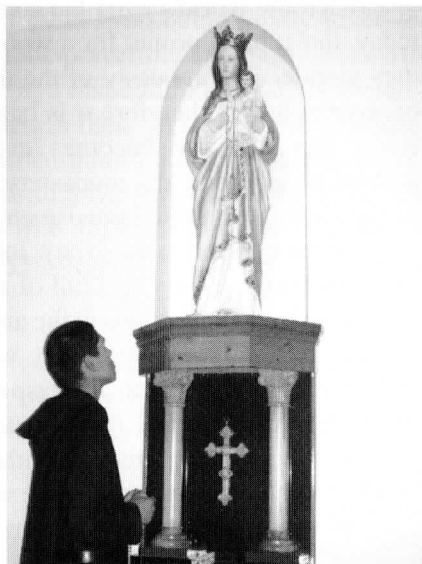




Father Abbot in the Church



One of the Monks prays to our
Blessed Mother

Life in a monastery demands a great price: nothing less than complete renunciation - not only of the world and its ambitions and worries and concerns, but also of the monk's or nun's own judgment and tastes and will. But once the price has been paid, the reward is greater still. It takes a real man or a real woman to live such a life, but such a life lifts one above the terrors and sorrows of modern life with all its dazzlements, and elevates the soul to a superhuman level, to the peace and quiet found above the clouds where the storms of human existence are unable to cause any disturbance. Only those who have tasted the joy that can be in the heart and soul of the monk or nun are able to answer the question, "What is your aim? How do you reach what you aim for?" The answer cannot be found in a book - any book!

Penance, fasting, and mortification are not ends in themselves. If monks or nuns never succeed in being nothing more than religious athletes, they do not fulfill their purpose in the Church, especially today. If anyone wants to understand why monastics lead the life they do, they will have to go to the monk or nun and ask, "What is your aim?"

The very thought of a life of silence and prayer and work, especially today, scares most people to sickness. A life without noise? Unthinkable! The modern system of communication allows for constant conversation - continuous conversation that is mostly inane and totally trivial and meaningless.