

## ***THE PATH TO GOD***

The path to God is not the route to some far distant land, nor death at the hands of the infidel. Neither is it found in outlandish austerities – austerities in too many cases self-concocted and self-inflicted and applied without the direction of a spiritual director, who, having been tried by the fires of temptation himself and properly formed, is competent to give prudent advice and direction. Independence and the lack of the use of common sense will inevitably lead to disaster, especially when and where children are concerned. The damage that is done to children in such matters will stay with them for the rest of their lives, and they will spend the remainder of their days fighting that which was put into them by over-strict or tyrannical parents. The path to God is a peaceful and joyful path, and the very beauty of it lends itself to the atmosphere of good and proper recollection, love of solitude, appreciation of self-sacrifice, and most of all, prayer. Without the noise of the marketplace and the streets of the world, the quiet of that beautiful path is alone that which brings us to the beauty of our all-loving God. Here again we must use common sense, for there may be some who will ask, “Then what about those of us who have to travel the streets of the world and every day enter the shops of the market place in order to eke out a living so that we might have bread to eat?” “Are we, then, lost because our feet do not travel upon that wonderful path?” Not at all! For him who seeks God, he will find that even in the noise of the world and the danger of it all, he can find God and his way to salvation and sanctification. But he must keep guard, careful guard, over his eyes and ears and thoughts, at every instant.

If we wish to embrace God, it is not necessary that the body should perish in rash and uncalled-for mortifications, or that we should lock ourselves in a total seclusion which keeps us insulated against the world’s presentations. Common sense, good guidance, and obedience to that guidance, are of the greatest necessity. □

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*Benedictine monks and nuns must have the refinement which marks an ascetic. In them contemplation takes the place of learning, and prayer gives them understanding. Monks and nuns are men and women of culture and refinement because they are persons of ordered living and lofty thinking. Benedictine monasteries and convents are not only citadels of contemplation, they are citadels of faith. And because they are citadels of faith, the monastics who live in them have no business engaging themselves in debate and proving, all of which is useless. True ascetics waste no time in proving the presence of the truth and peace which exists within their hearts and minds and souls. □*