

allowed, whilst we indulge in things never on any account permitted. God loves and honours those who obey him; and so, once again: whilst we keep this fast, much more must we banish all our base desires and evil deeds—then we shall share in the nature of the saints, and in the life to come be found worthy of their reward; for as it is written: 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled'.

Here is another thought: we should gladly arrange that the value of the things we give up be distributed to the sick and poor; for blessed are they who willingly suffer hunger that others may be satisfied. A gift is pleasing to God when it helps the poor, when it makes for peace and cancels old quarrels. Then he will be indeed pleased if our self-denial helps those who are compelled by necessity to practise abstinence. Then we shall deserve to hear our Lord saying: 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done this unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me'. What condescension is here! How loving is our Lord, who in order entirely to destroy our avarice, actually accepts for himself what we give to the very poorest of his followers.

Finally, my friends, may God in his mercy grant you so to please him by your abstinence and generosity that he will at last lead you to that eternal, that real life where he lives and reigns for ever.

*Translated by JOHN SEARLE.*



## CORRESPONDENCE

*To the Editor, 'LIFE OF THE SPIRIT'.*

### 'NO PLASTER SAINT'

Sir,—In your January number Father Netherway, reviewing *No Plaster Saint*, says the play shows that St Thérèse of Lisieux, towards the end of her life, was troubled by the memory of 'her father, deserted by his children' and 'helpless and lonely'. If the play does show this, it also shows that its author has not made good use of the 'primary sources and documents' which Father Netherway says he has consulted.

The facts about M. Martin (St Thérèse's father) are these: he was taken to the Hospital of the Bon Sauveur at Caen in February, 1889. It was no longer safe to keep him at home. He suffered from hallucinations. Once he vanished from home for four days and no one knew where he was. Two of his daughters, Léonie and Céline, went with him to Caen and stayed in the town until June of that year and saw him continually. Then the hospital enforced the rule that patients could only have one visit a week. So the two girls returned to Lisieux and lived with their aunt and uncle, Madame and M.

Guérin—the sister-in-law and brother-in-law of M. Martin. The weekly visit was paid to M. Martin.

In 1892, M. Martin was stricken with paralysis. He could no longer wander and so, in May, he was brought back to Lisieux and installed, with his two daughters, at number 7, rue Labby. There was also a housekeeper, and her husband devoted his time to the invalid. In addition, the Guérins, living a few yards away, were continually in and out of the house. M. Guérin had also a large house in the country, the Château de la Musse. M. Martin spent the summers of 1893 and 1894 there. In June, 1893, Léonie entered the Convent of the Visitation at Caen, with the glad consent of her father. Céline stayed with him.

He died in July the next year at the Château de la Musse with Céline and Madame Guérin at his side.

M. Martin was certainly helpless. It is quite untrue to say he was lonely. His brother-in-law and sister-in-law were devoted to him. Two daughters stayed with him until a year before he died and one to the very end.

We should take good note of M. Martin's own words. In 1888, Céline told him that she wished to follow one day her three sisters—Marie, Pauline and Thérèse—into Carmel. M. Martin said: 'Come, let us both go and kneel before the Blessed Sacrament to thank God for the graces he grants our family and for the honour he does me in choosing his brides from my house. God does indeed greatly honour me in asking for all my children. If I had anything better, I should hasten to offer it to him'.—Yours, etc.

JOHN BEEVERS.

### CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE IN THE WORLD

Sir,—May a humble tertiary, encouraged by your words in the LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, offer a few observations which present themselves after reading the most interesting articles on the subject of the contemplative life in the world?

First of all, one has been surprised that it has not been suggested that a group of people who wish to offer themselves for this life might be formed *within* the existing Third Order—with perhaps a special chapter under close and special direction from the First Order. The writer can testify from his own small experience to the truth of the claim that the Order is in great measure contemplative, as well as active; that Dominican methods of spirituality are very suitable to these times, for layfolk living amid the dissipating life of today; that these methods can and do assist layfolk to make progress towards the contemplative approach. Would it not be possible, therefore, to gather up what is already in hand and see what could be done therewith?

Second. It sometimes seems a pity that so much spiritual writing appears to be written by and for religious only, and to imply that to make real progress one MUST join a religious Order. Thinking, as one

does in January, of the Holy Family, of Holy Matrimony, the continuance of the Church till the end of the world, and so on, one finds it hard to accept that as really intended. Therefore it would seem that lay holiness is specially desirable and in accordance with the Divine plan, as well as specially necessary to these times. Yet in the writing about groups of lay contemplatives, it seems to be envisaged throughout that any such development can only be undertaken by those who are almost without responsibilities in this life, and who might as well be, humanly speaking, *inside* the cloister. Is it not true that the experience of the Grail, of J.O.C. and many other modern developments shows that much, very much, can be done by those deeply committed in the world?

Third. There are undoubtedly many of good intent who want, and know in their hearts they want, more of the things of God—of God himself, dare I say? Now the Order's history shows that it has always possessed adaptability and elasticity. Could these not be brought to bear at this point, so as to lead such people into more purely spiritual paths—I refer particularly to those who have progressed so far, and who are no longer satisfied by the ordinary parochial provision, or by mere pious societies and sodalities.

One ventures to suggest that, rightly undertaken, such an effort might, if faithfully sustained, produce results that would be entirely astonishing.

But anyhow, Mr Editor, may we please have some more on this subject, and on the type of spirituality which is proper to it?—Yours,  
D., T.O.S.D.

Sir,—The prolonged correspondence concerning a secular contemplative life has been most interesting and yet in some way tantalising and inconclusive. I particularly sympathise with your latest correspondent who revolts against the arbitrary distinction between work and prayer.

Do not these difficulties really arise from the fact that the Christian aspiring towards perfection soon finds himself up against the problem of detachment—'the old paradox of 'caring and not caring'? If we are to be apostles we must care for others intensely and persistently, as our Lord did: and yet the health of our soul demands unfettered and exclusive union with God.

One method which has proved helpful is the frequent use of this ejaculatory prayer: 'Thou and I . . . Thou and I'. Thus one disencumbers oneself from the clinging fingers of the world and maintains that essential union in the midst of worldly duties.

It is reminiscent of the old formula for Night Prayers: 'Endeavour to put yourself as far as possible in the dispositions in which you hope to be found at your death'. At that solemn moment we shall not appear as strangers before our Lord. He will not enquire, as some earthly potentate might do, 'Who is this person? Can anyone tell me something about him?' And we muster up our friends and good deeds to speak for us as witnesses.

No; it will be 'As long as ye did it, or ye did it not, to me'. He was there all the time in our work and our duties. Detachment, surely, consists in realising this and adoring him beneath the earthly trappings of his present manifestation, as we adore him beneath the accidents of the white host.

In this sense, I believe, contemplation is not incompatible with life in the world.—Yours, etc.

(GLADYS M. STANFORD (Mrs))



## REVIEWS

LITURGIE UND MONCHTUM. Laacher Hefte I. To the memory of Abbot Ildefons Herwegen. (Verlag Herder, Freiburg.)

In the death (in 1946) of the Abbot of Maria Laach and of Dom Odo Casel on Holy Saturday this year (1948), the Liturgical Movement has lost two quite exceptional apostles. *Maison-Dieu* (No. 14) which contains important studies of Dom Casel's *Mysterium-Theologie* devotes the whole number to his memory, and now we are happy to welcome from Germany the first number of a new series which most appropriately is a memorial to Abbot Herwegen.

That his was a great creative personality, that he made possible the physical and intellectual conditions which enabled such men as Dom Casel to produce their profound liturgical studies, those of us who had no personal contact with Maria Laach long ago suspected; but here the story is told and all is made plain. Abbot Herwegen was a many-sided genius, a scholar whose whole intellectual effort was to restore a true notion of the Christian life in its widest extent and deepest meaning; a man of affairs who provided the material conditions for that restoration; an artist, a Christian humanist, but above all the Spiritual Father (how he loved that word *Pneuma!*) of his monks and of many more besides. Up to the war, the ideas of the Maria Laach school seem to have influenced only German-speaking countries—and there they made a deep impression—but elsewhere they were hardly known. A few professional theologians made passing references to Dom Casel's teaching on the Mass; a few liturgists were aware of the artistic productions of Maria Laach, but very little was known about this school. Dom Theodore Wesseling in his book *Liturgy and Life* introduced Dom Casel's teaching on the Mass into England but the welcome was not over-enthusiastic. Now at last the importance of the Maria Laach school is realised in France and forms the basis of much of the best work of the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique*.

Perhaps there was a suspicion abroad that the Maria Laacher were extremists, that they were not quite in the centre of the theological stream. It is certain, as this journal makes clear, that Abbot Herwegen made some trenchant though never irresponsible