

very special vow. It is called the Vow of the CONVERSION OF LIFE. This vow it is that strives to bring about a TURNING AWAY from evil toward good – the selecting of that which is good and the rejecting of that which is bad. This vow is basic for the Benedictine monastic.

All these interior forces give moral value to each and every exertion and action, to the exterior conduct of man. Indeed, our demeanor, our very countenance, our bearing, our poise, will inevitably be given demonstration by the force – good or bad – that is in charge at any given moment. All our actions, our prayer life as well as our fetid life of sin, cannot but be motivated by what is going on inside us. Every human act, if performed freely, but with the force of whatever causes it, is responsible and is worthy of merit or blame, as it is directed by that which is interior. It is from the interior life that every good act or every bad act receives its qualities.

For so very many, regardless of state or station or place in life, the thought of God has no place in the collection of their ideas and intentions and motivations. Their interests and drives are centered only on that which is sought after by self interest or desire. In the symphony of their minds, only those instruments are given voice which cater to the cacophony of sin and lust and greed. Their minds exclude every sound other than that which benefits self and sinful pleasure. The force of the thought in such people, the central motivating effort in them, the central driving desire in all such people, is entirely divorced from religion.

The interior life of the Christian, the interior life of the man or woman of God, is entirely different. God is never completely absent from the minds and hearts of all such people. A true and devoted disciple of Christ, even in the act of sinning in a moment of weakness, knows that God is a witness to the drama of his conscience.

In a true Christian, dialogue between himself and his God is never ever completely shut off. The interior life of the Christian finds its most noble expression in prayer. For him, prayer is a constant pouring forth of adoration, and an unrelenting desire for union. In the very middle of the most complicated business transactions, the activity of prayer is continuous. It may be in the background, but it is there nevertheless. Love cannot be turned off! True faith and true hope cannot ever be totally distracted by the clamor of the marketplace.

“Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.” There! The order has been given, and it has to be carried out as given. In all truth, therefore, we must consider the Divine Presence as the very summit – the very peak of the mountain – of our earthly existence, of our earthly accomplishment – even though impossible, obviously, to reach with complete fulfillment. “My soul is restless until it rests in Thee, O