

We have to learn how to simplify our views about life and about our religion. We must come to an understanding of what constitutes holiness, and we must come to an understanding of how to keep life and religion together. Holiness will not be achieved by not performing what life around us demands of us in order to spend more time in formal prayer. Our religion must not only dominate our lives, it must penetrate, like oil, into life's every pore, so that we can – by prayer and work – give praise to God, in the performance of every task, even the most simple. Surely this was the procedure in the House of Nazareth. One's entire life must be a prayer, one's entire life must be an act of a loving hunger for God. This means that we are not to go from work to worship or from worship to work. It means that prayer and work – everything – must be forms of unending adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition to Almighty God.

Our Holy Religion is much more than a list of doctrines that must be believed, or a series of wonderful ceremonies to be performed for our enjoyment. Our Religion is meant to be a divinely fashioned instrument made for the purpose of refining and sanctifying human nature. Our life is meant to be a process in which our souls are made ever more brilliant with the supernatural life of divine grace. God places the immense treasures of His grace in a chest and He places that chest within our reach. The key to that chest is prayer.

The paradox in the lives of the saints is that the more divine their lives became the more simple, natural and human they became. Of course, any reference to the saints as being "natural" and "human" is not referring to *fallen* human nature but to the simplicity of human nature emancipated by grace, resulting in the freedom of a true child of God. They were free because they understood that life is not something but Someone. Their interior life, which consists in loving intimacy with God, allowed them to live life as it was meant to be lived. When a man fails to live life as one of God's saints lives it, he doesn't truly live – he merely exists. □

