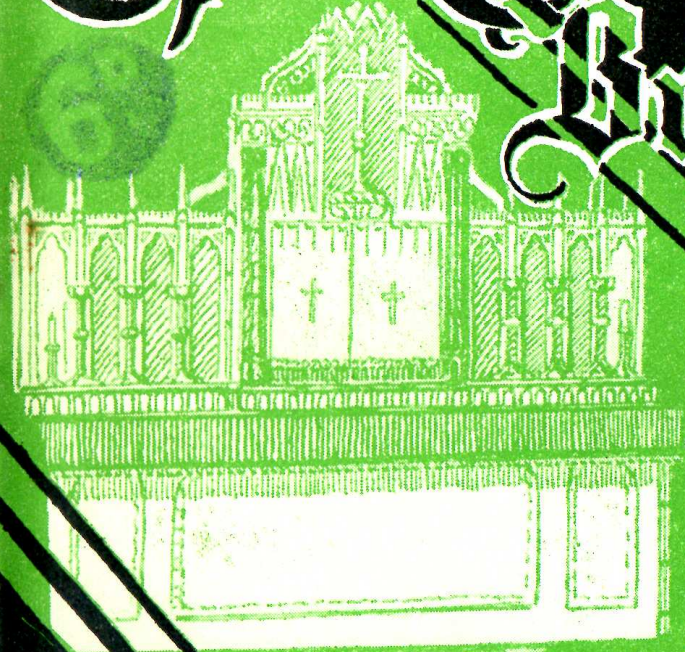


The Trappist Brother



His
Vocation
Its Means
and its End
By a Monk of Mellifont Abbey.

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Abbey

HIS VOCATION, ITS MEANS
AND ITS END

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THIS LITTLE BOOKLET is primarily intended for aspirants to our Laybrotherhood. It will meet substantially, we think, the needs of aspirants to the Choir also. These latter have normally not more than four or five hours daily for manual labour. The other hours are devoted to the discharge of the Liturgy and to sacred studies. In any case there is plenty of literature extant to help this class of enquirers. Practically all that has been written on the Order of Citeaux centres around the choir members. It is time to see the reverse of the coin.

I LOOKED him up and down, admiring his sturdily-built frame. "What age are you, Pat?" I said. "Twenty-seven, Father." "Is it true that you have come to join the monks?"

"I can't say that I've come to join just now. I'd like to know more about them first." And then: "I've searched practically all the C.T.S. boxes in Dublin, but could find nothing dealing with the Cistercian brothers."

Yes, it was only too true. There was no literature to meet the needs of this young man and of many like him. This fact has been made only too evident to me on several occasions in the past. When asked for some literature dealing with Cistercian laybrotherhood, I had nothing to offer but a few words, spoken or written, according to circumstances. It is surprising that such an evident need should have been overlooked for so long. We hope that this modest undertaking will help to fill the gap.

NEW LIFE IN OLD ORDERS

Can I be a monk? This is a question that many a young man up and down the country may well be asking himself to-day. There is, apparently, a great awakening of interest in the old monastic Orders, in the Order of Citeaux in particular, and, what is more significant, a sincere desire on the part of many, to join their ranks. Ample proof of this is provided by the fact that in the last few years three new "Swarms" have been sent out by the Irish Cistercian houses and even that has scarcely sufficed to relieve the congestion. This influx of vocations to Trappist (see note below) monasteries has gone beyond all bounds in the New World. The great monastery of Gethsemani, for example, received over 90 novices (more or less equally divided between choir and lay) during the year 1949. Surely there is something medieval about this. Even in St. Bernard's time such numbers could scarcely have been surpassed. Though we are quite aware that the standard by which religious Orders are judged is not their

N.B.—The terms "Trappist" and "Cistercian" are used indiscriminately in English speaking countries, and in the course of these pages.

material or exterior evidence of success, nevertheless we cannot but think that the finger of God is here.

Before coming to our subject proper, it may not be amiss to mention here one or two probable reasons for this unwonted increase in Cistercian vocations. From the human standpoint we may cite as a reason the great increase, especially in America, in recent years, of literature treating of Cistercian life. Books like "The Man who got even with God," "Elected Silence," "The Waters of Siloe," have exploded some of the distorted and even fantastic ideas entertained by many people about this mysterious silent Order. They have also made many realise the importance for humanity of a life dedicated to penance and contemplation.

Then there is the process of loss and gain going on in Christ's mystical Body which is His Church. This has been a feature of the Church's life down the centuries. The existence of evil and opposition to and persecution of the truth are unhappy results of man's defectible free will, or rather of his abuse of this noble faculty. But God has always cared for His Church with a special, loving Providence. When she suffers reverses in one part of the world, He compensates her by renewing her vigour in another. Sometimes God has used some religious Order to take a prominent part in such work of restoration and spiritual re-invigoration. Such a role, for instance, was played by the Benedictines after the fall of the Roman Empire; such also was that played by the Society of Jesus after the so-called Reformation. Are we to claim that the Cistercians are to play a similar part to-day? We certainly will not go so far, but let us see a third reason for the phenomenal increase in vocations to life in the cloister.

Man is made to possess happiness and joy even here below, though he can, in fact, never attain to perfect and unclouded happiness in this life. But man is not in any sense made for pleasure alone, and it is just here that man, at all times indeed, but never more than in our day, has foundered. Pleasure is of the senses; happiness is of the spirit. Happiness is interior to a man and independent of all that is external to him. No amount of entertainment can ever minister to man's true and lasting joy. Now let us look at the world of to-day—the radio, press, films, and a hundred and one other labour-saving devices have all conspired to make life easy and pleasant. Add to this spectacle the "flight from the land" and you have the perfect antithesis of what Cistercians stand for. Perhaps we have here the clue to the providential destiny of the Order of Citeaux. At all events we probably have the real reason for the "flight" to the monastic life. Many, themselves pressed down by boredom with the pleasures of this life and, at all events feeling that the world in

general has gone completely off the track, have decided to answer, in the most complete fashion, the invitation of Christ—"If any man thirst (for happiness) let him come to Me and drink."

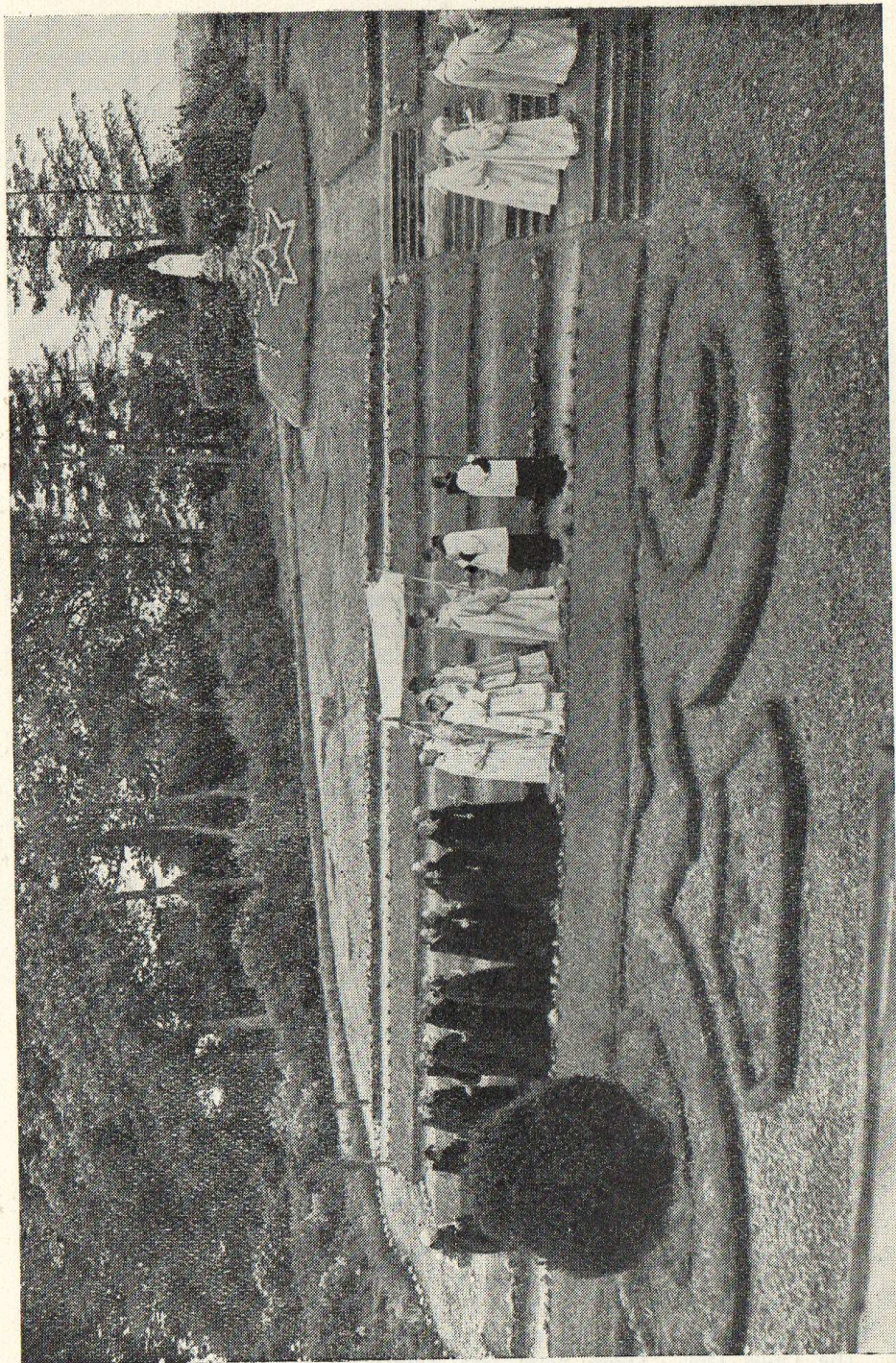
Right here, on the threshold of what we have to say about Cistercian laybrotherhood, we would like to strike a note of confidence in favour of those who may have long since passed their teens and whose education may not be very advanced. Such as these may think that there is no form of religious life open to them. We hope that what follows, while proving the high calling of the Cistercian brother, will at the same time convince all that no extraordinary brawn or brain or even virtue are required. But let us come to our subject.

CISTERCIAN LAY BROTHERHOOD : HISTORY

The history of laybrotherhood in general is a very long one. As a matter of fact it has not yet been written, or at most it has been but sketched. According to Abbot Delatte, O.S.B., there were lay monks in the monasteries of the West as early even as the 5th century, though then they did not form a distinct class. It was inevitable, however, that this distinction between choir (cleric) and lay monks should have become more defined as time went on. This was in part due to the more thorough organisation of the monastic machinery itself and in part to ecclesiastical legislation.

St. John Gualbert introduced lay assistants into his Order (1073) but it is not easy to state what exactly was their status. By the 12th century, however, they appear as true religious in practically every monastery in the West. All authorities are agreed that it was at Citeaux the institution of lay brotherhood reached its height and was most in honour. It was in Citeaux they received their charter.

St. Alberic, 2nd Abbot of Citeaux, it was who introduced lay brethren into the Order. He wanted the Divine Office celebrated in the Church and also wished to see all his monks present for every Office. But the monks had to live, and their support must be procured by the labour of their own hands. How could this be attained, without prejudice to the proper discharge of the choir duties? St. Alberic got an idea. Surely, he said to himself, there must be hundreds of people in the world desirous of giving their services to God, but who either have no aptitude or no inclination to undertake the duties of the choir. This would solve his great problem then. He would introduce members into his community who would share to the full in two of the three great duties of monks—manual labour and holy reading (*lectio divina*). They would, however, be exempt from choir and so could carry on the necessary work while their brothers in the choir performed the *Opus Dei*. There were two points on which St. Alberic



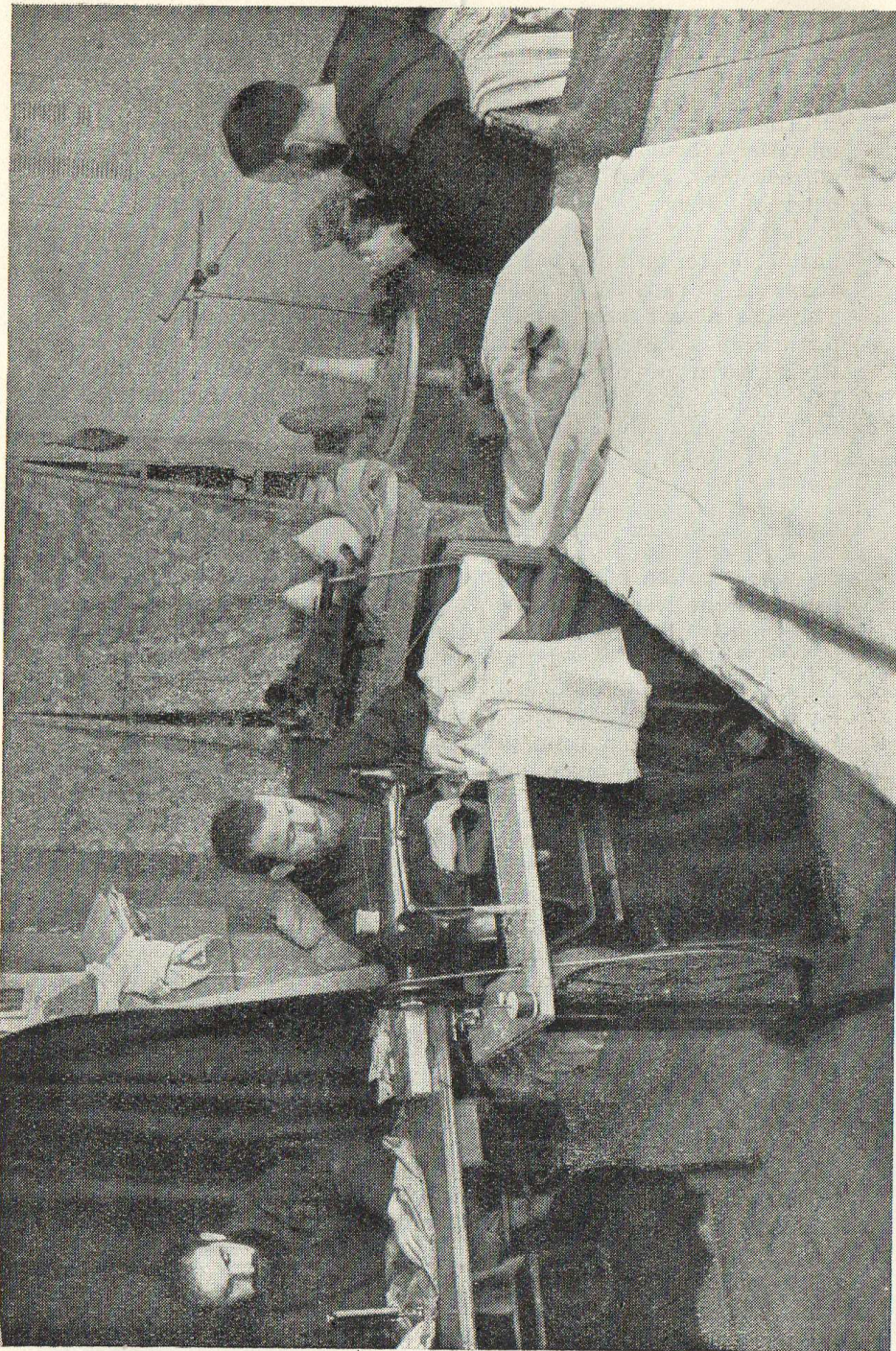
absolutely insisted. If he introduced lay brothers, they must in the first place be true religious—just as much so as the choir brothers. The second point followed quite naturally from the Benedictine conception of a monastery. This is that every monastery should be a self-contained whole, an organism, above all, a family, ruled over by an Abbot whose office is primarily paternal. Hence in the monastery there must be no distinction of persons but what is compatible with the idea of a family, distinction, for instance, based on apportioning of works and duties according to capacity. "Different operations but the one spirit." This has always been, and is to-day, one of the outstanding features of a Cistercian monastery. "All things are common to the children of one family," says the Cistercian "Spiritual Directory." And again: "Nowhere is the religious brotherhood more in honour than among us. There is but one body and one soul. We work by the arms of our brothers, they chant by our mouths."

VOCATION

The vocation of a lay brother is as specific as that of the priest, of the teaching brother, or of any other. It is absolutely independent of social status and even of education. There have been in the ranks of our lay brothers persons of noble birth—princes even—as also some of high intellectual culture. These latter were and always will be exceptions, but even to-day we have brothers taken from practically every walk of life, not a few of whom have made great sacrifices from the world's point of view.

Since a Cistercian monastery is a little self-contained world, there is wide scope for every talent from the highest to the lowest. Young men with trades—carpenters, masons, mechanics, tailors, shoemakers, bakers, etc., are all an acquisition to a monastery. Yet, when this much has been said, it is also true to say that nothing special is required in aspirants, for Cistercians claim that their way of life is but the purity of the Gospel. What they require above all in their subjects is that they have a true desire of union with God, a readiness to obey, and a cheerful acceptance of the humiliations and burdens of community life. (Note).

These are really the essential qualifications for undertaking the Cistercian life. Contrary to common opinion, normal physical strength is quite sufficient. As regards the signs of a vocation—the general and perhaps the best signs are (a) an intense conviction of the hollowness of worldly pleasures, (b) an appreciation of the superiority of the religious life, and finally, the firm resolve to bear courageously all the trials that the following of Christ in a religious



vocation involves. God is free to draw a soul to Himself in any way He chooses and hence there are many ways in which a religious vocation may manifest itself. For further information on the question of vocations in general, we would refer the reader to the current literature on the subject. We may add that St. Thomas says that the grace of vocation is a transient one, and not permanent. While some deliberation is necessary, to protract this beyond reasonable bounds would be to run the risk of losing that most precious grace.

FORMATION

The period of formation in the case of any science, art or craft is generally a rugged and painful one. During such a process, man is never in his natural element. There is too much conscious effort and constraint. Likewise the period of spiritual formation for novices is a time marked by special graces and spent under special conditions. As a result, novices are almost universally regarded as "hothouse plants," who have yet to face the real business of the spiritual life after profession. For one special reason, the Cistercian novice may have an immense advantage here. From the hour he steps inside the enclosure door, he is face to face with the full Cistercian life. There are no surprises awaiting him after profession, other than those of merest detail. Yet it must be said that this period will determine the whole character of the future religious—it is a mould in which like wax he takes on the form of the spiritual life. Being religious as truly as their brethren in the choir, the Cistercian lay brothers have a noviceship of two years which is preceded by a postulancy of six months.

During this period the novice gets instructions from his Father Master on the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, the vows, the code of Regulations which govern his external demeanour in the Monastery. Frequent conferences are given him on the theory and practise of mental prayer, and on the fundamental principles of the spiritual life. When his novitiate is completed, he is admitted, if judged suitable, to simple profession, which he makes for three years. In addition to the three vows of Poverty, Chastity

Note.—The following quotation from the Holy Rule of St. Benedict may be fitly mentioned here: "If there are any artisans in the monastery, let them exercise their respective crafts with all humility and submission, if permitted by the Abbot. Should any of them get puffed up by reason of his skill, imagining that he is benefiting the monastery, let him be put away from his trade, and not practise it any more, unless the Abbot seeing him humble himself, should command him to resume it." (Rule, c51). This to a beginner may seem a hard saying, but it is not really. It only indicates that St. Benedict had in mind before all else the sanctification of the brethren. They should ply their trades for God's glory, not to minister to vanity and self-love. Obedience is the very soul of all work in a monastery.

and Obedience, common to all religious, the Cistercian makes profession of two special vows, which it would be well to explain here. The first is called "Stability." By this vow, the religious binds himself not merely to the monastic state, and to the Order, but also to live and die in the house of his profession. In virtue of the second vow, i.e., "Conversion of Manners," the obligation of tending towards perfection, already implicitly contained in the three essential vows of religion, is explicitly undertaken, and made the object of a special vow. According to divines it would be a grave sin deliberately to make up one's mind not to strive for perfection. It seems that in violating his vow of tending to perfection a Cistercian would not commit a sin specifically distinct from other religious, as by his vow of "conversion of manners" he only makes explicit what is but implied in the three essential vows of religion.

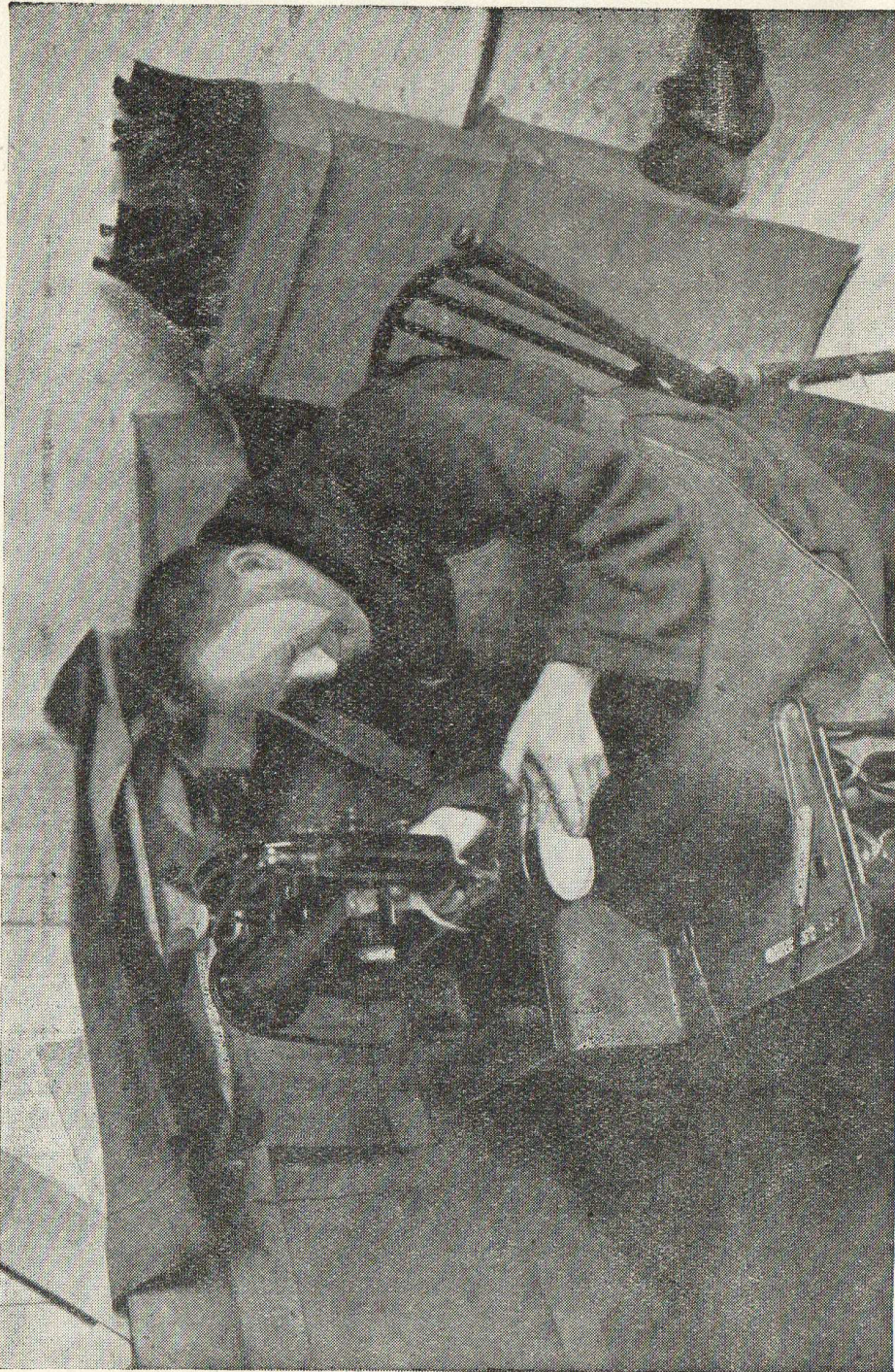
The essence of the obligation arising from this vow is the habitual, sincere will never to cease striving or aspiring to holiness, faults of frailty, or even grave faults promptly repented of, not being prejudicial thereto.

Finally, at the expiration of these three years, and if he is willing to embrace the life for good and for ever, he makes solemn perpetual vows. He is then enlisted for ever in the monastic family.

THE BROTHER AT WORK

Work is the common lot of mankind. It was the penance divinely imposed on all men after the fall. "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread" is a law to which in God's designs there is no exception; and St. Paul says "if a man will not work let him not eat." But precisely because work is a universal law, it must be possible to find our happiness in it. We may go further and say that our happiness and therefore our holiness are in some real sense bound up in our work. God can and should be found in our work, hence its sanctifying power. Besides, work provides a providential safety valve for our surplus energy, the release of which gives a sense of well-being.

Anyone who knows anything about Cistercians knows that manual work forms an integral element of their life. Has not our Lord, the Divine Workman of Nazareth, consecrated for ever that humble toil to which He devoted His whole life up to the age of thirty? Again consider St. Joseph—the great patron of those who dedicate to God's service their physical powers and energies: He was not a priest, he never preached a sermon, never wrote a book. He was known as the carpenter of Nazareth. He plied his trade with great love and energy in the service of the Holy Family and that sufficed to make him the greatest saint in Heaven after his Holy Spouse. To work with one's hands, therefore, like Our



Lord, St. Joseph and St. Paul is not a dishonourable stigma. It is, on the contrary, a dignified thing. Hence, not least among the achievements of the Order of Citeaux was its giving practical proof of its belief in the dignity of work at a time when to work meant to be a serf.

Even in our own days, work is being looked upon as a necessary evil—something to be shirked on the slightest pretext. To an age effeminate and pleasure-loving, work, especially farm work, is anything but attractive. In a Cistercian monastery all take part in the common work. As we have hinted already, lay brethren were not introduced into Citeaux in order to exempt the choir members from manual work, but to leave them free to devote themselves to the duties of the choir at the prescribed times. For the most part the lay brothers are in charge of the various works, while the choir brethren work under their direction. The lay brethren are generally also the tradesmen of the monastery. It must be said, however, that the greater part of the work in a Cistercian monastery consists less in skilled than in simple homely duties, as well as the tilling of the soil and caring for the dairy herd. Work, for the lay religious as for the clerics, is but a means to an end. It has no material end in view other than the maintenance of the monks and the succour of the poor. It occupies, it is true, a very large portion of their day (generally eight or nine hours) but they see in it both a powerful instrument of purification, and, when, like St. Joseph, they make it the expression of their love of Him a means of union with God. For the prayerful soul "to work is to pray" and for the Cistercian—everything in his life, the whole monastic atmosphere, tends to develop in him this spirit of continual converse with God.

HOLY READING

Anyone who has ever glanced through the pages of St. Benedict's Rule cannot fail to have been struck by the prominent place given by the holy Legislator to Holy Reading (*Lectio divina*). It does not require much thought to be convinced of the importance of this exercise for those who would devote themselves to a life of prayer. Since prayer consists in union of mind and heart with God, and since our thoughts and desires are mostly determined by our reading, it is plain that good spiritual reading is normally essential to the soul aiming at union with God. Moreover, prayer without constant spiritual reading even if it did not dry up, would be beset with danger for want of nourishment and a directive. Hence the Cistercian has at least an hour and a half of each day allotted to this important exercise. Other intervals he has which he is free to devote to private prayer.



THE BROTHER AND THE LITURGY

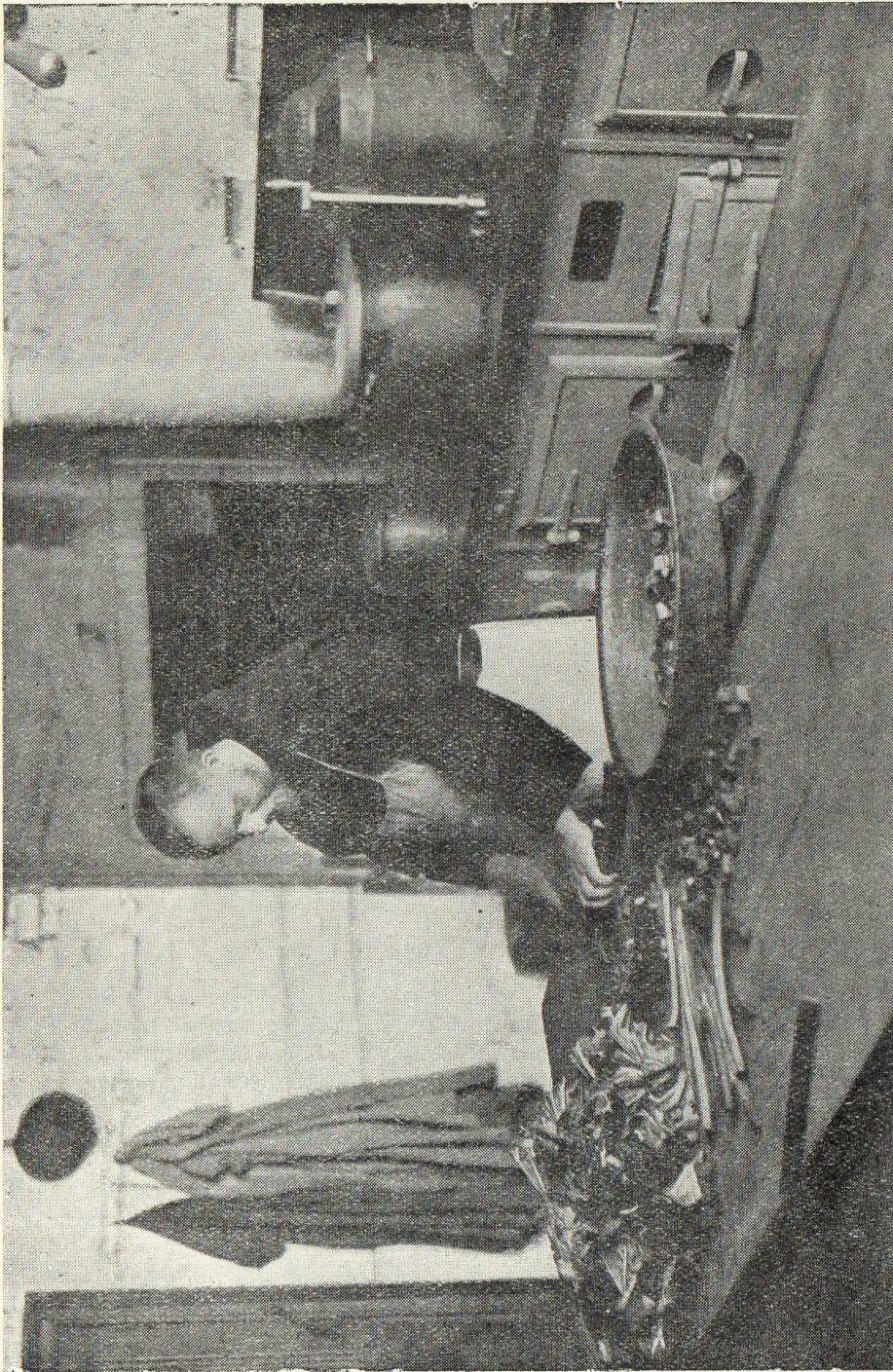
Because the Brothers do not take an active part in the divine office in choir, it must not be concluded that they have no part in the liturgy. The Liturgy is immediately and directly concerned with divine worship. By Baptism all Christians are deputed to this sublime duty. Every Christian, therefore, can and ought to share in the Church's liturgy to the extent, at least, of uniting in thought and intention and mingling his prayers with the unceasing prayer of the Church. Even this much on the part of the ordinary faithful would lend wings to their prayers for thus they would be united to the praise, thanksgiving, reparation and petition of Christ Himself, Who is always united to His Spouse, the Church.

Besides this general way of association in the liturgy the Cistercian brother has many other ways "of entering more directly into communication with the spirit of the Church and of drawing from its original and indispensable source the true Christian spirit." (Motu Proprio of Pius X, Nov. 1903).

- (1) By his manual labour he allows his choir brethren to discharge the great duty of praising God by the solemn chanting of the conventual Mass and Divine Office. Without his assistance, they could not perform this duty without modifying the whole Cistercian way of life. Hence it is clear that his participation in this great work is very close.

The following incident related in the life of St. Bernard amply illustrates this truth. On the night of Our Lady's Assumption a certain brother was minding the flocks some distance from the monastery of Clairvaux. He united himself in spirit with the monks chanting in choir, repeating his Aves the while. It was revealed to St. Bernard that Our Lady was more pleased with that humble brother's prayers than with that of his brethren in choir, fervent though they were. St. Bernard said so much next morning in Chapter to his children.

- (2) The lay brethren serve all the low Masses each morning. Not all realise that, after celebrating the Divine mysteries, there is no greater privilege than to serve at these same mysteries, and that no one after the celebrant shares so closely in them as the server.
- (3) They perform in turn the duties of inferior ministers
 - (a) on all Sundays throughout the year, (b) at Abbatial and Pontifical Masses on the major feasts of the year, and at such sacred functions as ordination ceremonies and those of Holy Week.



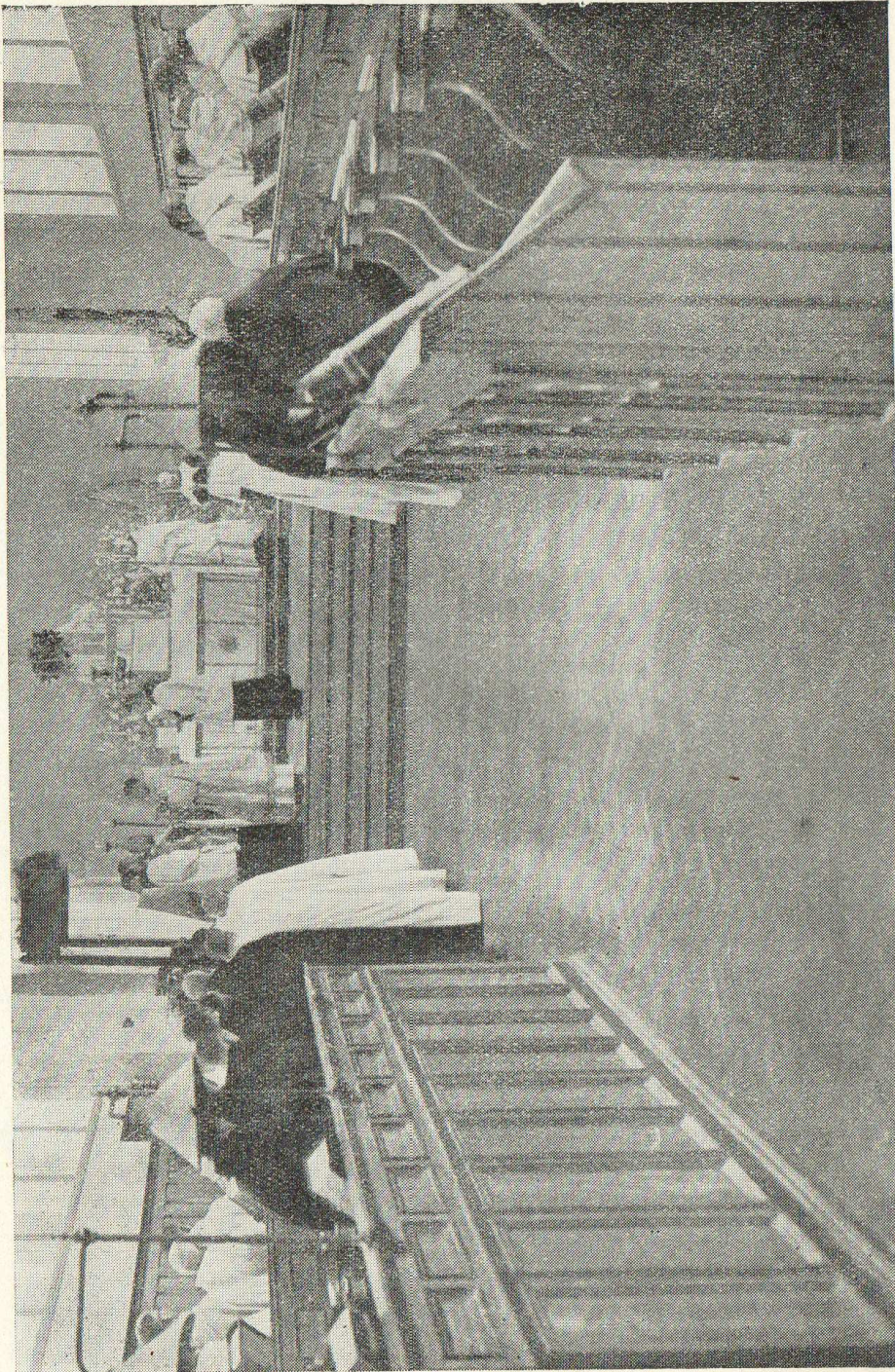
- (4) In addition to all this they have an Office of their own, consisting of Paters and Aves, corresponding respectively to the Canonical Office, and the Little Office of Our Lady, of the choir religious.

Hence we see that the lay brethren share in their measure in that spirit of worship and religion which is the very atmosphere of a Cistercian monastery, thus making up in some way for the modern world's sad neglect of this first duty of the creature.

PRAYER-LIFE : SOUL OF THE APOSTOLATE

From what we have said already, it will have been evident that the vocation of a Cistercian lay brother is indeed a very high one. It is a life capable, as the history of the Order proves, of leading the soul to the highest contemplative union with God, and for this same reason it is an Apostolate of incalculable value. This is a point that needs to be stressed in an age when quick and tangible results have become the only standard of values. It requires keen spiritual perception to appreciate the true value of a hidden life of prayer and penance. Yet in a sense it should not for those who read the Gospel. "I am the vine, you are branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing." Man's power to co-operate in his own sanctification and that of others depends entirely on his union with Christ, the unique source of supernatural energy and fruitfulness. Prayer, therefore, is the only sure index to a man's life, since it is chiefly by prayer that we are united with God. The more constant and intense our union of mind, memory and will with God, the greater also will be our personal holiness and our supernatural influence on other souls. By prayer we are put in contact with God, the primary and only infallible cause of supernatural effects. Hence its superiority over all external activities—preaching, teaching, etc., which depend on it for their efficacy. "Here below, no one knows the reason for these conversions far afield, of the heroic endurance of the persecuted Christians, of the heavenly joy of the martyred missionaries. All this is connected invisibly with the prayer of some humble, cloistered religious. With his or her fingers on the keyboard of divine forgiveness and eternal light, he or she in silence and hiddenness presides over the salvation of souls and the conquests of the Church." ("Soul of the Apostolate" by Dom Chautard).

The same note was sounded by the late Holy Father Pius XI. "It should be easy to understand how they who are assiduous in fulfilling the duty of prayer and penance contribute more to the increase of the Church and the welfare of mankind than those who labour in tilling the Master's field. Unless the contemplative drew down a shower of divine grace to water the field which is being



tilled, the active workers would clearly reap a less abundant harvest from their toil." The spiritual influence radiated by a prayerful soul can scarcely be over estimated. "The continual prayer of the just man availeth much" (James V. 20). Even the poet realised that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

This then is the apostolate of the Cistercian brother in common with his choir brethren—to seek God everywhere and in everything he does. By constant prayer he should drink to the full of the limpid and lifegiving waters of the Saviour, for himself in the first place, and then let the overflow reach out to the entire world of souls which form the Mystical Body of Christ.

"We should never forget that one of the most important aspects of our work for society consists in uniting to the sanctification and conversion of our own souls that of everyone else in the world. May Our Lady, devotion to whom is for us a ninth beatitude and who has been entrusted with the task of regenerating this tired and unbelieving world, inflame her children of Citeaux with her own burning zeal. May she obtain for them as a reward for their prayers and sacrifices the favour of being able to lead to God all men who are their brothers and to enfold them with themselves in that atmosphere of a genuine Catholic life, which is the centre of the true, integral and supernatural Communism." (Circular Letter of Most Reverend Abbot-General, O.C.R., Christmas, 1946).

MEANS TO THE END

We have just seen that the life of pure prayer (that is, prayer proceeding from a heart purified from earthly affections) is the very reason of the Cistercian's existence. To this everything in his life is ordered. We may group under four headings the chief means chosen by our holy founders as best calculated to lead their children to this sublime end.

(a) **Penance.** All the masters of the spiritual life are agreed that there is no living the life of prayer without a spirit of penance or mortification. Apart altogether from its expiatory value, penance is a necessary safeguard for the divine life in us. St. Paul says "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal. V. 24), and again: "Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies" (II Cor. iv. 10). Penance is incumbent on every Christian by reason of the disorder wrought in our nature by original sin and also as a consequence of Baptism which engages us to die daily to this same disorder. Does it not require a considerable amount of penance to keep the flesh in subjection, to fulfil faithfully the duties of one's state in life, and to accept

courageously all the dispensations of divine Providence? When speaking of Cistercians and penance, one expects to hear of "grave digging," "black" fasts and other strange, morbid things. As we said in an earlier page, there is nothing extraordinary in the Trappist's life, not even in his penances. Perhaps its all-round simplicity is the greatest penance of all. Yet he has his penances in plenty.

He has for exterior penances—long hours of manual labour, plain vegetarian diet, and early rising (2 a.m. all the year round). But exterior mortification is only a means to an end. St. Benedict insists much more on interior mortification—the total renunciation of self-will which finds its expression in obedience and in the patient, humble love of one's brethren in spite of their faults, which community life demands. These are the hair shirts of surpassing efficacy that Cistercians are asked to wear.

(b) **Common Life.** Cistercians are cenobites in the fullest sense of the word, i.e., religious who live a full, common life. They are herein distinguished on the one hand from hermits who live a completely solitary life, and on the other hand from the life, sometimes comparatively individualistic, of modern congregations. In a Cistercian monastery all the obligatory religious exercises are performed in common—all sleep in common dormitory, all take meals in a common refectory, all pray together in church, etc. During intervals (time to which no exercise is allotted) the brethren are free to pray or read, etc., in private. As we have noted above, this common life can be a very mortifying affair and calls for the rooting out of the last fibres of self-love. But there is also a more positive and gratifying aspect to the common life. It answers man's deepest needs for "Community life is a stimulus and an inspiration, and provides the aid of that force of example which is so potent a factor in human life." ("La Trappe in England"). And Abbot Marmion says that just as we enter into contact with Jesus through the Church on the day of our Baptism, so we enter into the current of religious grace on the day of our profession through the Community. "Henceforth," he says, "we have an effectual part in it (religious grace) according to the degree in which we live the Common life."

(c) **Solitude.** The Cistercians always chose for their monasteries places remote from the haunts of men. They left the world as much as possible even physically (not because they were misfits in the world: If so they would be going to the wrong place as we have seen from the nature of the common life) so as not to be allured by its sights and

disturbed by its noise. Yet this exterior solitude in relation to the outside world is but the material side, the symbol of that interior and far more important solitude of the heart. Solitude for the Cistercian means getting rid of all worldly cares, ambitions, desires and pursuits so as to be able to give himself untrammelled to God's service and love.

- (d) **Silence.** With such emphasis on the common life as prevails in Cistercian houses, the solitude spoken of above could never exist were it not for the great boon of silence. "Silence," says the "Spiritual Directory," is indispensable in a monastery. It procures us the advantages of solitude together with those of community life. And while the example of all stimulates us to the fulfilment of duty their silence assures us the enjoyment of peace and recollection, without the fatigue consequent on absolute isolation. It facilitates prayer, pious reading and all the exercises of the interior life. Thanks to silence the monastery is a sanctuary where God's presence is felt." Need we state that the 'vow of perpetual silence' does not exist? Perhaps, however, something analogous to it does, in so far as Cistercians, as a community, never speak to each other indiscriminately. All may, nevertheless, speak freely to the first Superior—the Abbot or Father of the monastery. All those solemnly professed may also speak, when necessary, to the Father Prior, and the novices may speak to their Father Master. Besides these general permissions, it will be sometimes necessary also to grant permission to speak to two brothers by reason of the particular nature of the work in which they are engaged. Such permissions always come from the Abbot. So we see after all there is a considerable amount of necessary speaking in a Cistercian monastery. The community as a whole communicate their ideas by means of manual signs, which have but a very limited range.

Such then are the four pillars of Cistercian life: Penance, Community Life, Solitude, Silence, all leading to and protecting the life of intimate union with God in prayer. Perhaps we could not close this section better than by quoting St. Bernard's description of this life we have been viewing. "Our Order is abjection, it is humility, it is voluntary poverty, it is obedience, it is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Our Order is to be subject to a Master, subject to an Abbot, subject to a rule, under discipline. Our Order is to love silence, to be exercised in fasting, in watching, in prayer, in manual labour: it is above all to follow the more excellent way, which is charity. Furthermore our Order obliges us to advance from day to day in the practice of all these virtues and to persevere therein until death."

CONCLUSION

The great Benedictine, Bishop Hedley, has said somewhere in his writings that for himself he found it hard to understand how anyone, wise even with the wisdom of commonsense, could help giving himself entirely to God and binding himself hand and foot to His perfect service.

Such indeed are the sentiments of every true religious, especially of every true Cistercian, who certainly leaves everything to follow the Master. But the gain is his, for God is never outdone in generosity: He gives to His faithful follower that deep peace of heart which is a foretaste of heaven. "A good conscience," says St. Bernard, "is a treasure beyond price. For what is there in the world that can make a man so rich and happy, so tranquil and secure? The flowers and fruits of a good conscience gladden us living, comfort us dying, dead they revive us, and continue with us forever."

Yes, "comfort us dying." Every good religious appreciates his vocation more and more as the years roll by. But above all, when the evening of his life is drawing nigh and when he sees things more clearly now in the light of the rays from eternity, it is then, I say, that he loves to say—Thank God, thank God I am in religion—I have in this fact the surest sign of my predestination.

As St. Bernard says:

In religion a man
Lives more purely
Falls more rarely,
Rises more speedily,
Walks more cautiously,
Is bedewed more frequently,
Rests more securely,
Dies more confidently,
Is purged more quickly,
and rewarded more abundantly."

HORARIUM

The following horarium will give the reader some idea of the order of exercises in a Cistercian brother's day.

2. 0 a.m. Rise. (As the monk sleeps fully dressed except for shoes, there is little delay in rising). Matins and Lauds in the Church.
- 2.30 a.m. Mental Prayer.
3. 0 a.m. Spiritual Reading.
4. 0 a.m. Angelus—Brothers serve the private Masses and receive Holy Communion at the Masses they serve. Those who are not serving in the 1st round of Masses receive at the High Altar and then serve the 2nd round of Masses.
5. 0 a.m. Arranging of couches: Mixt (Breakfast). Work.
- 7.30 a.m. Tierce and Sext at place of work. Continuation of work.
9. 0 a.m. Novices usually have a little talk from the Father Master on Mental Prayer.
- 9.20 a.m. Work.
- 10.45 a.m. End of Work. None. Interval (Private prayer or spiritual reading).
- 11.25 a.m. Particular examination of conscience in Church.
- 11.30 a.m. Angelus. Dinner. Clearing of tables and washing up. Interval.
1. 0 p.m. Repetition (Instruction by Father Master).
- 1.30 p.m. Vespers. Work.
- 4.45 p.m. End of Work.
5. 0 p.m. Mental prayer in the Church.
- 5.15 p.m. Collation. Clearing tables and washing up. Interval.
- 6.15 p.m. Lecture in Chapter Room followed by Compline in the Church. "Salve." Examination of Conscience. Repose.

NOTE—From Easter to 14th September a Siesta is taken at midday, which means that the subsequent exercises are one hour later, repose being at 8 p.m.

Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus.

CISTERCIAN ABBEYS**IRELAND:**

- MOUNT MELLERAY ABBEY, Cappoquin, Co. Waterford.
 MOUNT ST. JOSEPH ABBEY, Roscrea.
 MELLIFONT ABBEY, Collon, Co. Louth.
 OUR LADY OF BETHLEHEM, Portglenone, Co. Antrim.

ENGLAND:

- MOUNT ST. BERNARD ABBEY, Charnwood Forest, Coalville, Leicestershire.

SCOTLAND:

- ST. MARY'S ABBEY, Haddington.

WALES:

- CALDEY ABBEY, Caldey Island, Pembrokeshire, S. Wales.

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