

WHY RELIGIOUS ORDERS

It is only reasonable to assert that the people who live in the world cannot live as monks and nuns live in their monasteries and convents. However, it seems reasonable to assert that the climate, the atmosphere, the spirit that properly and appropriately exists in well regulated monasteries and convents can inspire - - as it has inspired in years past - - the everyday life experience of the Man and Woman, of good intentions, who live in the world. No founder of a religious order or legislator for the religious life has ever assigned the cultivation of the soil, or the copying of manuscripts, or work in the arts and letters as the special aim of any of those who live the religious life. It was not the skill of the monks and nuns that inspired the people who lived around them. Skill can be purchased. That which the monks and nuns have to offer cannot be purchased - at any price. The contribution of the Monks and Nuns is the holiness of their monastic living.

Religious orders and rules have a very special role to play, and they are able to do what no human power can do. Religious orders and rules take the man out of the world - even if he were wasted by sin; religious orders take rough men and rough women; they take proud men and proud women; they even take pagan men and pagan women. The religious rule transforms the candidates by chastity, they subdue them by obedience, they ennoble them by poverty, and they elevate them by sacrifice and humility. The reproduction of Christ is the life's work of the monk and nun, as it should also be the life's work of every Christian. For this, the genuine and sincere example of any good monk and nun is essential. Over the centuries, religious orders have produced countless prodigies of evangelical perfection.

Religious orders and rules have a very special role to play. The example of the life lived in monasteries and convents - the climate, the atmosphere, the spirit, the attitude, the quality of the prayer life, the quality of faith that permeate every corner of true monasteries and convents - - indeed, the very presence of holy monks and nuns - - will do more to restore the Heart of Man to God than all polemics presented by those who believe that polemics bring about true conversion.

Let us not waste a single particle of precious time in the futile contemplation of the Restoration of any - THING - that once was in place. It is the Heart of Man that must be restored. When that, please God, happens, all things - - ALL THINGS - - will be restored to their proper places. It must be clearly understood that if all things are ever to be restored, it will be the hand of God that will put them in the place they properly belong. □