

The Carthusian Statutes

Excerpts from the Carthusian Rule of Life and
Writings of St. Bruno, Blessed Guigo, Hugh of
Balma and Other Writings

By the Carthusian Order, Compiled by Marilyn Hughes



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION - 6

To the Carthusian Order
Thomas Merton, 1957

EXCERPTS FROM THE STATUTES OF THE CARTHUSIAN RULE OF LIFE - 22

BOOK ONE - 22

BOOK TWO - 53

BOOK THREE - 80

BOOK FOUR - 105

BOOK FIVE - 117

BOOK SIX - 132

Writings of St. Bruno (Founder of the Carthusian
Order) and Blessed Guigo (Fifth Prior of Grand
Chartreuse), Hugh of Balma - 143

The Blessed Trinity and the Supernatural Life, a
Carthusian - 175

SOURCES - 216

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Merton: *THE SILENT LIFE* (1957)
III - THE HERMIT LIFE

"1. The Carthusians

"Strictly speaking the Carthusians are not and have never been considered a branch of the Benedictine family. St Bruno, the founder of the Grande Chartreuse, spent some time in a priory dependent on the Benedictine Abbey of Molesme, when he was deciding his vocation. But the group which he led into the rugged wilderness of the Alps north of Grenoble were to be hermits in the strict sense of the word, hermits who would bring back to life something of the forgotten purity of the contemplative life as it was once led in the deserts of Egypt.

However, there are several traits in the Carthusian character which bring it, in fact, quite close to the spirit of St Benedict. First of all, the Carthusians, while insisting perhaps more than anyone else in the

Western Church upon silence and solitude, have always lived as hermits-community. The spokesmen of the Order point out that the Carthusian life combines the advantages of eremitical solitude and of the common life. Lanspergius, for instance, says:

Among the Carthusians you have the two lives, eremitical and cenobitic, so well tempered by the Holy Spirit that whatever might, in either one, have been a danger to you, no longer exists, and we have preserved and increased those elements which foster perfection. Solitude, as it is found in a Charterhouse, is without danger for the monks are not allowed to live according to their whims; they are under the law of obedience and under the direction of their superiors. Although they are alone, they can nevertheless receive assistance and encouragement whenever these become necessary. And yet they are anchorites, so that if they faithfully observe their silence they are in their cells just as if they were in the depths of an uninhabited desert. . . . The solitude of the Carthusians is far more secure than that of the first anchorites, and just as complete. (Enchiridion, 49. 128)

Like St Benedict in his Rule, the Carthusians divide their time between manual labor, the chanting of the Divine office, and spiritual reading or study. Finally, their spirit is altogether one with that of St Benedict in its simplicity, its humility and its combination of austerity and discretion.

To say this is simply to say that among the Carthusians we find the same authentic monastic tradition that we find in St Benedict and although there are significant differences of modality between the two orders, no book about Western monasticism would be complete without some mention of the Carthusians.

As a matter of fact the Church has always considered, and has sometimes openly declared, that the Carthusians have been the only monastic order to preserve faithfully the true monastic ideal in all its perfection during centuries in which the other orders fell into decay. The fact that the Carthusians have never needed a reform has long since become proverbial. *Cartusia numquam reformata quia numquam deformata.* "The Charterhouse has never been reformed because it has never been deformed." The enthusiastic praises which Pius XI heaped upon the Order when approving its new constitutions in 1924 are not equalled in any other similar document. The solitary life was termed, by Pope Pius XI, the "most holy form of life," *sanctissimum vitae genus*. And he said of the Carthusians:

It is hardly necessary to say what great hope and expectation the Carthusian monks inspire in us, seeing that since they keep the Rule of their Order not only accurately but also with generous ardor, and since that Rule easily carries those that observe it to the higher degree of sanctity, it is impossible that those religious should not become and remain most powerful pleaders with our most merciful God for all

Christendom.(Apostolic Constitution Umbratilem, July 8, 1924).

The Carthusians, then, occupy a place of special eminence among the monastic Orders not only because of the intrinsic perfection of their Rule of life, but also because of the extraordinary fidelity of the Order to that Rule.

What are the special peculiarities of the Carthusian way of life?

While remaining within the traditional monastic framework, the Carthusian life is led almost entirely in the solitude of the monk's cell. The Charterhouse is a compact enough unit to be called a monastery rather than a hermitage. But the monks live, nevertheless, in hermitages. Each cell is in fact a small cottage. The cells are united by a common cloister, and the aspect presented by the average Charterhouse is that of a small, well-ordered village with a church and a block of large buildings at one end, and a series of little roofs huddled around the rectangle of the great cloister. Each cell has its own enclosed garden, and the monk neither sees nor hears what is going on next door. He lives, in fact, all by himself. His cottage is relatively spacious. On the ground floor he has a wood shed and a workshop where he exercises his craft, if he has one. There is also a sheltered porch in which he walks when the place is snowed under—which frequently happens, since the Charterhouse is built by preference in the mountains. On the second floor he has, one might be tempted to think, too many

rooms. One of them, the Ave Maria, is hardly used at all: it is a kind of antechamber to the real cell where the monk spends most of his time. But by a charming and ancient custom, this antechamber, dedicated to the Virgin Mother of God and containing her image, is a place where the monk pauses in prayer on his way in and out of the cell. Carthusian mysticism thinks of the monk's life of solitude as hidden within the Heart of the Virgin Mother.

The real "cell" is a bedroom and sitting room with two alcoves, one an oratory and the other a study. In the one the monk kneels in meditation or recites the day hours of the canonical office with all the ceremonies that are performed when the monks are together in choir. In the other he has his desk, a shelf of books-the Bible, a volume or two of the Fathers, or some theology, some favorite spiritual reading-Ruysbroeck, perhaps, or St John of the Cross, or the Imitation of Christ. And with these one might find almost anything else under the sun if the monk has some special interest, or if he recognizes in himself a need for some light reading. Provided that it is serious and can reasonably be fitted in some way into the monk's life of contemplation, any book may find its way into a Carthusian cell. It is not necessary that the monk confine himself entirely within the limits of conventional piety.

Here, in this central apartment, the monk studies, and meditates, and rests, and takes his meals and recites a good part of the daily office and other appointed prayers.

He usually leaves the cell only three times in twenty-four hours.

First, he rises from a brief four hour sleep about ten-thirty at night, and after some preliminary prayers in his cell he goes to the choir where, with the other monks he chants the long, slow office of Vigils. Pius XI praises the Carthusian choir as he praises everything else about the Order, and he gives us a picture of the monks, chanting in solemn masculine tones, *voce viva et rotunda* without the accompaniment of an organ. Other reports have described the Carthusian chant as having something of the character of a lamentation. Benedictine and Cistercian visitors to the Charterhouse sometimes let fall the remark that "the Carthusians never have any chant practice-it interferes with their solitude" and the implication is that these visitors have found the Carthusian chant not to their liking. Whatever may be the merits of these various views, the Carthusians have always been quite frank in preferring their solitude to everything else, and regarding even the pleasure of beautiful chant as an expendable luxury, if it has to be bought at the price of chant-practices and other distractions of the cenobium.

After the Vigils, which last from two to three hours each night, the Carthusian returns to his cell to complete his night's rest. He will rise and say Prime in his cell in the early morning hours, and then he will again go to Church to sing the conventual Mass. If he is a priest, he will say his own Mass in a chapel attached to the Church and if he is not a priest he will

serve Mass and receive Communion. Then he will return again to his cell and spend the rest of his day there until Vespers when, for the last time, he will once again chant the office in choir. This takes place in the middle of the afternoon.

In short, the Carthusian spends nineteen or twenty hours of his day within the limits of his small cottage and garden, seeing no one, speaking to no one, alone with God.

Of course, there may be exceptions. The monk may have an employment or office that obliges him to speak from time to time. He may receive a visitor, occasionally. Once a week there is a three-hour *spatium* - a walk in the country around the Charterhouse, in which everyone must take part. On these walks the monks not only get exercise, but they talk together and the talk, though on a high plane, is not necessarily lugubrious and dull. In other words, it is a necessary break in the monk's solitude. On certain feast days, the monks chant all the day hours in choir together and take their dinner in a common refectory. There is also a sermon preached (in Latin) to the community assembled in chapter.

It is clear that the Carthusian life is notable above all for its single-minded insistence on silence and solitude. All monastic orders recognize that the monk is supposed to live in some sense alone with God. The Carthusians take this obligation as literally as they can. Although they agree with St Benedict that "nothing is to be preferred to the work of God-(the

divine office)," they interpret this in a characteristically eremitical fashion. For a long time the Carthusians had no conventual Mass, and the priests of the Order were rarely allowed to say Mass, because the solitude and silence of the cell were regarded as being more important even than Mass. Such an attitude is understood with difficulty today, but we must remember that the Carthusian, even though he may be a priest, is always and primarily a solitary. His chief function in the Church is not to celebrate the liturgical mysteries so much as to live, in silence and alone the mystery of the Church's life "hidden with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3) And in the early days of the Order, when these restrictions were in effect, the idea of "saying Mass" always apparently implied the celebration of Mass with a congregation present.

The spirit of the Carthusians can easily be deduced from the life which they lead. It is a spirit of solitude, silence, simplicity, austerity, aloneness with God. The intransigence of the Carthusian's flight from the world and from the rest of mankind is meant to purify his heart from all the passions and distractions which necessarily afflict those who are involved in the affairs of the world-or even in the busy, relatively complicated life of a cenobitic monastery. All the legislation which surrounds the Carthusian, and has surrounded him for centuries like an impenetrable wall, is designed to protect his solitude against even those laudable and apparently reasonable enterprises which so often tend to corrupt the purity of the monastic life.

For instance the Carthusians, have always been adamant in refusing dignities and marks of favor and attention from the rest of the Church. While the Benedictines and Cistercians are justly proud of the fact that their Abbots have the pontifical dignity and can celebrate Mass with all the pomp of a bishop, the Carthusians have consistently rejected any such favors. In fact they have refused to allow their houses to be raised to the rank of abbeys, precisely in order to avoid the consequences that might follow.

In order not to attract attention, and to avoid drawing crowds of visitors and postulants, the Carthusians have insisted on keeping their monasteries small and obscure. They have an uncommon distaste for all publicity, and if they are proclaimed as the most perfect of all the Orders in the Church, the proclaiming of the fact is not done by the Carthusians themselves but by others.

The Carthusians have never paid much attention to the apparent sanctity of their members. They have always thought it more important to be saints than to be called saints-another point in which they agree with St Benedict (The Carthusians have an adage, "Non sanctos patefacere sed multos sanctos facere." "To make saints, not to publicize them." And St. Benedict tells the monk "not to desire to be called a saint, but to be one.")

Therefore the Carthusians have never taken any steps to procure the canonization of their saints. They do not even have a Menologium, or private catalogue of

the holiest men of the Order. When a monk of exceptional virtue dies, the highest public honor he receives in the Order is a laconic comment: *laudabiliter vixit*. In good American we would translate this as: "He did all right." Finally, the Carthusian does not even have the personal distinction of a grave marked with his own name. He is laid away in the cemetery under a plain unmarked cross, and vanishes into anonymity.

The Carthusians have never encouraged any form of work that would bring them back into contact with the outside world. They do not preach retreats, they do not maintain parishes, and when, at times, Carthusians have gained a reputation as spiritual directors, their superiors have intervened to put a stop to it all. The one work of the Carthusian monk that might possibly involve him in fame, is writing. From the beginning the Carthusians have devoted themselves to the copying of manuscripts and the writing of books. Yet here too important qualifications must be made. The greatest writer in the Order, St Bernard's friend the laconic Guigo, was practically the only Carthusian writer for centuries. His "meditations" are mere aphorisms, which can be contained within the pages of a very small volume. Later, writers like Denis de Ryckel, were far less reserved. Yet when one looks into the forty odd volumes of Denis the Carthusian, one gets the impression that with him writing was something like the basket weaving of the early solitaires—a mechanical action that kept him busy and that had no particular reference to an admiring public. Denis

could write a book on any subject, much as a pious housewife might knit a sweater or a pair of socks. One feels that when he had finished a book he was quite indifferent about what happened to it, and would have been just as content to see it burned as to see it printed. This same spirit seems to have guided all the numerous Carthusian writers whose names are on record and whose works have either disappeared or survive only in manuscript. They are unknown, they are never read and the reason is that they did not really write to be read. They worked like the Desert Father in Cassian who, at the end of each year, used to burn all the baskets he had woven and start over again. Today, if a Carthusian writes something for publication, it never appears under any name.

In short, the Carthusians have never thought that the perfection of the spiritual life and true purity of heart could be preserved merely by what is called the "practice of interior solitude." The ancient Customs of the Order, the *Consuetudines* written in the 12th century by Prior Guigo of the Grande Chartreuse, end with a beautiful panegyric on solitude-physical solitude. (*Consuetudines Guigonis*, c.80, P.L. 153:758. 138) Here we read that nowhere better than in true solitude does the monk discover the hidden sweetness of the psalms, the value of study and reading, intense fervor in prayer, the delicate sense of spiritual realities in meditation, the ecstasy of contemplation and the purifying tears of compunction. The purpose of Carthusian solitude is found in these words and in their context. Like every other monk, the Carthusian is the son and follower of

the ancient prophets, of Moses and Elias, of John the Baptist, of Jesus Himself who fasted in the desert and spent many nights alone on the mountain in prayer. The purpose of Carthusian solitude is to place the soul in a state of silence and receptivity that will open its spiritual depths to the action of the Holy Spirit who makes known the mysteries of the Kingdom of God and teaches us the unsearchable riches of the love and the wisdom of Christ.

Commenting on this chapter of Guigo, Dom Innocent Le Masson summarizes it and defines the Carthusian spirit in the following terms:

The principles of the Carthusian life are quiet (quies) or rest from worldly things and desires, solitude which removes us from the company of men and from the sight of vanities, silence from useless speaking, and the quest for supernal realities (superiorum appetitio) that is to say seeking and delighting in the things that are above. All other matters are passed over (by Guigo in this text) because he considers them accidental to the true substance of the Carthusian vocation which is obedience, offered up in quiet, in silence and in solitude (Commentary on the Consuetudines, c.80, P.L. 153:756).

From the very beginning the Carthusians realized that this vocation was a very uncommon one and that the Carthusian life would never be popular or well understood. In the same commentary just quoted, Dom Lemasson remarks that God alone can make

monks and hermits, and that human expedients to increase the number of Carthusian vocations would only end in the ruin of the Order. The Carthusians have, in fact, always been the most exacting of all Orders in their admission of candidates, on the ground that "many are called to the faith but very few are foreordained to become Carthusians." (Dom Le Masson, *loc. cit.* col. 759.) As a result they may have seemed extremely exclusive and snobbish, in comparison to other Orders, but in fact the great prudence which they have always exercised in this matter of vocations has been one of the chief reasons why the Order has never needed a reform.

If we pause a moment to look a little more closely at this singular grace of the Carthusians, we will see that it cannot be explained merely by fidelity to their Constitutions and to the principles of their founders. It is true that the Carthusians have been exceptionally loyal to their traditional ideal. But mere fidelity to a Rule can itself end by distorting and eventually destroying the life for which the Rule was written, unless it is constantly supported by the interior spirit by which the rule was inspired.

The Carthusians have been preserved not only by their rigid exterior discipline, but by the inner flexibility which has accompanied it. They have been saved not merely by human will clinging firmly to a Law, but above all by the humility of hearts that abandoned themselves to the Spirit Who dictated the Law. Looking at the Carthusians from the outside, one might be tempted to imagine them proud. But

when one knows a little more about them and their life, one understands that only a very humble man could stand Carthusian solitude without going crazy. For the solitude of the Charterhouse will always have a devastating effect on pride that seeks to be alone with itself. Such pride will crumble into schizophrenia in the uninterrupted silence of the cell. It is in any case true that the great temptation of all solitaries is something much worse than pride-it is the madness that lies beyond pride, and the solitary must know how to keep his balance and his sense of humor. Only humility can give him that peace. Strong with the strength of Christ's humility, which is at the same time Christ's truth, the monk can face his solitude without supporting himself by unconsciously magical or illuministic habits of mind. In other words, he can bear the purification of solitude which slowly and inexorably separates faith from illusion. He can sustain the dreadful searching of soul that strips him of his vanities and selfdeceptions, and he can peacefully accept the fact that when his false ideas of himself are gone he has practically nothing else left. But then he is ready for the encounter with reality: the Truth and the Holiness of God, which he must learn to confront in the depths of his own nothingness.

What one finds in the Charterhouse, then, is not a collection of great mystics and men of dazzling spiritual gifts, but simple and rugged souls whose mysticism is all swallowed up in a faith too big and too simple for visions. The more spectacular gifts have been left for lesser spirits, who move in the world of action.

When the Carthusians landed in America for the first time in 1951, it could be said that the Church in the United States had finally come of age. The Carthusian foundation at Whitingham, Vermont, is still in the experimental stage: but it is a stage of such primitive simplicity that one feels the founders will look back to it with great happiness in years to come.

[Note of the Editor: evidently the following lines, written in 1957, have become inaccurate or obsolete 50 years later.]

There is as yet no real Charterhouse at Whitingham. There is a lonely farmhouse, "Sky Farm" is what it is called, and this accommodates guests and postulants. Further back in the woods are a group of shanties - four of them in all. These are the cells. They are built on the probable site of the future Charterhouse, and have none of the elaborateness and self-contained security of the true Carthusian cottage. Here the hermits live in peace, keeping the austere Carthusian rule with only those modifications demanded by the provisional nature of their dwelling. Meanwhile postulants present themselves from time to time, are tested for a few months, then sent to Europe for their novitiate. In the last four years, practically all those chosen have failed to meet the requirements of the Order or sustain the hardships of fasting, cold, and solitude in the frozen silence of an Alpine winter. But here and there a survivor makes his vows and becomes a professed Carthusian. The cornerstone of the American community is one of the founders of Whitingham, a former Benedictine who taught psychiatry at the Catholic University in Washington.

Dom Thomas Verner Moore left Washington for Spain in 1948, and was received as a novice at the Spanish Charterhouse of Miraflores, near Burgos, and he has undoubtedly been one of the guiding spirits in the American foundation.

The Charterhouse in America will have to meet the great temptations which this country offers to all the monastic orders - publicity, technology, popularity, commercialism, machines and the awful impulsion to throw everything overboard for the sake of fame and prosperity (masking as an "apostolate of example"). One feels that the Carthusians are equipped, as no other Order, to resist this attack of the world upon the monastic spirit. The whole monastic structure in America may eventually depend on their doing so successfully."

Thomas Merton, The Silent Life, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, p. 127-144. © 1957 by The Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani.

The Statutes

(of the Carthusian Order)

Book One - Chapter 1

Prologue to the Statutes of the Carthusian Order

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

1 To the praise of the glory of God, Christ, the Father's Word, has through the Holy Spirit, from the beginning chosen certain men, whom he willed to lead into solitude and unite to himself in intimate love. In obedience to such a call, Master Bruno and six companions entered the desert of Chartreuse in the year of our Lord 1084 and settled there; under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they and their successors, learning from experience, gradually evolved a special form of hermit life, which was handed on to succeeding generations, not by the written word, but by example.

At the repeated request of the other deserts founded in imitation of that at Chartreuse, Guigues, the fifth Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, committed to writing the organization of their way of life; this they all

undertook to follow and imitate as the rule of observance and bond of love of their newborn family. Then, after the other Priors of Carthusian observance had for a long time sought the permission of the Priors and members of the Grande Chartreuse to hold a common Chapter in that House, during the priorate of Anthelm, the first General Chapter was assembled, to which all the Houses – the Grande Chartreuse included – pledged themselves in perpetuity. It was also at this time that the nuns of Prebayon spontaneously embraced the Carthusian life. Such were the beginnings of our Order.

2 As time went on, the General Chapter, in the light of experience and of new conditions that arose, adapted the form of Carthusian life, thus stabilizing and clarifying its structure. Since a mass of ordinances gradually accumulated from this continuous and careful adaptation of our customs, the General Chapter in 1271 promulgated the Ancient Statutes, made up of the fusion of these ordinances with the Customs of Guigues and the usages of the Grande Chartreuse into one coherent whole; in 1368 other documents were appended called the New Statutes; and in 1509 still further documents, known as the Third Compilation.

On the occasion of the Council of Trent the three collections then in existence were reduced to one body, named the New Collection of the Statutes, the third edition of which was approved in specific form by the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Innocent XI, *Iniunctum Nobis*; a new edition, however,

revised and brought into conformity with the prescriptions of the Code of Canon Law then in force, was approved, again in specific form by the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XI, *Umbratilem*.

3 At the command of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, an appropriate renewal of our way of life was undertaken according to the mind of the conciliar decrees, our separation from the world and the exercises proper to the contemplative life being most carefully preserved. As a result, the General Chapter of 1971 approved and promulgated the Renewed Statutes, which were revised and corrected with the co-operation of all the members of the Order.

To bring them into conformity with the Code of Canon Law, promulgated in 1983, these Statutes were again revised and divided into two parts, of which the first, containing Books 1 through 4, comprises the Constitutions of the Order. We, therefore, the humble brothers, Andrew, Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, and the other members of the General Chapter of 1989, approve and confirm these present Statutes.

We do not, however, wish the earlier Statutes, especially the more ancient, to be forgotten; rather we desire that, although they no longer have force of law, their spirit may live on in our present observance.

4 In conclusion, considering how God has graciously deigned from the beginning till the present day to foster, guide and protect the Carthusian family, supplying us in abundance with everything leading to our salvation and perfection, we exhort and

beseech through the divine mercy and goodness, all the professed and members of our Order to strive, each in his own vocation and task, to respond with all possible gratitude to such paternal generosity and benevolence on the part of the Lord, our God. This we will achieve, if we labor faithfully and carefully in the regular observance handed down to us by these Statutes, so that our exterior conduct being rightly and fittingly ordered and cultivated, we may the more ardently seek, the more quickly find, the more perfectly possess God himself in the depths of our souls; and thus, with the Lord's help, we may be enabled to attain to the perfection of love – which is the aim of our Profession and of the whole monastic life – and through it, to obtain beatitude eternal.

Chapter 2

Guigues' Praise of Life in Solitude

1 Those monks who have praised solitude wished to bear witness to a mystery, whose riches they had indeed experienced, but whose full penetration is reserved for heaven alone; for in solitude there is ever being enacted the great mystery of Christ and his Church, of which our Lady is the outstanding exemplar, but which lies hidden in its entirety in the depths of every faithful soul, where to its unfolding solitude greatly contributes. Hence, one should seek in the following chapter – taken from Guigues'

Customs — as it were, sparks of light thrown off from the soul of him, to whom the Holy Spirit entrusted the compilation of the first laws of our Order. For these words of our fifth Prior, while they do indeed interpret Sacred Scripture in the vein of ancient allegory, nevertheless, when rightly understood, attain sublime truth, which links us, who enjoy the same grace, with our early Fathers.

2 In praise of solitude, to which we have been called in a special way, we will say but little; since we know that it has already obtained enthusiastic recommendation from many saints and wise men of such great authority, that we are not worthy to follow in their steps.

3 For, as you know, in the Old Testament, and still more so in the New, almost all God's secrets of major importance and hidden meaning, were revealed to his servants, not in the turbulence of the crowd but in the silence of solitude; and you know, too, that these same servants of God, when they wished to penetrate more profoundly some spiritual truth, or to pray with greater freedom, or to become a stranger to things earthly in an ardent elevation of the soul, nearly always fled the hindrance of the multitude for the benefits of solitude.

4 Thus — to illustrate by some examples — when seeking a place for meditation, Isaac went out to a field alone; and this, one may assume, was his normal practice, and not an isolated incident. Likewise, it was when Jacob was alone, having dispatched his retinue

ahead of him, that he saw God face to face, and was favored with a blessing and a new and better name, thus receiving more in one moment of solitude than in a whole lifetime of social contact.

5 Scripture also tells us how Moses, Elijah and Elisha esteemed solitude, and how conducive they found it to an ever deeper penetration of the divine secrets; and note, too, what perils constantly surrounded them when among men, and how God visited them when alone.

6 Overwhelmed by the spectacle of God's indignation, Jeremiah, too, sat alone. He asked that his head might be a fountain, his eyes a spring for tears, to mourn the slain of his people; and that he might the more freely give himself to this holy work he exclaimed, "O, that I had in the desert a wayfarer's shelter!" clearly implying that he could not do this in a city, and thus indicating what an impediment companions are to the gift of tears. Jeremiah, also said, "It is good for a man to await the salvation of God in silence." — which longing solitude greatly favors; and he adds, "It is good also for the man who has borne the yoke from early youth," — a very consoling text for us, many of whom have embraced this vocation from early manhood; and yet again he speaks saying, "The solitary will sit and keep silence, for he will lift himself above himself." Here the prophet makes reference to nearly all that is best in our life: peace, solitude, silence, and ardent thirst for the things of heaven.

7 Later, as an example of the supreme patience and perfect humility of those formed in this school, Jeremiah speaks of, "Jeering of the multitude and cheek buffeted in scorn, bravely endured."

8 John the Baptist, greater than whom, the Savior tells us, has not risen among those born of women, is another striking example of the safety and value of solitude. Trusting not in the fact that divine prophecy had foretold that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, and that he would go before Christ the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah; nor in the fact that his birth had been miraculous, and that his parents were saints, he fled the society of men as something dangerous and chose the security of desert solitude: and, in actual fact, as long as he dwelt alone in the desert, he knew neither danger nor death. Moreover the virtue and merit he attained there are amply attested by his unique call to baptize Christ, and by his acceptance of death for the sake of justice. For, schooled in sanctity in solitude, he, alone of all men, became worthy to wash Christ — Christ who washes all things clean — and worthy, too, to undergo prison bonds and death itself in the cause of truth.

9 Jesus himself, God and Lord, whose virtue was above both the assistance of solitude and the hindrance of social contact, wished, nevertheless, to teach us by his example; so, before beginning to preach or work miracles, he was, as it were, proved by a period of fasting and temptation in the solitude of the desert; similarly, Scripture speaks of him

leaving his disciples and ascending the mountain alone to pray. Then there was that striking example of the value of solitude as a help to prayer, when Christ, just as his Passion was approaching, left even his Apostles to pray alone – a clear indication that solitude is to be preferred for prayer even to the company of Apostles.

10 We cannot here pass over in silence a mystery that merits our deepest consideration; the fact that this same Lord and Savior of mankind deigned to live as the first exemplar of our Carthusian life, when he retired alone to the desert and gave himself to prayer and the interior life; treating his body hard with fasting, vigils and other penances; and conquering the devil and his temptations with spiritual arms.

11 And now, dear reader, ponder and reflect on the great spiritual benefits derived from solitude by the holy and venerable Fathers, Paul, Anthony, Hilarion, Benedict, and others beyond number, and you will readily agree that for tasting the spiritual savor of psalmody; for penetrating the message of the written page; for kindling the fire of fervent prayer; for engaging in profound meditation; for losing oneself in mystic contemplation; for obtaining the heavenly dew of purifying tears – nothing is more helpful than solitude.

12 The reader should not rest content with the above examples in praise of our vocation; let him gather together many more, either from present experience or from the pages of Sacred Scripture.

Book One

The Cloister Monks

Chapter 3

The Cloister Monks

1 The founding Fathers of our type of monastic life were followers of a star from the East, the example, namely, of those early Eastern monks, who, with the memory of the Blood shed by the Lord not long before still burning within them, thronged to the deserts to lead lives of solitude and poverty of spirit. Accordingly, the cloister monks who seek the same goal must do as they did; they must retire to deserts remote from men and to cells removed from the noise of the world, and even of the monastery itself; and they must hold themselves, in a particular way, alien from all worldly news.

2 The monk, who continues faithfully in his cell and lets himself be molded by it, will gradually find that his whole life tends to become one continual prayer. But he cannot attain to this repose except at the cost of stern battle; both by living austere in fidelity to the law of the cross, and willingly accepting the tribulations by which God will try him as gold in the furnace. In this way, having been cleansed in the night of patience, and having been consoled and sustained by assiduous meditation of the Scriptures, and having been led by the Holy Spirit into the

depths of his own soul, he is now ready, not only to serve God, but even to cleave to him in love.

3 A certain amount of manual work should also be done, not merely for an hour's relaxation, but chiefly because this submission of the body to the common lot of mankind helps to conserve and nourish joy in spiritual things. Each monk, therefore, is given all the tools that he needs, to avoid his having to leave cell; since this is in no way permitted, except when the community is meeting in church or cloister, or on occasions laid down by rule. Nevertheless, in the measure that the way of life we have embraced is more austere, we are the more strictly bound to observe poverty in all we use; for we must imitate the poverty of Christ if we wish to share in his abundance.

4 Being united by love for the Lord, by prayer and by zeal for solitude, let the fathers show themselves to be true disciples of Christ, not merely in name but in deed; let them be zealous for mutual love, living in harmony, forbearing one another, and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, so that, together, they may with one voice glorify God.

5 Let the fathers keep in mind the close union in Christ that they have with the brothers, and remember that it is thanks to them that they are enabled to offer pure prayer to the Lord in the peace and solitude of their cells; let them remember, too, that their priesthood is for the service of the Church and, in particular, of those members close to them,

namely the brothers in their community. Outdoing one another in showing honor let fathers and brothers live in love, which is the bond of perfection, and the foundation as well as the summit of any life dedicated to God.

6 To all his sons, both fathers and brothers, it is the Prior's task to mirror the love of our heavenly Father, uniting them in Christ so as to form one family, and so that each of our Houses may really be what Guigues terms a Carthusian church.

7 All this finds its source and support in the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is the efficacious sign of unity. It is also the center and high point of our life, as well as the spiritual food for our exodus in solitude, by which through Christ we return to the Father. Throughout the entire liturgical cycle, Christ prays, both for us as our Priest, and in us as our Head; hence it is that we may hear our voices in him and his voice in us.

The night Office is, in accordance with our ancient practice, fairly long, though never beyond the limits of discretion; in this way, the psalmody nourishes our interior devotion and enables us to give ourselves in addition, without fatigue or loss of interest, to secret prayer of the heart.

8 It is an old custom of ours – in which we recognize a wonderful gift of God's loving kindness – that every cloister monk is called to the sacred ministry of the altar. In this we see the harmony, to which Paul VI bore witness, that exists

between the sacerdotal and monastic consecration; for, after the example of Christ, the monk likewise becomes both a priest and a sacrifice whose fragrance is pleasing to God; and through this association in the Lord's sacrifice, he shares in the unsearchable riches of his Heart.

9 Since our Order is totally dedicated to contemplation, it is our duty to maintain strictly our separation from the world; hence, we are excepted from all pastoral ministry – no matter how urgent the need for active apostolate is – so that we may fulfill our special role in the Mystical Body of Christ. Let Martha have her active ministry, very praiseworthy indeed, yet not without solicitude and agitation: nevertheless, let her bear with her sister, as she follows in the steps of Christ, in stillness knows that he is God, purifies her spirit, prays in the depths of her soul, seeks to hear what God may speak within her; and thus, tastes and sees – in the slender measure possible, though but faintly in a dark mirror – how good the Lord is; and also pours forth prayer both for Martha herself and for all who, like her, labor actively in the service of the Lord. In this Mary has not only a most just judge but also a very faithful advocate – the Lord himself – who deigned not alone to defend but even to praise her way of life, saying, "Mary has chosen the best part, which shall not be taken from her;" with these words he excused her from involving herself in the solicitude and agitation of Martha, however pious and excellent they might be.

Chapter 4

The Keeping of Cell and Silence

1 Our principal endeavor and goal is to devote ourselves to the silence and solitude of cell. This is holy ground, a place where, as a man with his friend, the Lord and his servant often speak together; there is the faithful soul frequently united with the Word of God; there is the bride made one with her spouse; there is earth joined to heaven, the divine to the human. The journey, however, is long, and the way dry and barren, that must be traveled to attain the fount of water, the land of promise.

2 Therefore the dweller in cell should be diligently and carefully on his guard against contriving or accepting occasions for going out, other than those normally prescribed; rather, let him consider the cell as as necessary for his salvation and life, as water for fish and the sheepfold for sheep. For if he gets into the habit of going out of cell frequently and for trivial reasons it will quickly become hateful to him; as Augustine expressed it, "For lovers of this world, there is no harder work than not working." On the other hand, the longer he lives in cell, the more gladly will he do so, as long as he occupies himself in it usefully and in an orderly manner, reading, writing, reciting psalms, praying, meditating, contemplating and working. Let him make a practice of resorting,

from time to time, to a tranquil listening of the heart, that allows God to enter through all its doors and passages. In this way with God's help, he will avoid the dangers that often lie in wait for the solitary; such as following too easy a path in cell and meriting to be numbered among the lukewarm.

3 The fruit that silence brings is known to him who has experienced it. In the early stages of our Carthusian life we may find silence a burden; however, if we are faithful, there will gradually be born within us of our silence itself something, that will draw us on to still greater silence. To attain this, our rule is not to speak to one another without the President's permission.

4 Love for our brothers should show itself firstly in respect for their solitude; should we have permission to speak about some matter, let us do so as briefly as possible.

9 Those who neither are, nor aspire to becoming, members of our Order are not to be allowed to stay in our cells.

10 Each year for eight days we devote ourselves with greater zeal to the quiet of cell and recollection. Fittingly, our custom is to do this on the anniversary of our Profession.

11 God has led us into solitude to speak to our heart. Let our heart then be a living altar from which there constantly ascends before God pure prayer, with which all our acts should be imbued.

Chapter 5

Occupations in Cell

1 The cloister monks, bound by the divine law of work in the discharge of their duties, fly idleness, the enemy, the ancients tell us, of the soul. Humbly, therefore, and with alacrity they carry out all the tasks that a poor and solitary life demands, but in such a way that everything is ordered to that ministry of divine contemplation to which they are wholly dedicated. For, in addition to manual labor of different kinds, our quota of work comprises all the duties arising out of our state of life, particularly those related to the divine worship or to the study of theology.

2 First of all, lest we uselessly fritter away our religious life in cell, we should, at once with zeal and discretion, devote ourselves to studies fitting to us; and this, not from an itching desire for learning, nor from a wish to publish books, but because wisely ordered reading endows the mind with greater steadiness and provides a foundation for the contemplation of heavenly things. For they are mistaken, who think that they can easily attain to interior union with God, while having previously neglected the study of the Word of God, or later abandoned it altogether. Intent, then, on the rich substance of truth rather than the froth of words, let us scrutinize the divine mysteries with that desire to

know which both springs from love and in turn inflames love.

3 By working with his hands the monk practices humility; he also brings his whole body under control so as better to attain stability of mind. Accordingly, manual labor is permitted at the established times (46.8). This work should be genuinely useful, for it is not fitting that we should spend precious time given to us for glorifying God on work that is superfluous or vain. From this period of time we do not exclude the usefulness of reading and prayer; indeed, we are exhorted to have constant recourse during work to short and, as it were, ejaculatory prayers. It sometimes happens also that the very weight of our work acts as a sort of anchor to the ebb and flow of our thought, thus enabling our heart to remain fixed on God without mental fatigue.

4 Work is a service that unites us to Christ who came not to be served but to serve. They are worthy of praise who themselves take care of the furniture, tools and other things they use in cell, so as to lessen the burden on the brothers, as far as they can. But all have the duty of keeping the cell tidy and clean.

5 The Prior can always impose on a father some task or service for the common good. This we accept willingly and with the joy of love; for on the day of our Profession we asked to be received as the most humble servant of all. When a cloister monk is entrusted with some task, it should always be such as can be done with liberty of spirit, and without anxiety

concerning profit or meeting a deadline. For it is fitting that the solitary, whose attention is fixed not so much on the work itself as on the goal he is aiming at, should at all times be able to keep his heart watchful. However, that a monk may remain tranquil and healthy in solitude, it will often be advisable that he have a certain liberty in arranging his work.

6 As a normal thing, the fathers should not be asked to work outside their cells, especially not in the obedience of the brothers. If, however, it does happen that a group of the fathers are deputed to work together, they can speak among themselves of matters useful for the work, but they may not speak to passers-by.

7 Our activity, therefore, springs always from a source within us, after the manner of Christ, who at all times worked with the Father in such a way that the Father dwelt in him and himself did the works. In this way, we will follow Jesus in the hidden and humble life of Nazareth, either praying to the Father in secret, or obediently laboring in his presence.

Chapter 6

The Observance of Enclosure

1 From ancient times it has been the mind of our Order that our absolute dedication to God be

expressed and sustained by a great strictness of enclosure. How pressing the need must be before one goes out, can be sufficiently gauged from the fact that the Prior of the Grande Chartreuse never goes beyond the boundaries of the desert of Chartreuse. And since one and the same rule of life should be observed by all who profess it in a uniform and like manner, it follows that we, who have adopted the Carthusian ideal, whence we bear the name of Carthusians, do not readily admit exceptions. If, nevertheless, necessity compels us to go out, the permission of the Reverend Father must always be sought, except in a case of urgency and in the other cases provided for in the Statutes.

4 Rigorous observance of enclosure would however be merely pharisaical, were it not the outward expression of that purity of heart, to which alone is it promised to see God. To attain this, great abnegation is required, especially of the natural curiosity that men feel about human affairs. We should not allow our minds to wander through the world in search of news and gossip; on the contrary, our part is to remain hidden in the shelter of the Lord's presence.

5 We should therefore avoid all secular books or periodicals that could disturb our interior silence. To introduce newspapers treating of politics into the cloister in any way would be particularly contrary to the spirit of our Order. Indeed, the Prior should exhort the monks to be very circumspect in the matter of secular reading; but, of course, this exhortation presupposes a mature mind that is master of itself,

and knows how to embrace honestly all that follows from the best part that it has chosen — the part of sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to his words.

6 The heart, however, is not narrowed but enlarged by intimacy with God, so that it is able to embrace in him the hopes and difficulties of the world, and the great causes of the Church, of which it is fitting that monks should have some knowledge. Nevertheless our concern for the welfare of men, if it is true, should express itself, not by the satisfying of our curiosity, but by our remaining closely united to Christ. Let each one, therefore, listen to the Spirit within him, and determine what he can admit into his mind without harm to interior converse with God.

7 But if, by chance, we come to know something of events in the world, we must be careful not to pass it on to others; news of the world should rather be left where it is heard; it is for the Prior to tell his monks those things, especially concerning the Church and her needs, which they ought to know.

8 We are not to seek conversation with members of the Order or others who sometimes come to our House, unless there is a real need. For making or receiving visits without good cause is of no advantage to the monk who is firmly attached to solitude and silence, and thirsts for repose.

9 Since it is written, "Honor your father and your mother," we relax a little the rigor of our enclosure in order to receive the visit of our parents and other relations each year for two days, which may be

separate or continuous. But apart from this, we avoid visits from friends and conversations with seculars, unless indeed, some inescapable necessity is imposed on us by the love of Christ: for we know that God is worthy to be offered this sacrifice, and that it will be of greater profit to men than our words.

14 In canonically established Houses of the Order, strict enclosure is observed according to the tradition of the Order. Women can not be admitted within the cloister. When we speak with women, we observe that modesty which befits us as monks.

15 Let the monks ever bear in mind that the chastity they professed for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is to be valued as a gift of grace of surpassing worth. For it frees their hearts in a particular way, enabling them to cling more easily to God with undivided love, and in so doing to evoke that hidden nuptial union, established by God and to be fully revealed in the future world, by which the Church has Christ as her only Spouse. Striving, then, to be faithful to what they have promised, they should put their faith in the words of the Lord; and trusting in God's help rather than presuming on their own strength, practice mortification and custody of the senses. Let them trust also in Mary, who by her humility and her virginity merited to become the Mother of God.

16 What benefit, what divine delight, solitude and the silence of the hermitage bring to those who love them, only those who have experienced them can tell. Here strong men can return into themselves as much

as they wish, and abide there; here they can with eager earnestness cultivate the seeds of virtue, and with gladness eat of the fruits of paradise. Here is acquired that eye, by whose serene gaze the Spouse is wounded with love; that eye, pure and clean, by which God is seen. Here the solitary is occupied in busy leisure, and at rest in tranquil activity. Here God rewards his athletes with the longed-for prize: peace that the world does not know, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 7

Fasting and Abstinence

1 Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps; this we do by accepting the hardships and anxieties of this life, by embracing poverty with the freedom of God's sons, and by renouncing our own will. Moreover, in accordance with monastic tradition it is for us also to follow Christ in his fast in the desert, treating the body hard and making it obey us, so that the mind may flame with longing for God.

2 The fathers keep abstinence once a week, normally on Friday. On that day they content themselves with bread and water. On certain days and at certain times of the year, they observe the fast of the Order, and take only one meal a day (cf. chap. 48).

3 We should practice mortification of the flesh not merely out of obedience to the Statutes, but primarily to be freed from the tendencies of our lower nature and enabled to follow the Lord more readily and cheerfully. But if, in a particular case, or with the passage of time, someone finds that any of the aforesaid observances is beyond his strength, and that he is hindered rather than helped in the following of Christ, let him in a filial spirit arrange some suitable measure of relaxation with the Prior, at least for a time. But, ever mindful of Christ who calls, let him see what he can do; and what he is unable to give to God by common observance, let him offer in some other way, denying himself and taking up his cross daily.

4 Novices, therefore, should be accustomed gradually to the fasts and abstinences of the Order, so that, under the guidance of the Novice-Master, they may prudently and safely tend towards the rigor of complete observance. He should teach them to be specially watchful not to make future fasting a pretext for over-indulgence at meals. So, let them learn to chasten by the spirit the misdeeds of the flesh, and to carry in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in their bodies.

5 In accordance with the practice introduced by our first Fathers and ever since observed with remarkable zeal, we exclude all eating and taking of meat from our way of life. This abstinence is to be observed as a distinguishing mark of the Order and as a sign of

hermit austerity, in which, with God's help, we intend to persevere.

8 No one is to indulge in penitential practices over and above those prescribed by the Statutes without the knowledge and approval of the Prior. But, if the Prior wishes someone to have some additional food or sleep or anything else whatsoever, or, on the contrary, if he wishes to impose something difficult and burdensome, we have no right to refuse, lest, in resisting him, we are found to be in reality resisting not him but God, whose place he holds in our regard. For though many and diverse are the things that we observe, we cannot hope that any of them will profit us without the blessing of obedience. *

Chapter 8

The Novice

1 When aspirants, aflame with divine love and longing to leave the world and lay hold of eternal realities, come to us, let us receive them in the same spirit. It is therefore vitally necessary that novices should find in the House where they are to be trained an example of regular observance and piety, of silence and solitude, and likewise of fraternal love; if this example is lacking, there is little hope of them being able to persevere in our life.

2 However, candidates who come to us are to be examined carefully and prudently, in accordance with the warning of the Apostle John, "Test the spirits, to see whether they are of God." For it is indeed certain that the progress or deterioration of the Order, both in the quality and number of its members, chiefly depends on the good or bad reception and formation of novices. Priors, therefore, should cautiously inquire about their family, their past life, and their fitness of mind and body; on which matter it will be found helpful to consult experienced doctors, who are familiar with our way of life. Among the qualities, with which candidates for life in solitude should be particularly endowed, a sound and balanced judgement is of prime importance.

3 It is not our custom to receive novices before they have attained their twentieth year; further, of the applicants, only those are to be accepted who, in the judgement of the Prior and of the majority of the community, are sufficiently gifted with piety, maturity, and physical strength, to bear the burdens of the Order; they should, of course, have an aptitude for solitude, but also for life in common. *

4 Great caution must be shown in the reception of persons somewhat advanced in age, as they may have difficulty in adapting to our observances and way of life. For this reason we do not wish anyone over forty five years of age to be received without the express permission of the General Chapter or the Reverend Father. This permission is also required for the admission to the novitiate of religious who are in

vows in another Institute. If the religious is perpetually professed, the Reverend Father must have the consent of the General Council. For the admission of a candidate who has been under vows in another Institute, we are advised to consult the Reverend Father. *

6 When someone comes to us wishing to become a cloister monk, he is first questioned in private as to his motive and intention in wanting this. And if he seems to be truly seeking God alone, he is examined on certain points that are then necessary to know: has he had a literary education sufficient for a monk destined for the priesthood? can he sing? is he under any canonical impediment? A postulant, moreover, cannot begin his novitiate unless he has a sufficient knowledge of Latin.

7 This having been done, the purpose of our life is put before the candidate, as also the glory that we hope will be given to God by our sharing in the work of redemption, and how good and joyous it is to leave all things and hold fast to Christ; but the hard and austere things are also presented before him, so that every aspect of the life that he wishes to embrace is, as far as possible, exposed to his view. If, in face of this, he remains unperturbed and readily promises, on account of the words of the Lord, to walk this difficult path, desiring to die with Christ and to live with Christ, then, as a last counsel, let him be advised to make peace, in the spirit of the Gospel, with all who have anything against him.

8 The postulancy lasts between three months and a year. On an appointed day the postulant is proposed to the community, which on a subsequent day will vote on his admission.

11 The novice is to entrust to the Prior all the money and other possessions he may perhaps have brought with him, so that not he but the Prior, or someone appointed by the Prior, may take care of them, as if on deposit; for the novice has now left all things to follow Christ. Moreover, we neither require nor request anything whatever from those who wish to enter our Order.

13 The novitiate lasts for two years; which period the Prior can prolong, but not beyond six months.

16 Let not the novice be worn down by the temptations which are wont to beset the followers of Christ in the desert; nor let him put his trust in his own strength, but in the Lord, who has called him and who will bring to perfection the work he has begun.

Chapter 9

The Novice-Master

1 The formation of the novices is to be entrusted to a Novice-Master, who should be a monk outstanding

for prudence, brotherly love and regular observance; endowed with the necessary maturity and experience of the Order; a notable cultivator of contemplative repose and cell. He should be one who radiates love of our vocation, has an understanding of the diversity of spirits, and is in open-minded sympathy with the needs of youth. Moreover, while whole-heartedly zealous for the spiritual perfection of his charges, he must take care that he knows how to excuse defects in others. *

3 Let the Novice-Master be careful and vigilant in the reception of novices and put quality before number. For to become a Carthusian in fact as well as in name the mere wish is not sufficient; in addition to love for solitude and for our life, a certain special aptitude of mind and body is required, from which the existence of a call from God can be known. The Novice-Master, to whom it belongs in the first place to examine and test the candidates, is to be attentive to these signs. Nor should he be ignorant of the fact that certain defects which at first may seem perhaps of little moment, after Profession more often grow and increase. True, to refuse someone or send him away is a matter of great importance and is not to be decided without mature reflection; on the other hand to accept or to continue to keep, a candidate, when it is manifest he lacks the necessary qualities, is false — we almost said cruel — compassion. Let the Novice-Master be extremely careful that the novice decides concerning his vocation with complete freedom, and let him not put the slightest pressure on him to make Profession.

4 At suitable times the Novice-Master will visit the novice and instruct him in the observances of the Order that a novice should know. He will take great care that the novice attentively studies our Statutes. It is also the Novice-Master's task to form the conduct of the novice, to direct him in his spiritual exercises, and to apply suitable remedies to his temptations. He will be solicitous that the love of his charges for Christ and the Church grows daily. Although, like our holy Father Bruno, he should have the tenderness of a mother, it is fitting that he should also show the vigor of a father, so that the training of the novices may be both monastic and virile. Above all, he should let the novices experience solitary life in cell and its austerity, and he should teach them to give spiritual help to one another in a spirit of genuine and simple love. *

5 To apply himself to study and manual work is indeed very helpful for the novice; however, it is not enough for a monk to be occupied in his cell and to persevere there in a commendable manner till death. Something more is required: a spirit of prayer. For if life with Christ and intimate union of the soul with God were lacking, faithfulness to ceremonies and regular observance would be of little profit, and our life could be justly compared to a body without a soul. Accordingly the Novice-Master is to have nothing more at heart than to inculcate this spirit of prayer, and develop it with discernment, so that the novices after Profession may draw daily more and more close to God and so attain the end of their vocation.

6 The Novice-Master is to endeavor always to return to the sources of all Christian life, to the teaching of monastic tradition, and to the original inspiration of our Order. He should fully explain the spirit of our holy Father Bruno, and uphold the authentic traditions, that have been observed from the beginning of the Order, and were collected principally by Guigues.

10 In the second year of their novitiate, the novices are to start their studies; these should be carefully ordered to a formation at once monastic and priestly according to the directives of the Program of Studies. Monks should not be advanced to the priesthood before they have attained to a human and spiritual maturity sufficient to enable them more fully to participate in this gift of God.

Chapter 10

Profession

1 The monk, already by baptism dead to sin and consecrated to God, is by Profession still more totally dedicated to the Father and set free from the world, in order to be able to strive more directly towards perfect love; linked with the Lord in firm and stable pact, he shares in the mystery of the Church's indissoluble union with Christ, and bears witness to

the world of that new life won for us by Christ's redemption. *

2 Towards the end of the second year of his novitiate, the novice, if he seems suitable, is to be presented to the community, who, some days later and after serious examination of the matter will vote on his admission (cf. 8.9). On his part, the novice is to bind himself only with perfect liberty and mature deliberation.

4 The first Profession is made for three years. At the end of that time, it is for the Prior, after the vote of the community (8.9), to admit the junior professed to spend two years with the solemn professed. In that case, the monk will renew his temporary Profession for two years. For one of these years, normally the second, he is to be free from scholastic studies, so that he may prepare himself with greater reflection for solemn vows.

6 Since the disciple, if he wishes to follow Christ, must renounce all things, including self, a monk about to make solemn Profession must part with everything he then possesses; and, if he wishes, he can at the same time dispose of property to which he has a claim. No member of the Order is to ask for anything at all from the possessions of a temporary professed, even with a view to some pious work or to making a charitable donation to anyone whatever; rather, he is to dispose of his property freely and as he pleases.

9 The future professed is himself to write the Profession formula in the vernacular, as follows:

"I, Brother N., promise stability, obedience, and conversion of my life, before God, his saints, and the relics belonging to this hermitage, which was built in honor of God, the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and Saint John the Baptist, in the presence of Dom N., Prior."

In the case of a first temporary Profession after "promise" the words "for three years" are inserted, and when this Profession is extended, the period of the extension is indicated; in the case of a solemn Profession the word "perpetual" is added.

10 One should note that all our hermitages are dedicated in the first place to the Blessed Mary ever Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, our principal heavenly patrons. The certificate of every Profession, signed by the professed himself and the Prior that received his vows, and with the day and year noted on it, is to be kept in the archives of the House.

11 The one received knows himself by the Profession made to be so much a stranger to the things of the world that he has no power over anything at all, not even over his own self, without the permission of his Prior. For, as all who wish to live according to a rule must observe obedience with great zeal, we, in the measure that the way of life we have embraced is more exacting and more austere, must observe it the more ardently and carefully; lest if – which God avert! – obedience is lacking, such great labors may well go unrewarded. It is for this reason that Samuel

says, "Obedience is better than any sacrifice, and to listen to God than the fat of rams."

13 Following the example of Jesus Christ, who came to do the will of his Father, and who taking the form of a servant, learned obedience through what he suffered, the monk subjects himself by Profession to the Prior, as God's representative, and thus strives to attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Book Two, Chapter 11

The Lay Monks

1 From the very beginning, our Order, like a body whose members have different functions, has been composed of fathers and brothers; both are monks and thus share in the same vocation, although in different ways: and it is this diversity that enables the Carthusian family to fulfill its role in the Church with greater perfection. The first of these, about whom we have been speaking so far, are the cloister monks, who live in the seclusion of their cells, and who are priests or destined to be priests. The others, about whom, with God's help, we are now about to speak, are the lay monks, who, while also devoting themselves to solitude, nevertheless give more time to

manual labor, and so spend their lives in the service of the Lord. To the first brothers, styled converse brothers, in the course of time was added another kind of brother, namely, the donates, who do not take vows, but for the love of Christ give themselves to the Order in a mutually binding pledge; since they lead a monastic life, these too are called monks.

2 Just as the first Fathers of our Order followed in the footsteps of those monks of old, who led lives of solitude and poverty of spirit, so too, our first brothers, Andrew and Guérin, determined to follow a similar ideal. The brothers, therefore, both converse and donates, should not leave the monastic enclosure except on rare occasions when necessity demands; they should also diligently keep themselves strangers to all worldly news; finally, their cells should be so secluded that, once within, the door being closed, and all cares and problems left without, they can tranquilly pray to the Father in secret.

3. The brothers imitate the hidden life of Jesus of Nazareth, when carrying out the daily tasks of the House, they praise God by their work; in so doing, they consecrate the world to the glory of the Creator and put the gifts of nature to the service of the contemplative life. However, during the times set apart for solitary prayer, and when present at the Sacred Liturgy, God alone is their sole concern. Accordingly, the places where they work, like those where they live, should be so arranged as to be conducive to interior recollection; and, even though furnished with what is necessary and useful, it should

be quite apparent that they are a home where God dwells and not mere secular buildings.

4. Bound together by love for the Lord, by prayer, by zeal for solitude, and by the service of work, the brothers under the guidance of the Procurator are united into one. Let them, therefore, show themselves to be true disciples of Christ, not merely in name but in deed; let them be zealous for mutual love, living in harmony, forbearing one another, and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; so that they may be of one heart and soul.

5. Observing their own particular form of solitary life, the brothers by their work provide for the material needs of the House which have been entrusted to them in a special way. They thus enable the cloister monks to devote their time more freely to the silence of the cell. In this way, both brothers and fathers, by conforming themselves to him who did not come to be served but to serve, manifest in different ways the riches of a life totally dedicated to God in solitude.

United in one body, these two forms of life have different graces; but there is a communication of spiritual benefits between them, and each one complements the other. By this harmony, the charism entrusted by the Spirit to our Father St. Bruno reaches its full expression.

6 As the fathers know, the sacred Orders that they have received are less a dignity than a call to service. The ministerial priesthood and the baptismal

priesthood of the laity are ordered to one another; they both participate in the unique priesthood of Christ. It is for each one therefore, to persevere in the state in which he was called, tending unswervingly to the single goal of our vocation.

7 To all his sons, both fathers and brothers, it is the Prior's task to mirror the love of our heavenly Father, uniting them in Christ so as to form one family, and so that each of our Houses may really be what Guigues terms a Carthusian church.

8 All this finds its source and support in the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice which is the efficacious sign of unity. It is also the center and high point of our life, as well as being the spiritual food for our exodus in solitude, by which through Christ we return to the Father. Throughout the entire liturgical cycle Christ prays, both for us as our Priest, and in us as our Head.

9. And since following in the steps of our founders is the safest way to God, let the brothers keep before them the example of the first converse brothers of the Grande Chartreuse, who, before any written rule existed, gave to their life its structure and spirit. With them in mind and with joyful heart, St. Bruno wrote as follows:

"Of you, dearest lay brothers, I say: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,' because I see the richness of his mercy towards you. For we rejoice that the mighty God himself — since you are ignorant of letters — is writing directly on your hearts, not only

love but also knowledge of his holy law. Indeed, what you love, what you know, is shown by what you do. It is clear that you are wisely harvesting Sacred Scripture's sweetest and most life-giving fruit, since you observe with great care and zeal true obedience. For true obedience, which is the carrying out of God's commands, the key to the whole spiritual life, and the guarantee of its authenticity, is never found without deep humility and outstanding patience, and is always accompanied by pure love for God and true charity. Continue, therefore, my brothers, in the state that you have attained."

Chapter 12

Solitude

1 Our supreme quest and goal is to find God in solitude and silence. There, indeed, as a man with his friend, do the Lord and his servant often speak together; there is the faithful soul frequently united with the Word of God; there is the bride made one with her Spouse; there is earth joined to heaven, the divine to the human. Commonly, however, the journey is long, and the way dry and barren, that must be traveled to attain the fount of living water.

2 The brothers, whose solitude is frequently without the protection afforded by the seclusion of the cloister and the custody of cell, should certainly seek exterior

solitude with unremitting zeal; yet exterior solitude profits nothing unless, at all times, even when at work, it is accompanied, although without interior tension, by solitude of mind.

3 Whenever the brothers are not occupied with the Divine Office in church or with work in their obediences, they always return to cell as to a very sure and tranquil haven. Here, they remain quietly and without noise, as far as possible, and follow with faithfulness the order of the day, doing everything in the presence of God and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, through him giving thanks to God the Father. Here they occupy themselves usefully in reading or meditation — especially on Sacred Scripture, the food of the soul — or, in the measure possible, they give themselves to prayer, neither contriving nor accepting occasions for going out, other than those normally prescribed or arising from obedience. For, from time to time, human nature will seek to evade the silence of solitude and the quiet of prayer; for which reason St. Augustine remarks, "For lovers of this world, there is no harder work than not working." If beneficial from a spiritual point of view, the brothers may occasionally, and with the Procurator's consent, undertake some light work in cell.

5 Each year the converse brothers remain in the peace and solitude of their cells for eight days, which may be either continuous or divided into two periods; this the donates do for at least three days. Moreover,

once a month, each brother, if he wishes, may spend a normal working day in this type of recollection.

6 Love for our brothers should show itself firstly in respect for their solitude; should we have permission to speak with them in cell about some matter let us avoid idle talk.

8 The better to obtain the end to which they are called, the brothers' work should, as far as possible, be so distributed that each one works alone, even though there may be several brothers in the same obedience.

9 After the evening Angelus is rung, the brothers do not come to the cell of the Prior or the Procurator, unless summoned. From this time on, those alone, should remain with guests, whose duty it is to look after them. When someone is in another's cell or elsewhere, on hearing the evening Angelus bell, he should immediately leave, unless he has special instructions to remain longer.

10 What benefit, what divine delight, solitude and the silence of the desert bring to those who love them, only those who have experienced them can tell. Here God rewards his athletes for the exertion of the contest with the longed-for prize, peace that the world does not know, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 13

Enclosure

1 Having left the world forever in order to stand continually before the divine majesty, and being mindful of this our special task, we view with horror the thought of going out and traveling about through town and country. However, such rigorous observance of enclosure would profit nothing, unless through it we tended to that purity of heart, to which alone is it promised to see God. To attain this, great abnegation is required, especially of the natural curiosity that men feel about human affairs. We should not allow our minds to wander through the world in search of news and gossip; on the contrary, our part is to remain hidden in the shelter of the Lord's presence.

5 When a brother is sent to a place nearby, he does not accept food or drink or hospitality from anyone, unless he has special instructions to do so, or is compelled by some unavoidable and unexpected necessity.

6 Let the Porter be kind to all and religious in his bearing; and let him entirely abstain from useless conversation; so doing, he will give good and profitable example to seculars. In dealing with those whom he judges should be admitted, or politely refused, his words should be gracious but very few. These rules apply likewise to anyone who may be taking his place.

7 Since it is written, "Honor your father and your mother," we relax a little our separation from the world in favor of our parents and other relations, whom we allow to visit us each year for two days, which may be taken separately or together. But apart from this, we avoid visits from friends and conversations with seculars, unless indeed, some inescapable necessity is imposed on us by the love of Christ: for we know that God is worthy to be offered this sacrifice, and that it will be of greater profit to men than our words.

9 Let us likewise remember that seculars do not expect a Carthusian to write them about idle news or public affairs; so let all our correspondence be done in the presence of God and in union with Christ, avoiding the empty and the profane.

14 The noble charism of celibacy, which is a pure gift of divine grace, brings to our hearts an unrivaled freedom, and enables each one of us, who have been taken possession of by Christ, to spend himself totally for him. This gift leaves no room for narrowness of mind or seeking for self-advantage; rather, in response to the irresistible invitation of the love beyond words that Christ has shown us, it should so increase love in us, that the soul is inflamed to an ever more perfect sacrifice of self.

15 In solitude, then, let the monk's soul be like a tranquil lake, whose waters well up from the purest sources of the spirit and, untroubled by news coming

from outside, like a clear mirror reflect one image only, that of Christ.

Chapter 14

Silence

1 God has led his servant into solitude to speak to his heart; but he alone who listens in silence hears the whisper of the gentle breeze that reveals the presence of the Lord. In the early stages of our Carthusian life, we may find silence a toilsome burden; however, if we are faithful, there will gradually be born within us of our silence itself something that will draw us on to still greater silence.

2 On this account, the brothers may not speak indiscriminately of what they wish, or with whom they wish, or for as long as they wish; with few words and with quiet voice, they may speak about matters affecting their work; but apart from this, they may not speak without permission either to monks or to strangers.

3 Since, therefore, the observance of silence is of vital importance in the life of a brother, this rule must be kept with great care. However, in doubtful cases not foreseen by the law, let each one prudently judge according to conscience and the needs of the moment, whether, and to what extent, it is lawful to speak.

4 Devotion to the Spirit dwelling within them, and love for their brothers, both require that, when it is lawful to speak they should weigh their words well and be watchful of the extent to which they speak; for a long and uselessly protracted conversation is thought to grieve the Holy Spirit more and cause more dissipation than a few words, that are indeed against the rule, but are quickly cut short. Often a conversation, that was useful in the beginning, soon becomes useless and, finally, worthy of blame.

7 On Sundays and solemnities, and also on days specially set apart for recollection, they observe silence with special care and remain in cell. Likewise, every day from the evening Angelus to Prime, throughout the monastery should reign perfect silence, which the brothers may not break, unless in a case of true and urgent necessity; for, as appears from the examples of Scripture and the traditions of the monks of old, this time of the night is specially conducive to recollection and meeting with God.

10 Let the brothers not presume to speak without permission to seculars who approach them, or to chat with them; they may merely return their greeting, as also that of those they happen to meet, and, if questioned, briefly respond and excuse themselves as not having permission for further speech with them.

11 Observance of silence and interior recollection require special vigilance on the part of the brothers, since many occasions for speaking come their way; in

this they cannot attain perfection, unless they diligently strive to live always in the presence of God.

Chapter 15

Work

1 At appointed times, the brothers apply themselves to the work of providing for the needs of the House, in order that, in union with Jesus, a workman's son, they may glorify God the Father and associate the entire man in the work of redemption. The sweat and fatigue of their labor are a participation in the cross of Christ, whereby, through the light of the resurrection, they become sharers in the new heavens and the new earth.

2 Ancient monastic tradition assures us that such work contributes greatly to the practice of those virtues from which flows perfect love. Human labor, by fostering a happy equilibrium between mind and body, helps the brothers to profit more from solitude.

3 The brothers manage their obediences, and everything belonging to them, in accordance with the directions of the Prior and the Procurator, applying to the work committed to them their natural powers and gifts of grace. By this obedience their liberty of sons of God is developed, and by their willing service they

contribute to the building up of the Body of Christ in accordance with God's plan.

4 The Procurator in regard to the brothers, as also the head of an obedience in regard to his assistant, should exercise authority in a spirit of service, thereby portraying the love with which God loves them; they should readily consult them or give them a hearing, keeping for themselves, however, the right finally to decide and order what is to be done; thus, in the discharge of their duties, all cooperate together through an obedience that is active and entirely penetrated by love.

5 In union with Christ Jesus, who, though he was rich, yet for our sake became poor, the brothers always preserve a spirit of poverty in their work; in particular they avoid all waste and watch that tools are not lost; likewise they are very careful about the proper maintenance of all equipment, machinery especially.

17 The Infirmarian, and likewise the Cook and those whose duty it is to provide for the special needs of the sick, should surround with love those afflicted with illness; and more than that, they should see the suffering Christ mirrored in the suffering patients and rejoice that, in them, they are able to serve and console Christ himself.

18 The aim of the brother's life is, above all else, that, united with Christ, he may abide in his love; hence, whether in solitude of cell, or in the midst of his work,

aided by the grace of his vocation, he should strive whole-heartedly to have at all times his mind on God.

Chapter 17

The Novice

1 When aspirants, aflame with divine love and longing to leave the world and lay hold of eternal realities, come to us, let us receive them in the same spirit. It is therefore vitally necessary that novices should find in the House where they are to be trained an example of regular observance and piety, of silence and solitude, and likewise of fraternal love; if this example is lacking, there is little hope of them being able to persevere in our life.

2 However, candidates who come to us are to be examined carefully and prudently, in accordance with the warning of the Apostle John, "Test the spirits, to see whether they are of God." For it is indeed certain that the progress or deterioration of the Order, both in the quality and number of its members, chiefly depends on the good or bad reception and formation of novices. Priors, therefore, should cautiously inquire about their family, their past life, and their fitness of mind and body; on which matter it will be found helpful to consult experienced doctors, who are familiar with our way of life. Among the qualities, with which candidates for life in solitude should be

particularly endowed, a sound and balanced judgement is of prime importance.

3 It is not our custom to receive novices before they have attained their twentieth year; further, of the applicants, only those are to be accepted who, in the judgement of the Prior and of the majority of the community, are sufficiently gifted with piety, maturity, and physical strength, to bear the burdens of the Order; they should, of course, have an aptitude for solitude, but also for life in common. *

4 Great caution must be shown in the reception of persons somewhat advanced in age, as they may have difficulty in adapting to our observances and way of life. No candidate for the brother's life should therefore be received after reaching forty-five years of age, without the express permission of the General Chapter or the Reverend Father. This permission is also required for the admission to the novitiate of religious who are in vows in another Institute. If the religious is perpetually professed, the Reverend Father must have the consent of the General Council. For the admission of a candidate who has been under vows in another Institute, we are advised to consult the Reverend Father. *

6 When someone comes to us, seeking to become one of our brothers, he must be free from all legal impediment, moved by a right intention, and capable of carrying the burdens of the Order; hence he should be duly questioned about everything necessary or

helpful to know in forming a correct judgement concerning his admission.

7 This having been done, the purpose of our life is put before the candidate, as also the glory that we hope will be given to God by our sharing in the work of redemption, and how good and joyous it is to leave all things and hold fast to Christ; but the hard and austere things are also presented before him, so that every aspect of the life that he wishes to embrace is, as far as possible, exposed to his view. If, in face of this, he remains unperturbed and readily promises, on account of the words of the Lord, to walk this difficult path, desiring to die with Christ and to live with Christ, then, as a last counsel, let him be advised to make peace, in the spirit of the Gospel, with all who have anything against him.

8 If, after the aspirant has been some days with us, the Prior decides that he may be received, the Novice-Master will himself give him the postulant's mantle. The postulant will be employed in various types of work and obediences, and assist at the Divine Office, so as to familiarize himself with his new life as quickly as possible. Before beginning the novitiate, he will be tested for at least three months in the House, but not beyond a year.

9 If the postulant is found to be humble, obedient, chaste, trustworthy, religious, well-balanced temperamentally, suited to solitude, and hard working, then he can be proposed to the community, including the perpetual donates. This presentation

should be made by the Vicar, the Procurator and the Novice-Master, who should clearly and accurately set forth the postulant's good qualities and defects; and if the whole community, or a majority of it, judge that he should be received, it is for the Prior — after the postulant has had at least four days of recollection — to receive him in the monastic habit into the fellowship of the Order.

10 The novice, since he intends to leave all things and follow Christ, is to entrust to the Prior all the money and other possessions he may perhaps have brought with him, so that not he but the Prior, or someone appointed by the Prior, may take care of them. We neither require nor request anything whatever from those who wish to enter our Order.

11 A novitiate done for the lay monks is not valid for the cloister monks, nor the other way round.

12 The novitiate lasts for two years. It can be prolonged by the Prior, but not by more than six months. The brother candidate will choose, between the life of converse and that of donate, at the latest before the second year of novitiate. He makes this decision himself and with perfect freedom. *

13 When a candidate in perpetual vows comes to us from another religious Institute, he completes the postulancy as specified above; then if he is suitable, he is admitted to the converse novitiate. Then he will remain five years before being admitted to solemn Profession. For his admission to the novitiate, we follow the procedure outlined above (8.9); we do

likewise two years later, then after another two years, and finally before solemn Profession.

14 If a donate novice in second year wishes to pass to the state of converse, or if a donate wishes to do so, it is for the Prior to determine the stages of formation, provided that it last at least seven years and three months, and that the requirements of Canon Law be observed. A similar procedure is to be followed when a converse novice or temporary professed passes to the state of donate.

15 Let the novice not be worn down by the temptations which are wont to beset the followers of Christ in the desert; nor let him put his trust in his own strength, but in the Lord, who has called him and who will bring to perfection the work he has begun.

Chapter 18

Profession

1 The monk, already by baptism dead to sin and consecrated to God, is by Profession still more totally dedicated to the Father and set free from the world, in order to be able to strive more directly towards perfect love; linked with the Lord in firm and stable pact, he shares in the mystery of the Church's indissoluble union with Christ, and bears witness to

the world of that new life won for us by Christ's redemption. *

2 On the completion of a praiseworthy novitiate, the converse novice is presented to the community. He prostrates at full length in the Chapter and asks for mercy; then he petitions to be received for the love of God to first Profession, in the habit of the professed brother, as the most humble servant of all. After some days, the vote takes place as specified above (8.9).

4 Having passed at least eight days in spiritual recollection, the brother will again make his petition to the community in Chapter; he will then be reminded by the Prior of the various obligations attached to the state of converse brother, particularly of stability, obedience, and conversion of way of life. Afterwards, in church he will make Profession for three years in the manner described in (36.8-10). Every care should be taken that he makes his decision to take vows with mature reflection, and that he only binds himself with perfect liberty. *

5 Three years later, it is for the Prior, after the vote of the community (8.9), to admit the junior professed to a renewal of his temporary Profession for two years. The time in temporary vows can be prolonged by the Prior, but not for more than a year.

7 Since the disciple, if he wishes to follow Christ, must renounce all things, including self, a brother about to make solemn Profession must part with everything he then possesses; and, if he wishes, he can at the same time dispose of property to which he

has a claim. No member of the Order is to ask for anything at all from the possessions of a temporary professed, even with a view to some pious work or to making a charitable donation to anyone whatever; rather, he is to dispose of his property freely and as he pleases.

9 On the appointed day, the future professed makes his vows after the Gospel or the *Credo* of the Conventual Mass (36.13-14); for then, the offering of himself, which he intends to unite to that of Christ, is accepted and consecrated by God through the hands of the Prior. *

10 The future professed is himself to write the Profession formula in the vernacular, as follows:

"I, Brother N., before God, his saints and the relics belonging to this hermitage, and in the presence of Dom N. Prior, promise obedience, conversion of my life and perseverance in this hermitage, which was built in honor of God, the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and Saint John the Baptist."

If the Profession is temporary, the period of the engagement is indicated after "promise"; if it is solemn, the word "perpetual" is inserted.

11 One should note that all our hermitages are dedicated in the first place to the Blessed Mary ever Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, our principal heavenly patrons. The certificate of every Profession, signed by the professed brother and the Prior that

received his vows, and with the day and year noted on it, is to be kept in the archives of the House.

13 Let the brother know that, from the moment of his Profession, he can, without the Prior's permission, have nothing whatever for himself — not even a walking stick — since, indeed, even his very self is no longer his own. For, as all who wish to live according to a rule must observe obedience with great zeal, we, in the measure that the way of life we have embraced is more exacting and austere, must observe it the more ardently and carefully; lest, if — which God avert! — obedience is lacking, such great labors may well go unrewarded. It is for this reason that Samuel says, "Obedience is better than any sacrifice, and to listen to God than the fat of rams." *

Chapter 19

Donation

1 In the House of God are many dwelling-places: among us, there are fathers and converse brothers; there are also donates, who have likewise left the world and sought the solitude of the Charterhouse, in order, by giving themselves to prayer and work within the protection of the cloister, to consecrate their whole life to the Lord. Quite frequently, in fact, men of real holiness, who wished to be numbered among the sons of Blessed Bruno and to enjoy his

spiritual heritage, have preferred to live and die as donates.

2 On the completion of a praiseworthy novitiate, the donate novice is admitted by the Prior to temporary Donation, after the vote of the solemn professed and of the perpetual donates (8.9).

3 On the day of Donation, whether temporary or perpetual (36.16-18), the future donate — having had at least four days of recollection — in the presence of the whole community before Vespers, is to read aloud his Donation, written in the vernacular, with this form and in these words:

"I, Brother N., for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the salvation of my soul, promise to serve God faithfully as a donate for the building up of the Church, observing obedience and chastity, and living without personal possessions. I therefore give myself to this House in a mutually binding contract, to serve it at all times, and submit myself to the discipline of the Order, according to the Statutes."

For temporary Donation the words "for two years" should be added after "give myself"; likewise, if this is extended, the period of the extension should be expressed; in the case, however, of perpetual Donation one should insert "for ever".

4 The donate, although he lives without personal possessions, retains the ownership of his property and the right to dispose of it. Before perpetual Donation, however, no one may transfer, or permit to

be transferred, the ownership of any of his goods, even if the donate himself wishes it.

5 From this day, the donate is a member of the Order, and is bound to it, so that, if necessity demands, the superiors can transfer him to any of our Houses. However, he cannot be dismissed from the Order, unless he seriously fails in one of his obligations; in which case the Prior, with the consent of the Council, can annul his Donation. When a contract of Donation is annulled, let both parties sign a document giving proof of this repeal, that is, the Prior in the name of the community, and the donate himself.

6 Three years later, it is for the Prior, after the vote of the community, including the perpetual donates (8.9), to admit the donate to a renewal of his Donation for two years. The time of temporary Donation can be prolonged by the Prior, but not for more than a year.

7 After the time of probation, it is for the Prior, after the vote of the community including the perpetual donates, to admit the brother, either to perpetual Donation, or, to the regime whereby his Donation is renewed every three years. In the latter case, the vote of the community is required only at the start of this regime. Furthermore, the consent of the Reverend Father is required for perpetual Donation.

8 With regard to the Divine Office and the other observances, the donates have their own customs, which can be adapted to their needs, so that each one is enabled to attain, in the way best suited to him, our

aim of union with God in solitude and silence; let them then use this ordered liberty not as an occasion for self-indulgence, but rather in the service of love; and thus they will serve the Lord in a different way, yet without diminishing the gift of themselves to God or their zeal for holiness. Moreover, they give the House very useful help, sometimes doing tasks that would hinder the converse brothers in their observances.

Chapter 20

The Formation of the Brothers

1 The junior brothers are placed under the guidance of a Novice-Master, who must always be a choir monk and a priest. He should, moreover, be a deeply religious man, a lover of quiet and silence, gifted with prudence and good judgement, aflame with genuine charity, radiating love of our vocation, having an understanding of the diversity of spirits, and in open-minded sympathy with the needs of youth. Converse brothers remain in his care until solemn Profession, donates until perpetual Donation or entry into the regime whereby Donation is renewed every three years. *

3 The Novice-Master forms those in his care to a life of prayer, based on faith and love, and drawn from the pure source of the Word of God; he shows them

how to combine this harmoniously with the duties of their state, namely, solitude, silence, liturgy and work. He fosters in them, likewise, a love and understanding of our Statutes and the traditions of the Order; he seeks to make their love for Christ and for the Church increase from day to day. Once a week he gives them a common conference of at least half an hour, in which he teaches, especially, the spirit and observances of our vocation. The novices, however, are given extra time in cell, to allow them to devote themselves more effectively to their spiritual formation.

4 By visiting the members of the novitiate, and talking to them in private with frank simplicity, the Novice-Master comes to know their interior dispositions, and gives to each one advice suited to his particular needs, and calculated to enable each to attain the perfection of his vocation. *

5 The Procurator however, having, in virtue of his office, daily contact with the brothers, will give them more efficacious instruction in prayer and the virtues by the example of his own practice; for divine doctrine is communicated more by life than by words.

6 From the time of formation, the brothers are not to be over-burdened with exercises in common, or with observances foreign to our Order; rather, care should be taken to initiate them into the life of prayer and a true monastic spirit.

7 It is the province of the Prior and Novice-Master to judge, in the light of their prudence and discretion, of

the suitability of candidates, or junior brothers, for our vocation. For, to become a Carthusian in fact as well as in name, the mere wish is not sufficient; in addition to love for solitude and for our life, a certain special aptitude of mind and body is required. To accept, or to continue to keep, a candidate, when it is manifest that he lacks the necessary qualities, is false — we almost said cruel — compassion. Let the Novice-Master be extremely careful that the novice decides concerning his vocation with complete freedom, and let him not put the slightest pressure on him to make Donation or Profession.

Four times a year, in the presence of the Prior and his Council, the Novice-Master is to report on the state of each donate and converse novice; he is also to answer any inquiries made about other members of the novitiate.

8 The junior brothers should have free access to the Novice-Master, and be able to speak with him at all times — spontaneously, however, and without constraint of any kind. We exhort them to bring their problems to the Novice-Master with simplicity and trust, seeing in him one chosen by divine Providence to guide and help them. In like manner, all the brothers will have free access to the Prior, who, as the common father, will receive them kindly and sometimes visit them in their cells, showing to all, without partiality, the same concern.

9 The senior brothers — especially the heads of obediences — contribute effectively to the formation

of the junior brothers with whom they work by offering them an example of regular observance, of virtue and of prayer, in the ordinary circumstances of daily life. However, for the most part, they are to abstain from conversations with them, even about spiritual matters, since they should not involve themselves in the affairs of another's conscience.

10 In order that the spiritual life of the brothers may rest on a firm foundation, at the beginning of their monastic life they receive a doctrinal formation, for which they reserve some time each day. The goal of this formation is to introduce the brother to the riches which are contained in the Word of God, and to allow him to grasp in a personal way the mysteries of the faith; at the same time, he learns to reflect on profound books, and draw fruit from them. The responsibility for this formation is shared by the Prior, the Novice-Master and the Procurator, who act in mutual agreement according to the directives of the General Chapter. *

11 The spiritual and doctrinal formation of the brothers should be continued throughout their entire lives. With a view to this, certain fathers, appointed by the Prior to help the Procurator, give a conference each Sunday to all the brothers; at which, from the feast of All Saints until Easter, the Statutes are explained, the customary chapters of which should be read each year in the presence of the brothers; this conference, in which the observances of the Order are also treated, is, for preference, entrusted to the Procurator. From Easter until the feast of All Saints

instruction is given on doctrine, the spiritual life, Scripture and Liturgy, in accordance with the directives of the Prior: this teaching should have serious depth and, at the same time, be adapted to the brothers' capacity. If it seems opportune, these two forms of instruction can be otherwise distributed, but without reduction of the time due to each.

12 In this way, the brothers will acquire the supreme advantage of knowing Jesus Christ; provided they dispose themselves to receive it by a life of silent prayer, hidden with Christ in God. For this is eternal life: to know the Father, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

Book Three, Chapter 21

The Community

The Daily Celebration of the Liturgy

1 Having dealt with the life of the monk, insofar as he remains listening to God in cell and at work, with the help of God we will now speak of the community. For, the grace of the Holy Spirit gathers solitaries together to form a communion in love, in the likeness of the Church; which remains one, though spread throughout the world.

2 When our Father St. Bruno entered the desert with his six companions, he was following in the footsteps of the monks of old, who had been completely

dedicated to silence and poverty of spirit. But the particular grace of our first Fathers was to introduce into this form of life a daily Liturgy, which without detracting from the austerity of the eremitical vocation, would nonetheless join it, in a more visible way, to the hymn of praise which Christ the High Priest entrusted to his Church. We have maintained this Liturgy, as being thoroughly in accord with our solitary contemplative life.

3 As in the synaxis of the monks of the first centuries, the most important moments in our Liturgy are the night vigils, combined with morning praise, the conventual Eucharistic celebration, and evening praise. For these Offices we come together in church.

4 When we assemble for the Eucharist, the unity of the Carthusian family is consummated in Christ, who is himself present, and at prayer. This commemoration of the Lord's sacrifice brings together every day all the cloister monks, as well as the lay monks who so desire.

In addition, the monks who are priests celebrate a Eucharist in solitude, united to the entire Church. Then, the humble offering of their life in the desert is taken up into that of Christ, for the glory of God the Father.

On days when the community aspect of our life is more in evidence, the monks may concelebrate, united in one priesthood.

5 In night prayer, we keep a holy and persevering watch, awaiting the return of the Master so as to open to him as soon as he knocks. Evening praise is celebrated as the decline of the day invites the soul to a spiritual sabbath.

6 The other canonical Hours of the Liturgy are usually recited in cell. On Sundays and solemnities, Terce, Sext and None are sung in choir.

7 Liberty of spirit is a mark of the solitary life. The Liturgy celebrated in the secret of the cell should reflect this, be in profound harmony with the aspirations of the heart, while always remaining an act of our community life. At the sound of the bell, all pray at the same time, so that the whole monastery becomes a single act of praise to the glory of God.

8 When celebrating the Divine Office, the monks are the voice and heart of the Church. Through them, the Church presents to the Father, in Christ, praise, supplication, adoration, and humble petition for pardon. The monk fulfills this important role by his whole existence, but in a more explicit and public way in the Liturgy.

9 The monk unceasingly meditates the Holy Scriptures, until they become part of him. That is why we receive them as the bread of Christ when they are distributed to us by the Church in the Liturgy.

10 The conventual Liturgy is always chanted. Our Gregorian chant is part of the patrimony of our Order which we have kept from the very beginning. We

know that these melodies favor interiority and spiritual sobriety.

11 The Office of the cloister monks is that which is described in our liturgical books. The participation of the lay monks in the Sacred Liturgy can take various forms (49.10), but all have the value of public prayer of the Church.

12 Besides the Divine Office our Fathers have transmitted to us the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Ordinarily each one of its Hours precedes the corresponding Hour of the Divine Office. By this prayer we celebrate the eternal newness of the mystery that is Mary's spiritual engendering of Christ in our hearts.

13 Since the Lord has called us to represent the whole of creation before his face, we should intercede for all; for our brothers, our families, our benefactors and for all the living and dead.

14 We frequently celebrate the Liturgy of reconciliation; a perpetual Easter of the Lord renewing our lives as sinners seeking his face. In fact the quality of our life of prayer depends on our making conscientious personal use of the Sacrament of Penance.

15 Since our vocation is to remain ever awake to the presence of God, our whole life becomes a Liturgy, whether we offer the official prayer of the Church, or follow the movement of our heart. This Liturgy becomes more explicit at times; but the diversity is by

no means source of division, since it is always the same Lord who exercises his priesthood in us, praying to the Father in the one Spirit.

Chapter 22

Of Life in Common

1 The solitary life, in the cell or the obediences, enkindles and nurtures in our hearts the fire of divine love, which is the bond of perfection, and makes us members of one body. We express this love that we bear for one another when we come together, as a community, showing by our words and behavior our joy at meeting our brothers, and our willingness to forget ourselves for them.

2 The Sacred Liturgy is the noblest form of community life, since it establishes the deepest and most intimate communion among us. When we join in it each day, we have but one heart and one soul, as we present ourselves before God.

3 The Chapter House is a place well worthy of our esteem. Therein it was that we asked to be received as the very humble servant of all; therein, too, we avow our faults in the presence of our brothers; and therein, also, we hear spiritual reading and discuss matters pertaining to the common good.

4 On certain solemnities, we all meet in Chapter to hear a sermon from the Prior or from whomever the

Prior appoints. After None on Sundays and solemnities — with the exception of the solemnities of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost and those that fall on weekdays in Lent — we go to the Chapter House to hear a reading from the Gospels or from the Statutes. Every second week, or once a month, according to the custom of the House, we publicly avow our faults there. Each person can confess faults committed against his brothers, the Statutes, and also against the general obligation of our engagement. And since solitude of heart requires for its preservation the wall of silence, he who breaks silence must always proclaim his fault and perform some public penance in accordance with accepted procedure. When the accusation has been made the Prior can opportunely give admonitions.

5 On Sundays, at a suitable time, the brothers are to meet in Chapter, or in some other place, where they will hear a reading and an explanation of the Statutes, or else a father, appointed by the Prior, will instruct them in Christian doctrine. They will also proclaim their faults, unless they have already done so with the fathers.

6 When some matter has to be discussed, or if the Prior wishes to have the advice of the community, the monks, at the request of the Prior, will assemble in Chapter.

7 We take dinner together in the refectory on Sundays and solemnities on which days we meet together more frequently, so that we may taste

something of the joy of family life. The refectory, which we enter after an Office in the Church, brings to mind the Last Supper, a repast which Christ hallowed. The tables there are blessed by the celebrant of the Conventual Mass; and while food for the body is being served to us, we are at the same time spiritually nourished by the reading of things divine.

8 A period of conversation is accorded the fathers after the Chapter at None; the Prior can grant this to the brothers who desire it on any solemnity. Once a month, however, there is a recreation for all the brothers; on this day, if the Prior so wishes, fathers and brothers may have a common recreation, to which even the novices and junior professed may be invited.

9 At recreation, let us remember St. Paul's exhortation: rejoice, be of one mind, have peace, so that the God of peace and love may abide within us. Since a colloquium is an assembly together of the community, let us not separate ourselves from the main body; nor should we speak elsewhere, but only there where all are assembled — except, perhaps, a few words.

10 Since, as St. Bruno says, when wearied by our quite austere rule and application to spiritual things, our rather delicate natures can often be refreshed and renewed by the charms and beauties of woods and countryside, the fathers have a walk every week — with the exception of Holy Week. The brothers are to

have a similar walk every month, at which, however, attendance is optional. But they must take part in the walk at least three or four times a year. Fathers and brothers can take this walk together, at the discretion of the Prior.

11 In accordance with a very old custom of our Order, an exceptionally long walk is granted once a year, which the fathers and brothers, and also the junior professed and novices, are permitted to have together, if it seems suitable to the Prior. On this walk, it is permissible to go beyond the limits assigned by the General Chapter, and also to bring something to eat. However, Carthusian frugality is to be observed; when eating, we must be well-removed from strangers. The Prior is allowed to grant another walk of this kind, on which we do not eat, however.

12 Our walks should be such as to further brotherly union and also the spiritual progress of our souls. Hence all are to walk together, taking the same route so that each one can, in turn, talk with the others — unless, for a reasonable cause, it seems better to have two or three groups. Should it be necessary to go through a town or village, they will be content simply to pass through, preserving due decorum, nor may they ever enter the houses of seculars. They should not hold conversation with strangers, nor give them anything. On the walks, we are not to eat or drink anything, except plain water, found by the wayside.

13 These conversations together are intended to help us to grow in mutual love, and to moderate

somewhat our solitude. Let us be on our guard against talking excessively, or shouting, or indulging in indecorous laughter. Let our conversations be religious, not frivolous or worldly; sedulously let us shun even semblance of detraction or murmuring. Should a difference of opinion arise, let us know how to listen and to see the matter from the other's point of view so that in all things, the bond of mutual love will grow ever stronger.

14 *Opera communia* may be held three times a year at the discretion of the Prior — who may also, if he wishes, omit them entirely. This work in common — during which silence is to be observed in the manner prescribed in chapter 5.6 — may be continued for three days. As well as work which the Sacristan might require, the Prior may enjoin something of assistance to the brothers; if so, the fathers will be very happy indeed to have this opportunity of participating in the ministry of the brothers. In the week of *opera communia*, the walk is optional for the fathers.

15 Any fathers who so desire, may, once a month, with the Prior's consent, devote the time of the walk to some work, in the manner prescribed for *opera communia*, yet with permission to speak.

Chapter 23

The Prior

1 Every House of the Order where at least six professed qualified to vote are present, can elect their own Prior. The election, however, must be held within forty days: that time having elapsed, the Reverend Father or the General Chapter will provide the House with a new Prior.

5 The Prior, following the example of Christ, is among his brothers as one who serves. He guides them according to the spirit of the Gospel and the traditions of the Order, which he himself has received. To all by word and by life he strives to be of benefit; in particular to the cloister monks, from whose number he has been taken, he should offer an example of peaceful repose, stability, solitude, and all the other observances of their life.

6 His seat in all places and his clothes do not differ by any kind of dignity or luxury from those of the others; nor does he wear anything indicating that he is Prior.

8 The Prior, since he is the common father of all in the monastery, should show the same solicitude for all, brothers and fathers, visiting them from time to time in their cells and obediences. If someone comes to his cell, let him receive him with all love, and always give a willing hearing to each one. Let him be such that the monks - especially those suffering trials - can have recourse to him, as to a loving father,

and even, if they so wish, freely and spontaneously open their souls to him. He does not judge according to human standards, but together with his monks strives to listen to the Spirit in a common seeking of the will of God, for the interpretation of which for his brothers he has received a special mandate.

9 The Prior must not relax regular discipline with a view to being loved; that would not be to guard the flock but to lose it. On the contrary, let him govern the monks as sons of God, and strive to develop in them a spirit of voluntary submission, so that in solitude they may more fully conform themselves to the obedient Christ.

10 The monks, for their part, should love and reverence their Prior in Christ, showing to him at all times deference and humble obedience. Let them have confidence in him who has assumed the charge of their souls in the Lord, and cast all their care on him whom they believe to represent Christ. Far from being wise in their own eyes and from relying on their own understanding, let them turn their hearts to the truth and give heed to their father's counsels.

11 The Prior is to ensure that young choir monks when they first come to live among the solemnly professed, converse brothers who have just made solemn Profession, and donates who are no longer under the care of the Novice-Master, are not left to themselves and to the bidding of their own wills; for experience teaches that these are the crucial years of our vocation and that on them the whole subsequent

life depends. And so talking with them simply and in private, he should give them fatherly even brotherly help. Moreover, he is to be careful, as far as possible, not to appoint any monk too soon after the completion of his studies, to office - especially not to that of Procurator.

12 The Prior is to see that the brothers' Chapter is regularly held and is to provide for their instruction in either Christian doctrine or the Statutes once a week. Since this is a serious duty, let him carefully ensure that the brothers receive a solid formation and that books suitable for this purpose are given to them.

13 Let him also be solicitous concerning the sick and those in trial or affliction, knowing from experience how harsh solitude can become for us at times.

15 The Prior should willingly provide his monks with books, since these are the imperishable food of the soul. It is fitting that monks should find their nourishment primarily in Holy Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and proved monastic authors. He is to supply them also with other books of sound quality, carefully selected for their usefulness to each individual. For in solitude we read, not to be informed about the latest opinions, but so that faith may be nourished in peace and prayer fostered. If necessary, the Prior can prohibit a book to his monks.

19 Before deciding anything in matter of importance belonging to the obedience of one of his Officers, the Prior should consult him and try to reach a decision by common consent with him. The Officers, however,

are always to accept his decisions with filial submission. Moved by paternal affection, the Prior should learn to know them and their problems; he should help them and support their authority before everyone else; and also, if necessary, charitably admonish them. He should not act as if good external order were his sole concern, but rather by his own docility to the Spirit he should mirror to all the love of Christ. For the peace and concord of the House depend in great measure on the Prior and his Officers being in full accord and of one mind.

22 The Prior should not eat with guests in his House freely and indifferently, but only with such people as cannot easily be denied this – even then, the rarer the better.

23 A Prior who is prevented by age or infirmity from taking care of his flock and from giving an example of regular observance, will humbly acknowledge this, and, without waiting for the General Chapter, will ask the Reverend Father for mercy. We exhort the Definitors, moreover, not to leave in office Priors weakened by old age or bad health.

25 Let the Prior, whose office requires no small degree of self-denial, apply to himself these words of Guigues: "Your Lord has deputed you to be the servant of your sons; let your effort be that they do, not what you like, but what profits them. It is for you to adapt yourself to their utility, not bend them to your will; for they have been entrusted to your care,

not for you to preside over, but so that you may be of use to them."

Chapter 26

The Procurator

1 Over the brothers of the House, the Prior is to appoint one of the solemn professed as a diligent Procurator - for so we wish him to be called. Who like Martha - whose office he assumes - will be occupied and troubled about many things; nevertheless, he is not to abandon completely or shrink from the peace and silence of his cell. On the contrary, he should be ever ready - in the measure that the affairs of the House permit - to return to his cell as to a very secure and tranquil haven where, through reading, prayer and meditation, he will be able both to calm the turbulent emotions of his soul which arise from the planning and care of external things, and also to store up within himself some helpful thought which he might gently and prudently impart to the brothers entrusted to him.

5 The Procurator should regularly visit those monks who are too sick to go to the church, showing them kindness and painstaking care. Otherwise, he is not to visit the fathers nor to enter their cells without permission, nor to speak with them outside their cells, except if he meets them having a conversation

authorized by the President. He may, however, speak a few words to them at the cell door. But he must be very careful not to bring worldly news into the House; for it is precisely the object of his office to ensure that the monks can live in the peace of contemplation.

6 The obediences of the brothers and their health will ever be the object of the Procurator's care and loving attention. He will guide them, above all, by example - for actions are more eloquent than words; and they will willingly imitate the Procurator if he himself imitates Christ. He should be especially careful that the brothers are not overburdened with work. So that they may be able to devote sufficient time to recollection in cell, their daily work period should not normally exceed seven hours.

7 Each brother is responsible for his obedience, and in turn the Procurator should support his authority in the work committed to him. He should consult the Procurator about this work and submit himself to his will; however, insofar as the situation permits, the Procurator should allow the brothers to act with all due liberty, the better to fulfill their allotted tasks. Should he wish to change something in their obediences, he should not do so without consulting - or at least notifying them.

8 The Procurator - and also all the other Officers of the House - must be careful not to abuse their office by allowing themselves dispensations or unnecessary

things which they would be unwilling to concede to others.

9 It is the duty of the Procurator to look after guests, to meet them on their arrival, and to visit them. Should the Prior be absent, the Procurator may absent himself from the refectory to take care of the visitors. But he is not to eat with guests as a normal rule, but only with those to whom this mark of attention cannot be easily refused. And even then the more rarely the better. Only the Procurator, and, in the absence of the Prior, the Vicar, may be present when guests are having a meal.

12 Should the Procurator relinquish his office, he will leave behind him all solicitude and all that is superfluous, so that he may follow Christ alone into the desert.

Chapter 27

The Sick

1 Sickness and the infirmities of old age invite us to a new act of trusting confidence in our heavenly Father who, by means of these infirmities, conforms us ever more perfectly to Christ. In this way, united in a very special manner with the great work of our redemption, we become united ever more intimately with the entire Mystical Body of Christ.

2 The Prior will show special kindness towards the sick and the aged, and towards those who are being purified by some trial. And we counsel all who have charge of the sick to do likewise. As far as the resources of the House permit, let all that is necessary or helpful, be lovingly provided for them; and in all matters, however personal, in which they cannot take care of themselves, let them be humbly helped; and let those who render these services esteem themselves very fortunate. Those who suffer from some nervous problem - which in solitude is especially oppressive - are to be encouraged and sustained in whatever way possible so that they may realize that they can give glory to God, provided that, forgetful of self, they offer themselves whole-heartedly to the loving designs of him who is their Father.

3 Let the sick, however, be very carefully warned, in accordance with a remark of St. Benedict, not to distress those in attendance on them by asking for superfluous or impossible things or perchance by grumbling; and, mindful of the religious state they have adopted, let them realize that, just as healthy monks differ from healthy layfolk, so too sick monks should differ from sick layfolk, lest - which heaven forbid - on the occasion of illness, their souls grow narrow and this contact with the Lord prove vain.

4 The sick then are to be encouraged to bear in mind the sufferings of Christ; those who look after them - the compassion of Christ. In this way, the former will get strength to suffer patiently; the latter, strength to serve readily. And when the sick reflect that they are

being served on account of Christ, and the assistants that they are serving likewise for Christ's sake, the former will not feel proud nor the latter humiliated as each awaits from the same Lord the reward they have earned, one by suffering and the other by compassion.

5 As befits those who practice the poverty of Christ, let us be content with the services of the ordinary local doctor, or if the case should so require, of a more specialized physician from among the neighboring towns. If however in addition to the local doctor, any father should wish to consult a still more skilled one, the Prior may allow him - provided he returns the same day - to go to one of those neighboring towns which the Visitors, with the consent of either the Reverend Father or of the General Chapter, have designated. Also, the Prior can permit a monk to be admitted to the hospital, but it is advisable to inform the Reverend Father.

6 In the measure possible let our sick monks, as befits souls in search of solitude, receive the necessary treatment in their own cells. We should not attach too much importance to the counsels of certain doctors who may perhaps advise going outside or who prescribe cures and remedies which ill accord with our rule; it is we alone who will have to give an account to God as to how we have observed our vows. We should be careful too not to use medicines in an abusive degree with damage to our quest of spiritual perfection - and very possibly to our health - and also adding to the financial burden of the House.

7 In all the foregoing let us commit ourselves in a docile spirit to the will of God, remembering that the trial of infirmity prepares us for the joys of eternity and making our own the words of the psalmist: "I have rejoiced at the news that they brought me: we are going to enter the house of the Lord."

Chapter 28

Poverty

1 The monk has elected to follow Christ in his poverty and by this poverty to be enriched. Depending on God and in no wise on things terrestrial, he has treasure in heaven and it is there that his heart ever tends. Recognizing that he owns nothing, he is ready to place in the Prior's hands freely and spontaneously all that has been entrusted to him whenever the latter so desires.

2 Those who are solemnly professed are to have nothing but what the Order concedes to them for simple use. They have given up the right of asking or receiving from another or of making gifts or of transferring ownership without permission. Even amongst ourselves we cannot exchange or receive anything whatever without permission.

3 While those in temporary vows and donates retain ownership of their property and the power to acquire

more, they should not keep anything personal for themselves as also is the case for novices. Let the Novice-Master inspire his newcomers with a singular love for poverty and a deep sense of separation from temporal goods and comforts.

4 In accordance with the counsels of Guigues if a garment or something of that sort be sent as a gift to one of the monks by a friend or relative let it be given not to him but rather to someone else lest it seem to belong to him. Hence let no member of the Order claim a right of use or any other right in reference to books or to anything else which the Order may have received thanks to him; but if that use be granted to him, let him receive it with gratitude clearly understanding that it belongs not to him but to others. No one is ever to have money under his control or in his possession.

5 Since the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head, let poverty and simplicity be strictly observed in our cells. Let us be constantly vigilant that there be nothing there that is superfluous or over ornate - willingly even seeking the opinion of the Prior in this matter.

6 Whoever is temporarily replacing another in an obedience may not change anything whatever therein without permission. Moreover, the monks themselves are not to change or install anything in their cells or obediences without first submitting it to the Prior and obtaining his permission.

7 The Prior will provide all the monks with whatever is necessary in matter of attire. All members of the Order wear a white habit and cowl; they receive two habits, and two or three cowls. The cloister monk - but not the converse brothers or donates - wear a hairshirt and a cincture cord. All novices wear a black cape whenever the community meets. When we go outside the bounds we wear a coat.

8 In our dress there should be nothing unduly elegant or superfluous or that otherwise offends religious poverty and simplicity. For in this matter, our Fathers aimed simply at covering themselves and at protecting themselves from the cold, believing that it is certainly fitting for Carthusians that both their clothes and all else they use should be well worn. While we too should be inspired by this same ideal, we must nevertheless take care that our habits and cells are well kept and clean. Unless we are sick or on a journey, our bed should be in conformity with monastic austerity.

9 Somewhat costly equipment is permitted only to those for whom, in the Prior's opinion, it is necessary. Musical instruments are quite out of keeping with our life, as are games of every sort. However, instruments which guide or assist the voice may be used for teaching our chant but all forms of radio are completely excluded.

10 So great is the diversity of local conditions that what is necessary in one region may frequently be

superfluous in another, so that it is impossible to establish a definite universal law for all countries. Accordingly, we exhort the Priors to show themselves gracious and cooperative in providing for the needs of their community, in the measure that their resources permit. If they are moved by Christ's love, they will in no way leave themselves open to any reproach in this matter, nor will they, by being grudging cause their monks to err by ownership. For the more willingly that poverty is embraced, the more acceptable it is to God. For it is the free surrender of the goods of this world that is praiseworthy - not the deprivation.

Chapter 29

The Care and Administration of Temporal Goods

1 The temporal goods that the Prior administers belong, not to him, nor to any human owner, but to the poor man Christ, and it is to him that the Prior must render an account of his stewardship. It is thus part of his function to guide the Officers and their assistants in their administration of temporal affairs, and, having in mind God and the voice of his own conscience and the spirit of our Order and its Statutes, to carry on the affairs of the House with prudence and discretion, and to be specially careful that money be not spent wrongfully.

2 When a new Prior is installed, the Procurator will furnish him with a statement of the principal assets of

the House, both movable and real. This statement, countersigned by the new Prior and his Council, is to be preserved in the archives.

5 As regards the support of our Houses, our Fathers thought it wiser not to await the receipt of gifts, but, God helping, to set up sources of annual income. For they did not consider that for the sake of uncertain profits well defined liabilities which can neither be discharged or rejected without risk should be accepted – especially as the mere idea of wandering about in quest of alms inspired them with horror.

6 We are of the opinion, however, that, with God's help, modest resources would suffice if there still dwells within us zeal for the ideals of our first Fathers in matters of simplicity, poverty, and sobriety, in all that we wear and eat and use; and if, moreover, we are making daily progress in detachment from the world and in love for God – who should be the source of every action and the support of every trial. To us, indeed, most certainly apply those words of our Lord: "Be not solicitous for the morrow, your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things; seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice."

14 While each House may lawfully possess whatever is necessary for a life in accordance with the letter and spirit of our vocation, nevertheless, if genuine witness is to be given to true poverty, all that savors of luxury, inordinate gain, or accumulation of wealth must be sedulously avoided. Nor is it sufficient that the monks be subject to their superiors in their use of

temporal things; they must be, as Christ was, really poor, having their treasure in heaven. We must avoid, not only anything that might be termed sumptuous, but even excessive concern for convenience, so that everything in our Houses will reflect that plain simplicity which our vocation requires.

16 While our buildings should, indeed, be both sufficient and suitable for our purpose, simplicity should nevertheless be everywhere in evidence. For our Houses should not seek to be monuments of vainglory or art, but simply to give testimony to the poverty of the Gospel.

19 Finally, we beg and exhort all the Priors of the Order, by the tender love of Jesus Christ, our God and our Savior, who offered himself for us on the cross in total holocaust, that they devote themselves wholeheartedly to almsgiving on as lavish a scale as their resources will permit. Let them be persuaded that whatever is spent or retained in excess is, as it were, a theft from the poor and from the needs of Mother Church. Directing our property in this way towards the common good, we imitate the early Christians among whom none called anything his own, but for whom all things were in common.

Chapter 30

Stability

1 A monk's surrender of himself to God will not be really perfect unless he faithfully persevere in that intention all the days of his life - as, indeed, at solemn Profession, he freely promised to do. Since this is an irrevocable commitment, before making it, he should first sit down and consider whether he really wants to yield himself to God forever. By virtue of his Profession, a monk is, as it were, incorporated into a family chosen for him by God, wherein he is to settle down for ever, both in mind and body.

2 Let each one, therefore, having been totally dedicated to God, in his own function either as father or brother, not only continue in that state to which he has been called, but also strive to attain ever greater perfection therein, thus enriching the sanctity of Mother Church, to the greater glory of the Blessed Trinity, One and Undivided.

4 Our monks should not too easily persuade themselves that they have good reasons for asking their superiors to transfer them to another House. Many have been misled by the imagined charm of distant countries and by the attraction of change. Moreover, it is not becoming for a monk to attach too much importance to climate or to food, or to the temperament of those around him, or to other differences of that sort.

8 We are well aware how much patience and perseverance in the situation in which God has placed us, contribute to contemplation of things divine. For it is not possible for a man to keep his mind firmly fixed on one person if, beforehand, he has not perseveringly kept his body in one place. And if the mind is to draw near to him in whom there is neither change nor shadow of alteration, it must adhere unshakably to its undertaking.

Book Four, Chapter 31

The Order

The Government of the Order

1 To keep our Carthusian ideal continually before us and to maintain it in unchanging vigor, the first Priors of our Order by common consent decreed that a General Chapter would be held in the Grande Chartreuse, and to this Chapter they submitted all their Houses with a view to correction and preservation; and to it they likewise promised obedience both for themselves and for their communities. In this way, strength is given to the bond of perpetual love that exists between the Houses and between all the members of the Order, who are striving eagerly to advance together along God's path.

2 The General Chapter is held every other year, at which the Priors, and likewise the Rectors, the

Procurator General, and the Vicars of nuns, are all to assist. Should someone in charge of a House be unable to go, let him delegate a solemnly professed monk. Should a House be without a Prior, the Reverend Father may invite a solemnly professed monk of that House to come to the General Chapter. Every monk who is present at the Chapter has the rights and functions of a Prior.

3 The Assembly of all those who enjoy the rights of a Prior, and also of those monks who happen to be numbered among the Definitors, is called the General Assembly, over which the Reverend Father presides. This Assembly has the power to regulate all matters pertaining to the Order, apart from those that are reserved to the Definitory. The General Assembly also gives a consultative vote on matters referred to it by the Definitors, who, on this occasion, do not themselves vote.

4 The Definitory, over which the Reverend Father presides, consists of the Reverend Father and eight Definitors elected in the manner discussed elsewhere. Except for the Reverend Father, no one who was a Definitor at the previous Chapter can be elected. In matters relating to individual persons and to the Houses of the Order, the Definitory decides.

At each General Chapter, all the superiors, in accordance with the common obedience promised and due to the General Chapter, ask for mercy so that the Definitory can deliberate upon their removal or confirmation. According to our tradition, the Prior

discharges his office as long as the General Chapter deems him fit to exercise his office for the good of the community. Also, the Definitors appoint the Procurator General, who represents the Order at the Holy See.

9 Any ordinance which would cause a substantial change in any point of our observance, even though it might not affect the rigor of the Order, cannot be promulgated unless it receives the assent of at least two-thirds of those who vote. At the following General Chapter, it must be confirmed by a similar vote.

11 The Reverend Father, that is, the Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, is the Father General of the entire Order. He is elected by the community of the Grande Chartreuse, but this election does not have force of law until it is accepted by the assembly of Priors, Prioresses, and Rectors.

15 The Reverend Father, whose task it is, as the Minister General, to preserve the unity of the Order, exercises ordinary jurisdiction over the nuns.

19 All who exercise authority in the Order should always regard the mind and law of the Church as the supreme norm in accordance with which the traditions of the Order are to be interpreted. It is, moreover, supremely fitting that the Priors — to whom their subjects owe prompt obedience — should themselves give these same subjects good example by humbly submitting to the ordinances of the General

Chapter and of the Reverend Father, and by avoiding criticism of them in the presence of others.

In order that the communion of our Order with the Holy Father be better fostered, the Reverend Father sends a brief overview of the state and life of the Order to the Apostolic See every six year.

Chapter 32

The Canonical Visitation

1 Moved by urgent concern for peace and love, and faithful observance in the Houses of the Order, the General Chapter decided to send Visitors to each House every two years; these Visitors are to manifest the solicitude of the Order in their regard, and they are to be endowed with the necessary powers to resolve any problems that may arise.

2 At each General Chapter, Priors suitable for this task are designated and their names inscribed in the Carta, so that, in virtue of their ordinary powers, they can visit the Houses of the Province of which their own Houses form a part. A Visitor is also to be named for the nuns, who should visit their Houses, together with the principal Visitor of the Province.

4 The procedure for the Visit is described elsewhere (chap. 40).

Since the community desires that the Visit should receive the Visitors or Commissioners in a spirit of faith, vested as they are with the authority of the General Chapter or the Reverend Father. Everyone should be at pains to help them in the accomplishment of their duty. Hence the Visitors and the monks should do all in their power to establish a climate of mutual trust.

5 The chief duty of the Visitors is to accord everyone a fraternal welcome, and listen to him with the greatest attention. Afterwards, they will make every effort to enable him to give to God and his brothers the best of himself.

6 It is not as judges that they should perform their task, but as brothers, to whom the tempted and the afflicted can open their minds freely and without fear of any breach of confidence; and, in a matter of such importance, let them avoid precipitation and proceed with tranquil calm.

7 All can speak without constraint to the Visitors and put before them any matters, affecting either themselves or the community, that require a decision or advice. They may also make constructive suggestions for the common good.

8 Before speaking of anyone else, we should recollect ourselves in prayer; for if we remain docile to the Holy Spirit we will be all the more certain of doing the truth in love. He who is truly at peace is suspicious of no one. It will often be better to keep silence rather than dwell on matters that are frivolous

or cannot be proved, or on defects that are already being corrected.

9 Besides talking to each monk separately, the Visitors also meet the community itself, especially at the opening and closing sessions of the Visit.

In order that by God's grace, the Visit may produce lasting fruit, they will do all that they can to enable the community to take in hand its own spiritual renewal.

18 Since the progress of our Houses depends greatly on the results of Visitation, the Visitors are to be thorough and zealous; they must never be satisfied with a superficial external fulfillment of their mission, or treat it as a mere matter of form. Let them seek only the good of souls and spare neither time nor effort, that their Visit may increase in all hearts peace and Christ's love.

Chapter 33

Conversion of Life

1 The more sublime the path that opens before us in the holy way of life handed down to us by our Fathers, the more easily can we fall away from it; not only by obvious transgressions, but also by the drag innate, as it were, in routine. Since, however, God gives his grace to the humble, let us have recourse to

him above all and stand fast in the combat, lest the chosen vineyard fall into ruin.

2 For the continuing quality of our life will depend more on the fidelity of each individual than on the multiplication of laws, or the updating of customs, or even the zeal of Priors. It is not, indeed, enough to obey the commands of our superiors and observe faithfully the letter of the Statutes, unless, led by the Spirit, we savor the things of the Spirit. Each monk is placed in solitude from the very beginning of his new form of life and left to his own counsel. Now no longer a child, but a man, let him not be tossed to and fro and carried about with every new wind, but rather let him try to find out what would please God and do it of his own free will, enjoying with sober wisdom that liberty of God's children, concerning which he will have to render an account before God. Let no one, however, be wise in his own eyes; for it is to be feared that he who neglects to open his heart to an enlightened guide, will lose the quality of discretion and go less quickly than is necessary, or too fast and grow weary, or stop on the way and quite fall asleep.

3 How, then, can we fulfill our role in the People of God of being living sacrifices acceptable to God, if we allow relaxation and immortification of life, distraction of mind and useless conversation, vain cares and trivial occupations, to separate us from the Son of God — from him who is life itself and the Supreme Sacrifice; or if a monk in cell is held captive by a miserable anxiety arising from love of self? In simplicity of heart, then, and in purity of mind let us

strive with all our power to fix our thoughts and affections continually on God. Let each be forgetful of self and what lies behind, and press on towards the goal to win the prize which is God's call to the life above, in Christ Jesus.

4 "But he who has no love for the brother he has seen, what love can he have for the God he has not seen?" And since brotherly fellowship between men can never be perfect unless based on mutual esteem, it is certainly fitting in the highest degree that we, who live in the house of God, should bear witness to the love that comes from God by lovingly welcoming our brothers with whom we live, and by making a real effort to understand with heart and mind their characters and temperaments, however different from our own. For the source of hostilities, disagreements, and the like, often lies in contempt of others.

5 Let us carefully avoid anything that could injure the blessing of peace; above all, we should not speak unkindly about one of our brothers. If dissension does arise in the House among the monks — or between them and the Prior — before referring the matter to the Visitors, or to the Reverend Father, or the General Chapter, we should patiently and humbly explore every possibility of settling the dispute ourselves in a spirit of love. For it is better that the monastic family itself provide for the preservation of peace, through the effort and consent of all. In such a situation the Prior's duty is to show himself not as one who dominates, but as a brother; and if he is at fault, let him acknowledge it and correct himself.

6 Since it is most particularly through the Priors that the spirit of the Houses in our Order declines or flourishes, let these strive to do good by their example and practice first what they teach; nor let them ever presume to say anything that Christ himself would not wish to say through them. Dedicated to prayer, silence, and cell, let them earn the confidence of their monks and have with them true communion of brotherly love. Let them keep a kindly and careful watch over their monks' life in cell and the state of their souls, in order to be able to withstand their temptations in the early stages, lest these grow in strength and the remedy be applied too late.

7 Finally, in these times, we must be extremely careful not to model ourselves on the behavior of the world around us. For, too eagerly to seek and too readily to accept the comforts of modern life is altogether opposed to our state of life; especially as novelty always calls for more novelty. The resources granted us by divine Providence are not given that we may seek the good things of life; indeed, if the way to God is easy, it is because it is traveled not by loading ourselves with burdens, but by getting rid of them. Let us then, free ourselves from possessions to the point that, having given up everything and having left even self behind, we may share in the way of life of our first Fathers.

Chapter 34

The Function of our Order in the Life of the Church

1 What benefit, what divine delight, solitude and the silence of the hermitage bring to those who love them, only those who have experienced them can tell. Yet, in choosing this, the best part, it is not our advantage alone that we have in view; in embracing a hidden life we do not abandon the great family of our fellow men; on the contrary, by devoting ourselves exclusively to God we exercise a special function in the Church, where things seen are ordered to things unseen, exterior activity to contemplation. *

2 If therefore we are truly living in union with God, our minds and hearts, far from becoming shut in on themselves, open up to embrace the whole universe and the mystery of Christ that saves it. Apart from all, to all we are united, so that it is in the name of all that we stand before the living God. This continual effort to be always — as far as human frailty permits — very close to God, unites us in a special way with the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we are accustomed to call the Mother in particular of all Carthusians.

3 Making him who is, the exclusive center of our lives through our Profession, we testify to a world, excessively absorbed in earthly things, that there is no God but him. Our life clearly shows that something of the joys of heaven is present already here below; it prefigures our risen state and anticipates in a manner the final renewal of the world.

4 By penance, moreover, we have our part in the saving work of Christ, who redeemed the human race from the oppressive bondage of sin, above all by pouring forth prayer to the Father, and by offering himself to him in sacrifice. Thus it comes about that we, too, even though we abstain from exterior activity, exercise nevertheless an apostolate of a very high order, since we strive to follow Christ in this, the inmost heart of his saving task.

5 Wherefore, in praise of God — for which the hermit Order of Carthusians was founded in a special way — let us dedicate ourselves to the peace and silence of our cells and strive to offer him unceasing worship, so that, sanctified in truth, we may be those true worshippers whom the Father seeks.

Chapter 35

The Statutes Themselves

1 These Statutes contain, in renewed and adapted form, the rule of life of our Fathers; to this rule let our hearing be attentive and on it let our meditation be continual: let us not forsake it and it will keep us, let us love it and it will guard us. For it is both the form and the sacrament of that holiness to which each of us has been predestined by God. But it is the Spirit who gives life, and he does not allow us to rest content with the mere letter; for to this alone do these Statutes tend, that, guided by the Gospel, we may walk in the way of God and learn the breadth of love.

3 Matters not mentioned in the Statutes are left to the decision of the Prior, but only on condition that what he decides is not out of harmony with them. Whether on this or any other occasion, we do not wish that the Priors should change too easily the honorable and pious customs of our Houses, although these customs can never prevail against the Statutes.

5 "If your brother sins against you," the Lord says, "go and tell him his fault between you and him alone." Now this requires very great humility and prudence, and if it does not proceed from that pure love, which seeks not its own good, it even does harm. And do not we ourselves wish our corrections to come in humble tone? However, for the most part, it will be wiser to entrust our admonitions to the Prior, or to the Vicar, or to the Procurator, who will pass them on to others in the measure that conscience and prudence suggest.

7 For their part, the monks should give obedience to the Statutes, as responsible persons, not serving in appearance only, as pleasing men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God. Nor should they be ignorant of the fact that, if obtained without just cause, a dispensation is null. Let them meekly listen to and fulfill the instructions and admonitions of their seniors, especially of the Prior, who acts on God's behalf. And if, being human, they err at times, let them not be obstinate in refusing to amend, lest they give an opportunity to the devil; but rather to him, from whom man departed by the inertia of

disobedience, let them return by the labor of obedience.

8 As we contemplate all the benefits which God has prepared for those he has called into the desert, let us rejoice with our Blessed Father Bruno that we have attained the peaceful haven of a hidden port, in which we are invited to experience, in some sort, the incomparable beauty of the Supreme Good. Let us rejoice in the beatitude, which has become our lot, and in the generous outpouring of God's grace on us; and let us always give thanks to God the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Amen.

Book Five, Chapter 36

Rites and Acts of Carthusian Life

Rites of Carthusian Life

1 When anyone enters the Carthusian family, after a period of probation, he is received as a novice. By placing his hands between those of the Prior, he expresses his submission, and is received into the fellowship of the Order. All then conduct him to the cell, or, if he is a brother novice, to the church, so as to impress upon him the fact that his life is dedicated primarily to prayer.

Profession (and, in its own way, Donation) is a free, personal commitment which is expressed in the

public reading of the formula of either Profession or Donation. Before his first Profession, the one about to make his vows is clothed with the cowl of the professed which symbolizes his conversion of life and his consecration to God; before the irrevocable act of solemn Profession, with special ardor he begs his brothers to help him with their prayers.

Reception of a cloister novice

2 After completing his probation, on an appointed day the postulant is proposed to the community (cf. 8.8). First, he is asked in the presence of all whether he has made Profession in another religious Institute; whether he is free from the bonds of marriage; whether he has any incurable disease; whether he is in a position to go on to Holy Orders; whether he has paid all his debts. He must know that if he conceals anything in responding to these questions, he can be expelled, even after Profession.

3 On another day, with the entire community assembled in Chapter, the postulant, lying prostrate, asks for mercy. Rising at the bidding of the Prior, he then says: "I ask for the love of God, to be received for probation in the monastic habit, as the most humble servant of all, if this should be pleasing to you, Father, and to the community."

Then the Prior presents to him the manner of life he desires to follow.

4 If the postulant replies that, relying solely on the goodness of God and the prayers of his brothers, he

will fulfill these obligations insofar as the divine goodness allows, then the Prior tells him that he is free to leave before Profession and that, on the other hand, we have the power and liberty to send him away if, considering the matter before God, we find that he is not suited to our life. When he has given his assent to this, the postulant kneels at the Prior's feet and places his joined hands between those of the Prior. The Prior then receives him into the fellowship of the Order on the part of God and of the Order, on his part and that of the community. When this has been done, he is received with a kiss of peace by the Prior and all the community.

5 On the same day, if possible, the novice is clothed privately, and is led to the church where he prostrates and prays on the sanctuary steps. The Prior, clothed with the church cowl and white stole, remains in the last stall of the right choir. The monks, kneeling in the stalls, sing the verse *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, the choirs facing each other. At the conclusion the Prior inclines on the misericord, and the community likewise. The Prior says the versicle and then adds a Prayer.

After this, the novice is conducted to his cell by all, with hoods up, as they sing the psalms "How lovely is your dwelling place," "O Lord, remember," "Have mercy on me." One or two however may be sufficient. The Prior leads the way, followed by the novice, then the Procurator or the monk who carries the holy water, and then the community, seniors first. On arrival at the cell door the Prior sprinkles first the novice and then the cell, saying "Peace to this house;"

then, taking the novice by the hand, he brings him into the cell and leads him to the oratory. The novice kneels and prays. When the community has finished the psalm or psalms, then follow the prayers, as described in the Ritual.

When these are finished the Prior enjoins the novice to keep the cell and all other practices in accordance with the observance and practice of our Order so that he may cling to God alone in silence and solitude, in constant prayer and ready penance. He then commends him to the care of the Novice Master.

Reception of a brother novice

6 After completing his probation, on an appointed day the postulant is proposed to the community (17.9). First he is asked in the presence of all, whether he has made Profession in another religious Institute; whether he is free from the bonds of marriages; whether he has any incurable disease; whether he has paid all his debts. He must know that if he conceals anything in responding to these questions, he can be expelled, even after Profession.

7 On the day of his reception, prostrate before the whole community in Chapter, the postulant asks for mercy. At the bidding of the Prior, who is clothed with the church cowl and the white stole, he rises and asks for the love of God to be received for probation in the monastic habit as the most humble servant of all. Then after an exhortation from the Prior he is told

that during the novitiate he is free to leave, while on the other hand we have the power and liberty to send him away if, considering the matter before God, we find that he is not suited to our life. When he has given his assent to this, he kneels at the Prior's feet and places his joined hands between those of the Prior. The Prior then grants him fellowship in the Order on the part of God and of the Order, on his own part and that of the community. He is then clothed with the cowl and mantle and receives the kiss of peace, first from the Prior and then from the others.

When this has been done, the novice is led from the Chapter House to the church, with the community singing the psalm "How lovely is your dwelling place." The Prior leads the way, followed by the novice and then the fathers and brothers, seniors first. On arrival at the church the Prior, taking the novice by the hand, leads him to the sanctuary steps where he prostrates and prays. Meanwhile the community kneels and sings the verse *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*. At the conclusion, the Prior inclines on the misericord, and the community likewise. The Prior says the versicle and then adds a Prayer.

When it is finished the novice rises, makes a profound bow and goes to his place in choir.

Simple Profession

8 On the day before a novice takes either simple or solemn vows, before Vespers he prostrates in Chapter in the presence of the whole community and asks for mercy. When the Prior says, "Rise," he stands and asks to be received for Profession as the most humble servant of all; he remains standing to listen to the Prior's sermon.

On the day on which Profession is to be made, some relics of the saints are placed on the altar.

9 When simple Profession is made, at the beginning of the *Kyrie eleison* of the Conventual Mass the Novice Master or, if he is not available, some other monk puts the new cowl on the forms in front of the one who is to make Profession. After the Gospel, or the *Credo*, if it is sung, (the Universal Prayer being omitted), the one about to be professed takes the cowl in his hands and goes to the sanctuary steps, where he makes a profound bow and, putting down the cowl, remains standing. The Prior then comes to him and says the following prayers as described in the Ritual. He then blesses the cowl, which has been placed on the step in front of the one about to make Profession, and with hand extended says the appropriate Prayer. After the blessing he sprinkles the cowl with holy water.

When this has been done the candidate for Profession kneels in front of the Prior on the first step of the sanctuary and in a clear voice recites (if there are several, they recite it together) the psalm

"Preserve me, God" up to the verse "O Lord, it is you who are my portion" exclusively. Then with the help of the Sacristan, the Prior takes the short cowl and the mantle from off the novice and says: "May the Lord put off from your old self with its past deeds," and exchanges it for the long cowl, saying: "and may he clothe you with the new man, created in God's image, whose justice and holiness are born of truth." If there are several being professed he repeats the same words for each one.

After this the novice reads the formula of Profession (10.9 or 18.10) written on paper, which he holds in his hands. If there are several the formula is read by each one separately.

When he has made his vows the professed gives the document to the Prior and, beginning with the verse "O Lord, it is you who are my portion," he continues the psalm up to and including the "Glory to the Father ... Amen." Then, after making a profound bow, he returns to his place.

10 At the Mass of Profession — whether it be simple or solemn vows — the newly professed receives the Body of the Lord from the Prior's hands, immediately after the deacon, even if he is a priest, and thus he does not concelebrate; but he can celebrate Mass in private that day.

Solemn Profession

13 For the ceremonies in Chapter and the preparation of the altar see no. 8 above.

At the Mass, which is prioral, after the Gospel, or the *Credo* if it is sung, (the Universal Prayer being omitted), the one (or those) about to be professed goes to the center of the sanctuary steps, bows profoundly, and sings the verse: "Sustain me, Lord, as you have promised, that I may live; disappoint me not in my hope." The community, facing the altar, replies in the same way and on the same tone. When the verse has been repeated three times by both, the community sings: "Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy." Then the community, inclined on the misericords, prays in silence.

When the "As it was in the beginning" is begun, the professed stands erect and goes down the right choir towards the first stall and, before the monk occupying it, then before each of the other monks of that choir, he kneels and says "Pray for me, brother;" then passing to the left choir, he does the same.

14 After this the community stands with hoods down facing the altar, and the one to be professed stands facing the middle of the altar. All then listen as he clearly and distinctly reads the formula of Profession, written on parchment; after reading it he kisses the altar and places the parchment on it in offering. He then prostrates before the celebrant's

chair, at the feet of the priest, and he receives the blessing while the community inclines on the misericords. The Prior sings the Prayer with his hand extended over the professed. If there are several, he sings the Prayer in the plural. He then sprinkles him with holy water, and the professed returns to his choir stall.

In the Eucharistic Prayer, mention is made of the newly solemn professed, in order that his self-offering may be more intimately joined to that of our divine Redeemer.

Temporary Donation

16 Temporary Donation is made in Chapter before Vespers, in the presence of the community. The Prior is vested in church cowl and white stole and is seated in front of the altar. The novice prostrates and asks for mercy. Rising at the Prior's bidding, he says, "I ask for the love of God to be received for temporary Donation as the most humble servant of all, if this should be pleasing to you, Father, and to the community." Then, after hearing an exhortation from the Prior, while the community remains seated with hoods up, the novice goes forward and kneels at the step in front of the altar before the Prior. Then the Prior rises and, helped by the Sacristan and the Procurator, the Prior takes away the mantle and short cowl with the words, "May the Lord put off from you your old self with its past deeds," and clothing him with the long cowl without bands, adds, "And may he

clothe you with the new man created in God's image, whose justice and holiness are born of truth." If there are several, he repeats the same words for each one.

The novice then reads the formula of Donation (19.3), written on paper, which he holds in his hand. He gives it to the Prior after he has made his Donation. The Prior accepts his Donation with these words: "And I, dear brother, receive your Donation on the part of God and of the Order, and I promise in my name and in that of my successors to provide for all your needs both of body and soul, with paternal kindness, provided you remain faithful to your promises. And may the blessing of Almighty God, Father, † Son and Holy Spirit, descend upon you and remain with you for ever. R/. Amen." After the word "promise" he specifies the duration if it is a question of temporary Donation, or says "until the end of your life," if it is perpetual Donation.

Then all go to Vespers in choir.

Perpetual Donation

18 Perpetual Donation is made in the presence of the whole community before Vespers. First of all, the community assembles in Chapter, and the donate prostrates before the Prior, who is vested in church cowl and white stole. He asks for mercy, and at the Prior's bidding he stands and says: "I ask for the love of God to be received for perpetual Donation as the most humble servant of all, if this should be pleasing

to you, Father, and to the community." After the exhortation of the Prior, all go to the church, the donate following immediately after the Prior. The donate kneels on the sanctuary steps, with the Prior standing before him, while the monks stand with their hoods down in their places in choir, facing the altar. Then the donate reads the formula of Donation, and the Prior receives it and blesses him, as described in the previous section (no. 16).

Then, while the donate remains kneeling in the same place, the Prior goes to the last place of the right choir, and the community, kneeling in the stalls, sings the *Sub tuum præsidium*. The versicle is sung by the weekly chanter, and the Prior then says a Prayer.

Afterwards, he goes to take off the church cowl in the vestry and then to his place in choir. The donate also goes to his place, and Vespers are intoned.

Chapter 38

Election of a Prior

1 When a House of the Order loses its Prior, the Vicar takes a secret vote of those solemnly professed who have the right to elect, to ascertain whether they wish to exercise it. If the General Chapter is being held at the time, the community makes known its response to the Definitory as soon as possible. If the community does not wish to elect, or if, on the second ballot, the votes are still equally divided, then the

Vicar is to ask the General Chapter, or the Reverend Father if the General Chapter is not in session, to provide in their prudence for the orphaned House.

3 If the community replies that it wishes to elect, the Vicar must, in the Lord's name, seriously admonish the electors that the election of a pastor of souls is a very difficult but extremely important matter; since, in large measure, the whole flock will be good or bad, according as the pastor is good or bad: and that therefore, in this undertaking, they must proceed with all uprightness and prudence and fear of God. In electing a Prior, attention should be given in the first place to those qualities necessary for the guidance of souls. Some aptitude for the administration of temporal affairs is also required, but this alone cannot decide the choice; besides, the care of temporal things can be entrusted to others.

4 After the Vicar has put these points before the electors, a fast of three continuous days, unless a solemnity or Sunday intervenes, is prescribed for all.

5 Every day until it has a new Prior, the community sings the hymn, *Veni, Creator Spiritus* with united devotion, as described in the Ritual, after Lauds and Vespers.

6 All have the right, and indeed the obligation, to question those members of the Order who have a better knowledge of the persons involved; religious so consulted must be careful not to put pressure on the electors in any way.

8 Meanwhile, as quickly as conveniently possible, Confirming Officers will be summoned to preside at the election; both should be Priors, deputed by the General Chapter or the Reverend Father, or, if two Priors are not readily available, one a Prior and the other a monk, who may not, however, be a member of the electing community. Unless something prevents it, one of the Confirming Officers should be a Visitor of the Province.

9 Those so called to assist at the election should unite themselves in silence and prayer with the electing community; nor should they interfere in the coming election in any way. For it is not for them to suggest candidates, but only to reply truthfully to any that question them and simply to receive the votes of the electors.

10 On the day of the election, one of the Confirming Officers celebrates, or presides at the concelebration of the Mass of the Holy Spirit in the presence of the entire community. After the Mass, the Vicar assembles the Confirming Officers and the community in Chapter. While all are standing with hoods down, the principal Confirming Officer begins the prayers as described in the Ritual. Then he or his colleague gives a sermon, at the end of which only the electors remain in Chapter with the Confirming Officers, while all the others depart.

11 Then, the principal of the two will warn the electors that they are to elect someone whom they

judge, before God and conscience, to be truly fitted and suitable for the office of Prior in that House.

12 Then, at the bidding of the principal Confirming Officer, each will go to the place appointed for filling in the ballots; he will write only the name and surname of his choice, enclose the paper in an envelope, bring it to the table of the Confirming Officers, and place it in the vessel set there for that purpose.

13 If someone who has a vote is unable to assist in person at the election, he can still cast his vote, written on a ballot-paper and enclosed in an envelope like the others; the Confirming Officers themselves will, if necessary, go to his cell to receive it.

14 When all the votes have been cast, the principal Confirming Officer counts and opens them. The future Prior must obtain more than half the votes actually cast, subtracting, that is, the abstentions and the invalid votes. If no one gets this, the Confirming Officers will announce the names of those who received votes, and the number of votes each obtained. The ballot-papers will be burned then and there, and a new vote taken.

15 If, after three ballots, no one is elected, a fourth and last can take place the same day; before this, the monks will be at liberty to discuss the matter outside the Chapter House among themselves, but not with others. If still no one is elected, an account of the whole affair will be sent to the Reverend Father, who,

after consulting the Visitors of the Province, will provide the orphaned House with a pastor.

16 If, on the other hand, someone is elected, the principal Confirming Officer will announce in a loud voice, "We have a Prior;" he will then give his name, his House of Profession, any office he may hold, and the number of votes he obtained; after which, all the ballots are to be burned.

17 Upon the public announcement of the name of the Prior, the Vicar, unless he himself has been elected, will ask the Confirming Officers to confirm the elect as Prior. They, however, will assign a time-limit of one or two days, during which objections against either the form of the election or the person elected can be made.

21 Should the Confirming Officers find no impediment they will call all the electors, and them alone, into the Chapter, while the rest wait in the church. They will then confirm the one elected, the principal Confirming Officer saying: "We N. and N. humble Priors of the Houses N. and N. deputed by the General Chapter or the Reverend Father to preside at your election, by the authority of the Statutes, confirm for you as Prior of this House Dom N., professed of N. House, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." To which all present will respond, "Amen." If one of the Confirming Officers dies, is impeded or elected Prior, the other alone confirms the elect. Then, the second Confirming Officer is to read an account of the

election, which first the Confirming Officers, and after them all the electors, are to sign.

25 On the day the new Prior assumes office, at a pre-arranged time, the Confirming Officers (or, if they are absent, the Vicar and the Antiquior) escort the new Prior to his predecessor's place in church, holding his cowl on either side, and with everyone else following. There is a brief Prayer in church, everyone leaning against the forms with hoods down; afterwards, all go to the Chapter House, where the principal Confirming Officer (or Vicar) addresses the new Prior, who then makes the profession of faith required by Canon Law. Then the Vicar comes forward and, kneeling, places his joined hands between those of the Prior, who asks him, "Do you promise obedience?" He replies, "I promise" and after receiving the kiss of peace, he gets up and goes to his place. After the Vicar, the Antiquior and the others in order of seniority do the same.

26 The whole day is given over to rejoicing; we eat together in refectory, and no fast is observed except one which would not be broken even for a solemnity. The Office preceding refectory is sung in church.

Book Six, Chapter 41

The Liturgical Seasons

The Liturgy in our Order

1 End and Source

The Liturgy is at once both the end to which the action of the Church tends and at the same time the source from which flows all her strength. We who have left everything to seek God alone and to possess him more fully, should carry out the liturgical functions with particular reverence. For when we accomplish the Liturgy, especially the Eucharistic celebration, we have access to the Father through his Son, the Word Incarnate who suffered and was glorified, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Thus we achieve communion with the Most Holy Trinity.

2 A Sign of Contemplation

When we celebrate the divine worship in choir, or recite the Office in cell, it is the prayer of the Church which is being offered by our lips; for the prayer of Christ is one, and through the Sacred Liturgy, this one prayer is wholly present in each member. But among solitary monks, liturgical acts manifest in a special way the nature of the Church in which the human is directed and subjected to the divine, the visible to the invisible, action to contemplation.

3 A Complement to Solitary Prayer

Throughout the centuries, our Fathers have taken care that our rite should remain suited to our

eremitical vocation and the smallness of our communities, by being simple and sober and ordered primarily to the union of the soul with God. For we know that Mother Church has always approved of a diversity of liturgical rites by which her catholic and undivided nature is all the more clearly manifested. Thus, through the sacred rites, we are able to express the deeper aspirations of the Spirit, and prayer, springing from the depths of the heart, when it finds an echo in the sacred words of the Liturgy, acquires a new perfection.

4 Liturgy perfected by Solitary Prayer

Again, communal prayer, which we make our own through the liturgical action, is carried over into solitary prayer by which we offer to God an intimate sacrifice of praise, transcending all words. For the solitude of the cell is the place where a soul, enamored of silence, and forgetful of human cares, becomes a sharer in the fullness of the mystery by which Christ crucified, rising from the dead, returns to the bosom of the Father. A monk, therefore, provided he strives continually to cling to God, exemplifies within himself what is signified by the entire Liturgy.

Chapter 52

Liturgical Chant

Our Way of Chanting and the Psalmody

1 Our Order recognizes in the Gregorian chant an integral part of its Liturgy. We ought to take part in the Divine Office with vigor and purity so as to stand before the Lord with reverence and a ready will, not lazily nor half asleep, not sparing our voices nor clipping our words, but with virility, as is fitting, letting the Holy Spirit inspire both heart and voice as we sing.

Simplicity and measure should so regulate the chant that its hallmark will be a gravity which will encourage the spirit of devotion, for we should sing and praise the Lord with mind and voice. We sing best when we enter into the sentiments with which the psalms and canticles were written.

2 The psalmody should be neither too long and drawn out nor too quick. It should be rendered with a voice that is full, lively and clear, so that all can sing with devotion and attention, without any shouting, and combining depth of feeling with diligence in execution.

3 We make a substantial pause in the middle of the verse. At the beginning, the middle and the end of the verse we both start and finish together. No one should presume to start before the others nor to sing faster than they do; we should sing together and pause together, always listening to the voices of the others.

4 As far as possible, in every text be it the lessons, the psalms or the chant the accentuation and the interrelationship of the words should not be

neglected, for the correct phrasing of the words is of the greatest help for grasping and relishing the meaning.

5 It is of the greatest importance that novices should be properly instructed in the chant, and those are to be praised who, once they have left the novitiate, do not neglect this study.

6 In the Houses of the Order both the night and the day Offices are to be celebrated with chant whenever there are at least six fathers present who are in good health.

12 The Chanters put in charge of the two choirs should be so instructed and experienced that they give others good and timely direction in the psalmody and the chant according to the principles laid down above, but always under the direction and the authority of the Prior. They have further the task of gently correcting those who sing either too slowly or too quickly, or otherwise than is laid down, but it is better that they should do this outside the choir.

13 In their own choir, the Chanters raise or lower the pitch of the psalms and also of the rest of the chant, as seems expedient, so that all can sing without strain.

When the Chanters are present, no one else is to correct the choir except the Prior, or in his absence, the Vicar.

25 Let us observe this manner of chanting, singing in the sight of the most Holy Trinity and the holy angels,

penetrated with fear of God and aflame with a deep desire. May the songs we sing raise our minds to the contemplation of eternal realities, and our voices blend into one cry of jubilation before God our Creator.

Chapter 53

Ceremonies of the Community during the Divine Office

The Way We Enter Church

1 As soon as the bell is heard for those Hours of the Divine Office which we sing together in church, we leave all other occupations and hasten to church with the greatest reverence and decorum. For nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God.

2 As we enter church we take holy water and after making a profound bow to the Blessed Sacrament we go to our place in choir. We also make a profound bow at the sanctuary steps whenever we either go on to or leave the sanctuary and whenever we pass in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

After entering the stalls, we stand facing the altar with our hoods up, preparing ourselves in silence for the Office; when the President gives the signal we

either incline or kneel for the silent prayer, according to the time.

We do not enter the church during the period of private prayer which precedes the Office.

Prayer in Silence

6 (...) Such periods of silence allow our personal prayer to be more deeply fused with the Word of God and with the public prayer of the Church.

The Sign of the Cross

22 Out of respect for the divine majesty, we avoid all noise in church. We conduct ourselves with decorum and always keep our hands outside the cowl. Our eyes should be guarded always and everywhere, but most of all in church and refectory.

25 After the singing of the Hours, or of the Mass or of any other Office, the Prior leaves the church first, then the Vicar, then the others follow. No one should remain in church or elsewhere, unless evident necessity excuses him.

Chapter 54

Ceremonies for the Office in Cell

10 If sometimes manifest weakness or excessive weariness compels us to sit during the Office, or if we

are confined to bed with sickness, nevertheless we try to show as much reverence as possible when we recite the Office.

Everywhere, when we say the Divine Office, we must do so with reverence and decorum since the majesty and divinity of him whom we address and before whom we stand is everywhere the same, both watching over us and listening to us.

Book Nine, Chapter 62

Sacraments and Suffrages

The Sacraments

Penance

1 In the Sacrament of Penance, God, the Father of mercies, through the Paschal Mystery of his Son, reconciles us in the Spirit with himself, with the Church and with ourselves. We encourage all to have frequent recourse to this sacrament; for, by it, that conversion of the heart which is the basic aim of the monk becomes rooted in the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ.

2 The Prior must name and appoint several of the more discreet monks to hear the confessions of the others.

Moreover, any member of the Order can, for the peace of his conscience, both validly and licitly confess to any priest who has legitimate faculties.

3 We should avoid, as far as possible, hearing the confessions of those who are not members of our Order, and it is forbidden to hear the confessions of women (cf. 6.13).

Chapter 65

Suffrages

Since we are members one of another it is fitting that we take upon ourselves in prayer the burdens of our brothers, and that we pray especially for:

Each Member of the Order

For our Superiors

For our Families and Benefactors

For the Universal Church and for the Order

25 Although we offer many prayers for specific persons, we trust that all our prayers may, by the mercy of God, benefit first of all the universal Church, to the praise of the glory of God."

Excerpts from the Statutes of the Carthusian Order

St. Bruno's (Founder of the Carthusian Order) Profession of Faith

"We have carefully preserved Master Bruno's profession of faith, which he pronounced in the presence of all his assembled brothers, when he felt the time was approaching for him to go the way of all flesh, because he had urgently requested us to be witnesses of his faith before God.

Here is his profession of faith:

1. I firmly believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: the Father unbegotten, the only begotten Son, the Holy Spirit proceeding from them both; and I believe that these three Persons are but one God.

2. I believe that the same Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. I believe that the Virgin was chaste before she bore her child, that she remained a virgin while she bore her child, and continued a virgin ever after. I believe that the same Son of God was conceived among men, a true man with no sin. I believe the same Son of God was captured by the hatred of some of the Jews who did not believe, was bound unjustly, covered with spittle, and scourged. I believe that he died, was buried, and descended into hell to free those of his who were held there. He descended for our redemption, he rose again, he ascended into heaven, and from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

3. I believe also in the sacraments that the Church believes and holds in reverence, and especially that what has been consecrated on the altar is the true Flesh and the true Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we receive for the forgiveness of our sins and in the hope of eternal salvation. I believe in the resurrection of the flesh and everlasting life.

4. I acknowledge and believe the holy and ineffable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be but only one God, of only one substance, of only one nature, of only one majesty and power. We profess⁽¹⁾ that the Father was neither begotten nor created but that he has begotten. The Father takes his origin from no one; of him the Son is born and the Holy Spirit proceeds. He is the source and origin of all Divinity. And the Father, ineffable by his very nature, from his own substance has begotten the Son ineffably; but he has begotten nothing except what he is himself: God has begotten God, light has begotten light, and it is from him that all Fatherhood in heaven and on earth proceeds. Amen."

The Statutes (Rule of Life) of the Carthusian Order

Writings of St. Bruno (Founder of the Carthusian Order) and Blessed Guigo (Fifth Prior of Grand Chartreuse), Hugh of Balma

“Bruno's Letter to Raoul le Verd

“1. Bruno, to the esteemed Lord Raoul, provost of the Chapter of Rheims: health in the spirit of true charity. I am aware of your loyalty to our long and constant friendship, the more wonderful and excellent as it is found so rarely among men. Great distances and many years have separated us, but they have not diminished your affection for your friend. By your warm letters and your many kindnesses to me, and to Brother Bernard for my sake, you have reassured me of your friendship, and in many other ways besides. For your goodness, I send thanks. Though they are less than you deserve, they come from a love that is pure.

2. A long time ago I sent a messenger with some letters to you. He was faithful on other errands, but this time he has not come back. So I thought about sending one of our monks to explain my concerns in person, because I cannot do it adequately by letter.

3 . Now I want you to know — hoping it will not displease you — that I am in good health and things are going as well as I could wish. I pray God that it is the same for my soul. In my prayer I await the divine

mercy to heal my inner weakness and grant the blessings I desire.

4. I am living in a wilderness in Calabria, sufficiently distant from any center of human population. I am with my religious brethren, some of whom are very learned. They persevere in their holy life, waiting for the return of the master, ready to open the door for him as soon as he knocks. How can I speak adequately about this solitude, its agreeable location, its healthful and temperate climate? It is in a wide, pleasant plain between the mountains, with verdant meadows and pasturelands adorned with flowers. How can I describe the appearance of the gently rolling hills all around, and the secret of the shaded valleys where so many rivers flow, the brooks, and the springs? There are watered gardens and many fruit trees of various kinds.

5. But why am I giving so much time to these pleasantries? For a wise man there are other attractions, which are still more pleasant and useful, being divine. Nevertheless, scenes like these are often a relaxation and a diversion for fragile spirits wearied by a strict rule and attention to spiritual things. If the bow is stretched for too long, it becomes slack and unfit for its purpose.

6. Only those who have experienced the solitude and silence of the wilderness can know what benefit and divine joy they bring to those who love them.

There strong men can be recollected as often as they wish, abide within themselves, carefully cultivate the

seeds of virtue, and be nourished happily by the fruits of paradise.

There one can try to come to clear vision of the divine Spouse who has been wounded by love, to a pure vision that permits them to see God.

There they can dedicate themselves to leisure that is occupied and activity that is tranquil.

There, for their labor in the contest, God gives his athletes the reward they desire: a peace that the world does not know and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Remember lovely Rachel. Although she gave Jacob fewer offspring than Leah, he preferred her to the more fruitful one, whose vision was dim. The offspring of contemplation are more rare than the offspring of action; so it was that their father had more affection for Joseph and Benjamin than for their other brothers. Remember that better part, which Mary chose and which would not be taken away from her.

7. Remember the lovely Sunamitess, that virgin who was the only one in the land of Israel found worthy to attend to David and warm him when he was old. I should like for you, too, dear brother, to love God above all, so that warmed by his embrace you may be aflame with divine love. May this charity take root in your heart so that the glory of the world, that captivating and deceptive temptation, will soon seem abhorrent to you; that you will reject the riches whose cares are a burden to the soul; and that you will find

those pleasures, so harmful to body as well as spirit, distasteful.

8. You should always be aware of the one who wrote these words: "If anyone loves the world and what is in the world — the concupiscence of the flesh, the covetousness of the eyes and pride — the love of the Father is not in him"; and these, too: "Whoever wishes to be a friend of this world becomes an enemy of God." Is there any greater sin, any worse folly and downfall of the spirit, anything more hurtful or unfortunate, than to wish to be at war against the one whose power cannot be resisted and whose just vengeance cannot be evaded? Are we stronger than he? If, for the moment, his patient goodness moves us to repentance, will he not at last punish the offenses of those who disregard him? What is more perverse, more contrary to reason, to justice, and to nature itself, than to prefer creature to Creator, to pursue perishable goods instead of eternal ones, those of earth rather than those of heaven?

9. My dear friend, what do you intend to do? What, if not to believe God's counsels, to believe Truth who cannot deceive? This is his counsel to you: "Come to me, you who are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you." Isn't it a burden both unprofitable and unproductive to be tormented by concupiscence, constantly under attack by the cares, anxieties, fears, and sorrows that are the result of those desires? What heavier burden is there than that which makes the soul descend from its sublime dignity down to the underworld, where all holiness is held in contempt?

Then, my brother, flee all this agitation and misery, and go from the storm of this world to the cove where there is tranquil and certain rest.

10. You know what Wisdom herself says to us: "If you do not renounce all your possessions, you cannot be my disciple." Is there anyone who cannot see how beautiful and useful and pleasant it is to dwell in his school under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, there to learn divine philosophy, which alone can confer true happiness?

11. So, it is important for you to consider your duty carefully. If the invitation from love does not suffice for you, if the glimpse of useful goods does not impel you, at least let necessity and the fear of punishment restrain you.

12. You know the promise you made and to whom you made it. He is all-powerful and terrible, that Lord to whom you consecrated yourself in a pleasing oblation. It is not permitted to lie to him, nor is it profitable, because he does not permit himself to be mocked with impunity.

13. You will remember that day when we were together — you, Fulco le Borgne, and I — in the little garden beside Adam's house, where I was staying. We talked for some time, I think, about the false attractions and the perishable riches of this world and about the joys of eternal glory. With fervent love for God we then promised, we vowed, we decided soon to leave the shadows of the world to go in search of the good that is everlasting and receive the monastic

habit. We would have carried out our plan had Fulco not gone to Rome, but we put it off until he would return. He delayed, and other matters came up, his courage waned, and his enthusiasm cooled.

14. What else is there for you to do, my dear friend, but to acquit yourself of this pledge as soon as possible? Otherwise you will have been guilty of a lie all this time, and you will incur the wrath of the all-powerful One as well as the terrible sufferings to come. What sovereign would permit one of his subjects to deny him with impunity a service that had been promised, particularly a service he valued highly? Do not take my word for it, but believe the prophet and the Holy Spirit saying: "Make vows to the Lord, your God, and fulfill them; let all round about him bring gifts to the terrible Lord who checks the pride of princes, who is terrible to the kings of the earth" (Ps 76:12f). Pay attention: this is the voice of the Lord, the voice of your God, the voice of the one who is terrible and who checks the pride of princes, the voice of the one who is terrible to other kings of the earth. Why does the Spirit of God teach that so strongly, if not to encourage you earnestly to do what you promised by your vow? Why is it hard for you to fulfill a vow that will not cause you to lose nor even diminish anything you have but will rather bring you great profit from the one to whom you owe it?

15. Do not allow yourself to be delayed by deceitful riches — they cannot relieve our poverty; nor by the dignity of the provost's office — it cannot be exercised without great peril to the soul. Permit me to say that it

would be repugnant and unjust to appropriate for your own use the possessions of which you are merely the administrator, not the owner. If the desire for honor and glory inclines you to live in style — and you cannot afford those expenses on what you possess — do you not in one way or another deprive some people of what you give to others? That is not an act of beneficence or of generosity. No act is charitable if it is not just.

16. But I would like to discourage you from withdrawing from divine charity in favor of serving the Archbishop, who trusts your advice and depends upon it. It is not easy to give sound, beneficial advice all the time. Divine love, being more sound, is more beneficial. What is more sound and more beneficial, more innate, more in accord with human nature than to love the good? And what is as good as God? Still more, is there anything good besides God? So, the holy soul who has any comprehension of this good, of his incomparable brilliance, splendor, and beauty, burns with the flame of heavenly love and cries out: "I thirst for God, the living God. When will I come and see the face of God?" (Ps 42:3).

17. My brother, do not disregard this admonition from your friend. Do not turn a deaf ear to the words of the Holy Spirit. Rather, my dearest friend, satisfy my desire and my long waiting, so that my worry, anxiety, and fear for you will torment me no longer. If you should leave this life — may God preserve you! — before having fulfilled what you owe by your vow,

you would leave me destroyed by sadness and without hope for consolation.

18. That is why I beg you to grant my wish: at least come on a devotional pilgrimage to Saint Nicholas, and from there to me. You will see the one who loves you more than anyone else, and together we will talk about our affairs, our religious observance, and what concerns the good of us both. I trust in the Lord that you will not regret having undertaken the difficulty of such an arduous journey.

19. I have exceeded the bounds of an ordinary letter because, being unable to enjoy having you here, I wanted to talk with you a little longer by writing this. I sincerely hope that you, my brother, will long remain in good health and remember my advice.

Please send me The Life of Saint Remi, because it is impossible to find a copy where we are. Farewell."

Bruno's Letter to his Carthusian brothers

"Brother Bruno, to his brethren in Christ, beloved more than anything in the world: greeting in the Lord.

Through our dear brother Landuino's account, so detailed and so consoling, I have learned of your uncompromising yet wise observance, so commendable and deserving of praise.

He spoke to me about your holy love, your untiring zeal for purity of heart and virtue. My spirit rejoices in the Lord. Yes, I rejoice, I give praise and thanks to the Lord, at the same time that I sigh with sorrow. I rejoice, yes — it is right that I should — to see you grow in virtue; but I am distressed and blush, being so sluggish and neglectful in the misery of my sins.

2. Rejoice, my dear brothers, over your blessed vocation and the generous gift of divine grace you have received. Rejoice over having escaped the turbulent waters of this world, where there are so many perils and shipwrecks. Rejoice over having reached the peaceful quiet of a sheltered cove. Many desire to arrive there; many even tried to attain it, but did not arrive. Many did not remain after experiencing it, because they had not received that grace from God.

Also, my brothers, take it as certain and proven: no one, after having enjoyed so desirable a good, can ever give it up without regrets, if he is serious about the salvation of his soul.

3. This I say about you, my beloved brothers: my soul glorifies the Lord, when I consider the wonders of his mercy toward you after hearing the report of your dear father, your Prior, who is filled with joy and pride because of you. I, too, rejoice because, even though you do not read, almighty God with his own finger has written love and the knowledge of his holy law in your hearts. By your works you show what you love and what you know. With all possible care

and zeal you practice true obedience, which is doing the will of God, the key and the seal of all spiritual observance, and that could never be without great humility and outstanding patience accompanied by a chaste love for the Lord and true charity. It is clear that you are wisely reaping the sweet and refreshing fruits of the Divine Scriptures.

4. Therefore, my brothers, remain in the condition you are in, and flee as from a pestilence those deceitful laymen who seek to corrupt you, distributing their writings and whispering into your ear things that they neither understand nor love and which they contradict by their words and their acts. They are idle gyrovagues (11) who disgrace every good religious and think they should be praised for defaming those who really deserve praise, while they despise rules and obedience.

5. I would like to keep brother Landuino with me because he is often seriously ill. But because he feels he cannot find health, or joy, or life, or any improvement without you, he disagrees with me. His tears and sighs for your sake have shown me what you are to him and how much he loves all of you in perfect charity. I do not want to force him to stay, because I do not want to hurt him, or you, who are so dear to me on account of the merit of your virtues. That, my brothers, is why I urge you, I humbly but energetically beg you to show by your deeds the charity that you nourish in your hearts for him who is your beloved Father and Prior and tactfully and attentively providing for him whatever his numerous

infirmities require. Perhaps he will decline to accept your loving services, preferring to endanger his health and his life rather than mitigate in any way the strictness of exterior observance, which of course could not be permitted; but that will no doubt be because he who is first in the community would blush to find himself last in observance and because he would fear to be the one among you to become lax and lukewarm on account of weakness. In my opinion, there is no reason to fear that. So that you will not be deprived of this grace, I authorize you to take my place in this one matter: you have permission to oblige him, respectfully, to take everything you give him for his health.

6. As regards myself, know that what I desire most after God is to go to see you. And as soon as I can, I will, with the help of God. Farewell."

THE SOLITARY LIFE

A Letter of Guigo, 5th Prior of the Grande Chartreuse. Written about 1135, in the last days of his priorate, to an unknown friend.

Introduced and translated from the Latin by Thomas Merton, (Copyright © 1977 by the Trustees of The Thomas Merton Legacy Trust)

"Introduction

Guigo is one of those extraordinary figures in literature and in spirituality who, unknown and perhaps in some sense inaccessible to the many, have

been accorded the most unqualified admiration by the discerning few. Thirty years ago Dom Wilmart, editing Guigo's *Meditations*, did not hesitate to say that he considered this little book "the most original work that has come down to us from the truly creative period of the middle ages." No small praise when we reflect who Guigo's contemporaries were! Dom Wilmart names a few: not only Hildebert, William de Conches, Bernard of Chartres, Honorius "of Autun", Gilbert de la Porrée, but even Abelard, Hugh of St. Victor and St. Bernard himself. The opinion is neither rash nor even new. The very ones Wilmart names were among the first to praise Guigo without reservation. Peter the Venerable called him "the fairest flower of our religion." We know what effect the *Meditations* of Guigo had on Bernard of Clairvaux (see St. Bernard, Letter XI). Some of the most fundamental ideas in Bernard's own doctrine of love were inspired by his Carthusian friend. Wilmart compares Guigo, without exaggeration, to Pascal. (1) We find in the *Meditations* the same psychological finesse as in the *Pensées*, the same metaphysical solidity, the same religious depth. But we also find in the twelfth century Carthusian a rocklike wholeness and coherence, untroubled by the anxieties and ambivalences that stirred the solitary of the convent of Port Royal. The difference is doubtless to be sought not only in the characters of the two and in their lives, but also in their times.

Fifth Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, Guigo was born in 1083 in Dauphiné. (2) He entered the Chartreuse at the age of twenty-three, and three years later was

elected Prior. We cannot suppose that the Carthusians were given to impetuous or ill-considered action. The choice is significant. In fact, Guigo held this post for thirty of the most crucial years in the early history of the Carthusians. He made the first foundations and wrote the *Consuetudines* (Customs). He edited the Letters of St. Jerome (and the edition has recently been found). He wrote his *Meditations* as well as a life of St. Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble. In 1132 he rebuilt the Grande Chartreuse which had been de-stroyed by an avalanche.

The present Letter is supposed to have been written after this event, toward the end of Guigo's life. (He died 27 July, 1136.) We do not know to whom it was addressed, nor do we know how he responded to the invitation.

The Letter itself is a masterpiece of its kind, surely worthy of an assiduous reader of Jerome. It contains some of the classical tropes on the solitary life; the *otium negotiosum*, or the contemplative leisure which is more productive than any activity; the *militia Christi*, in which the monk, soldier of Christ, fights not against others but against his own passions, overcoming the world in himself, offering his bodily life in sacrifice to Christ. The hermit, sitting alone in silence and poverty, is the 'true philosopher' because, as Guigo says in another place he seeks "the truth in its nakedness, stripped and nailed to the Cross" ("*Sine aspectu et decore, crucique affixa, adoranda est veritas!*")

It is this utter devotion to truth that has led Guigo himself, we feel, into solitude. To love solitude is to love truth, for in solitude one is compelled to grapple with illusion. The solitary life is a battle with subjectivity in which victory is to be gained not by the subject but by Truth. Unless we struggle with the falsity and delusion in ourselves, we can never break through the deceptive veil of rationalizations with which 'the world' adorns and conceals its empty wisdom.

There is an inimitable naked power in the austere style of Guigo the Carthusian from which every suggestion of ornament, indeed every useless word is ruthlessly excluded. The extraordinary compression of this thought and language convey something of the fervor, the passionate seriousness of this saint and genius, a pure exemplar of the Carthusian spirit and certainly the greatest Carthusian writer.

Abbey of Gethsemani, Lent, 1963.

Editor's notes:

1. Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), French mathematician, physicist, religious philosopher, and master of prose, author of the *Pensées* (Thoughts). He propagated a religious doctrine that taught the experience of God through the heart rather than through reason.

2. This Guigo, also known as Guigo I, or Guigo of Saint Romain, after the name of the castle where he was born, is not to be confused with Guigo II (died 1193), 9th Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, who wrote

an important work on prayer, the Ladder of Paradise or Ladder for Monks, quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 2654.

GUIGO'S LETTER

To the Reverend N. Guigo Least of those servants of the Cross who are in the Charterhouse to live and to die... for Christ.

One man will think another happy. I esteem him happy above all who does not strive to be lifted up with great honors in a palace, but who elects, humble, to live like a poor country man in a hermitage; who with thoughtful application loves to meditate in peace; who seeks to sit by himself in silence.

For to shine with honors, to be lifted up with dignities is in my judgment a way of little peace, subject to perils, burdened with cares, treacherous to many, and to none secure. Happy in the beginning, perplexed in its development, wretched in its end. Flattering to the unworthy, disgraceful to the good, generally deceptive to both. While it makes many wretched, it satisfies none, makes no one happy.

But the poor and lonely life, hard in its beginning, easy in its progress, becomes, in its end, heavenly. It is constant in adversity, trusty in hours of doubt,

modest in those of good fortune. Sober fare, simple garments, laconic speech, chaste manners. The highest ambition, because without ambition. Often wounded with sorrow at the thought of past wrong done, it avoids present, is wary of future evil. Resting on the hope of mercy, without trust in its own merit, it thirsts after heaven, is sick of earth, earnestly strives for right conduct, which it retains in constancy and holds firmly for ever. It fasts with determined constancy in love of the cross, yet consents to eat for the body's need. In both it observes the greatest moderation for when it dines it restrains greed and when it fasts, vanity. It is devoted to reading, but mostly in the Scripture canon and in holy books where it is more intent upon the inner marrow of meaning than on the froth of words. But you may praise or wonder more at this: that such a life is continually idle yet never lazy. For it finds many things indeed to do, so that time is more often lacking to it than this or that occupation. It more often laments that its time has slipped away than that its business is tedious.

What else? A happy subject, to advise leisure, but such an exhortation seeks out a mind that is its own master, concerned with its own business disdaining to be caught up in the affairs of others, or of society. Who so fights as a soldier of Christ in peace as to refuse double service as a soldier of God and a hireling of the world. Who knows for sure it cannot here be glad with this world and then in the next reign with God.

What else? A happy subject, to advise leisure, but such an exhortation seeks out a mind that is its own master, concerned with its own business disdaining to be caught up in the affairs of others, or of society. Who so fights as a soldier of Christ in peace as to refuse double service as a soldier of God and a hireling of the world. Who knows for sure it cannot here be glad with this world and then in the next reign with God.

Small matters are these, and their like, if you recall what drink He took at the gibbet, Who calls you to kingship. Like it or not, you must follow the example of Christ poor if you would have fellowship with Christ in His riches. If we suffer with Him, says the Apostle, we shall reign with Him. If we die with Him, then we shall live together with Him. The Mediator Himself replied to the two disciples who asked Him if one of them might sit at His right hand and the other at His left: "Can you drink the chalice which I am about to drink?" Here He made clear that it is by cups of earthly bitterness that we come to the banquet of the Patriarchs and to the nectar of heavenly celebrations.

Since friendship strengthens confidence I charge, advise and beg you, my best beloved in Christ, dear to me since the day I knew you, that as you are farseeing, careful, learned and most acute, take care to save the little bit of life that remains still unconsumed, snatch it from the world, light under it the fire of love to burn it up as an evening sacrifice to God. Delay

not, but be like Christ both priest and victim, in an odor of sweetness to God and to men.

Now, that you may fully understand the drift of all my argument, I appeal to your wise judgment in few words with what is at once the counsel and desire of my soul. Undertake our observance as a man of great heart and noble deeds, for the sake of your eternal salvation. Become a recruit of Christ and stand guard in the camp of the heavenly army watchful with your sword on your thigh against the terrors of the night.

Here, then, I urge you to an enterprise that is good to undertake, easy to carry out and happy in its consummation. Let prayers be said, I beg you, that in carrying out so worthy a business you may exert yourself in proportion to the grace that will smile on you in God's favor. As to where or when you must do this thing, I leave it to the choice of your own prudence. But to delay or to hesitate will not, as I believe, serve your turn.

I will proceed no further with this, for fear that rough and uncouth lines might offend you, a man of palaces and courts.

An end and a measure then to this letter, but never an end to my affection of love for you.

Releuando. *G. Erone erone*
 et caritate magis et unice viron; *Alia* ab
 ego illa papae res et felix. nō q̄ sapient
 cuncta honoris ambar in palatio. 5; qui hu
 5 malis rubicari eligit in dermo. Audiosus
 philosophari diligit in ocio. Solus ridere ap
 parit in silentio. Quid fulgere honoris cel
 sis et dignitatis res et in eo rubicari vironis
 q̄ta. Subiecta p̄culis obnoxia curis. mul
 10 tis suspecta. nullis statura. Leta in gredia.
 p̄p̄ta in ista. tristis in fine. Indignus ap
 plaudens. bonis indignans. utrosq̄ p̄
 rōq̄ deubet. Et cō noster fides multos.
 omnino reddat beati siue felix. Ar una
 15 paup̄ et solitaria. in p̄mo gaudiis. in
 p̄ctu solis. i gremio efficit. q̄lētis. i abu
 sis cōstet. i dubis fida. i p̄p̄i modesta.
 Sobria in vici. simplex in habitis. pudica
 iuribus. cetera i morib; *Maxime ambien*
 20 di. q̄a minime et ambiosa. Pro comitib;
 ope cōpungit. malis. instantia vnat.
 caueq̄ fuit. p̄sumat de p̄m. diffidat
 de meritis. q̄lētis inuit. trena factu
 dit. phatol moiet enire expent. cōstet
 25 ter reaner. phemut statur. Icanis
 m̄stir. p̄p̄t crucis cōsuetudinē. cūlq̄s
 acquiescit. p̄p̄t carnis necessitatē. Sū
 mo uicq̄. modestissime dispensant.
 q̄a cōp̄m̄ quoraet p̄andere stidu.
 30 ut guli. quoraet abstinerē iactantia.
 Iuenerit luerit. i; inq̄me canonicū
 et rebus sit. in q̄b; est maḡ occupat me
 dulla sensu. quā spūma uerbor;
 35 Quid; magis m̄erit uel laudet. sic ē
 cōm̄ia in ocio. q̄b; nūq̄ ē ocio. *Et*
 Sui nūq̄. officia ita multiplicat. ut ei
 sit p̄p̄tū. q̄nt d̄sit sp̄m̄. q̄ uane
 actionis negotiū. Et seip̄m de q̄nt
 facit cōp̄tū. q̄ de op̄i cōsidio;
 40 Si q̄b; plura. scilicet quidē m̄ia ē sua.
 docet oia ē. Et adhortatio animū
 sui iur̄t. nūq̄. qui sui sollicitus. alie
 nū ul' publicis implicari negotiū.

op̄at; *Q. d. quatuor sic m̄it. ut nōlet et*
 simul deus m̄it. et am̄ia cōstet. Quid; fuit
 45 erone. Et nō p̄p̄t h̄c gaudiū cō d̄it. et i n̄it regnat
 cō d̄it. Sed p̄p̄ta fuit ista. et h̄c fuit. Et m̄it d̄it
 habere ad p̄p̄tū. q̄t uirgine ad regnū. *Et nōlet*
 op̄at; ut ē. p̄p̄tū. q̄nt d̄it. q̄t d̄it. *Et nōlet*
 50 h̄c cōstet. Si cōp̄tū. h̄c. et d̄it. *Et nōlet*
 n̄. Et cōstet. Et cōstet. *Et nōlet*
 q̄nt p̄p̄tū. ut d̄it. cōp̄tū. ad d̄it. Et d̄it. *Et nōlet*
 i d̄it. ad fuit. Et p̄p̄tū. *Et nōlet*
 ego habet. *Et nōlet*
 55 Et cōstet. *Et nōlet*
 la cōstet. *Et nōlet*
 la. *Et nōlet*
 60 *Et nōlet*
 65 *Et nōlet*
 70 *Et nōlet*
 75 *Et nōlet*
 80 *Et nōlet*

Praise of Life in Solitude

by Guigo, Fifth Prior of the Grande Chartreuse

**Consuetudines Guiguonis (1128): cap. LXXX
Statuta Ordinis Cartusiensis (1991): 0.2.2 - 0.2.9**

“In praise of solitude, to which we have been called in a special way, we will say but little; since we know that it has already obtained enthusiastic recommendation from many saints and wise men of such great authority, that we are not worthy to follow in their steps.

For, as you know, in the Old Testament, and still more so in the New, almost all of God's secrets of major importance and hidden meaning were revealed to His servants, not in the turbulence of the crowd but in the silence of solitude; and you know, too, that these same servants of God, when they wished to penetrate more profoundly some spiritual truth, or to pray with greater freedom, or to become a stranger to things earthly in an ardent elevation of the soul, nearly always fled the hindrance of the multitude for the benefits of solitude.

Thus — to illustrate by some examples — when seeking a place for meditation, Isaac went out to a field alone (Genesis 24:63); and this, one may assume, was his normal practice, and not an isolated incident. Likewise, it was when Jacob was alone, having dispatched his retinue ahead of him, that he saw God face to face (Genesis 32:24-30), and was thus favored

with a blessing and a new and better name, thus receiving more in one moment of solitude than in a whole lifetime of social contact.

Scripture also tells us how Moses, Elijah and Elisha esteemed solitude, and how conducive they found it to an even deeper penetration of the divine secrets; and note, too, what perils constantly surrounded them when among men, and how God visited them when alone.

Overwhelmed by the spectacle of God's indignation, Jeremiah, too, sat alone (Jeremiah 15:17). He asked that his head might be a fountain, his eyes a spring for tears, to mourn the slain of his people (cf. Jeremiah 9:1); and that he might the more freely give himself to this holy work he exclaimed, "O, that I had in the desert a wayfarer's shelter!" (cf. Jeremiah 9:2), clearly implying that he could not do this in a city, and thus indicating what an impediment companions are to the gift of tears.

Jeremiah also said, "It is good for a man to await the salvation of God in silence" (Lamentations 3:26) - which longing solitude greatly favors; and he adds, "It is good also for the man who has borne the yoke from early youth" (Lamentations 3:27) - a very consoling text for us, many of whom have embraced this vocation from early manhood; and yet again he speaks saying, "The solitary will sit and keep silence, for he will lift himself above himself" (Lamentations 3:28). Here the prophet makes reference to nearly all

that is best in our life: peace, solitude, silence, and ardent thirst for the things of heaven.

Later, as an example of the supreme patience and perfect humility of those formed in this school, Jeremiah speaks of "Jeering of the multitude and cheek buffeted in scorn, bravely endured."

John the Baptist, greater than whom, the Savior tells us, has not arisen among those born of women (Matthew 11:11), is another striking example of the safety and value of solitude. Trusting not in the fact that divine prophecy had foretold that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, and that he would go before Christ the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah (cf. Luke 1:11-17); nor in the fact that his birth had been miraculous, and that his parents were saints, he fled the society of men as something dangerous and chose the security of desert solitude (cf. Luke 1:80); and, in actual fact, as long as he dwelt alone in the desert, he knew neither danger nor death.

Moreover the virtue and merit he attained there are amply attested by his unique call to baptize Christ, and by his acceptance of death for the sake of justice. For, schooled in sanctity in solitude, he alone of all men became worthy to wash Christ (cf. Matthew 3:13-17) — Christ who washes all things clean —, and worthy, too, to undergo prison bonds and death itself in the cause of truth (cf. Matthew 14:3-12).

Jesus himself, God and Lord, whose virtue was above both the assistance of solitude and the hindrance of

social contact, wished nevertheless, to teach us by his example; so before beginning to preach or work miracles he was, as it were, proved by a period of fasting and temptation in the solitude of the desert (cf. Matthew 4:1-11); similarly, Scripture speaks of him leaving his disciples and ascending the mountain alone to pray (cf. Matthew 14:23). Then there was that striking example of the value of solitude as a help to prayer when Christ, just as his Passion was approaching, left even his Apostles to pray alone (cf. Matthew 26:39-44) — a clear indication that solitude is to be preferred for prayer even to the company of Apostles.

We cannot here pass over in silence a mystery that merits our deepest consideration; the fact that this same Lord and Savior of mankind deigned to live as the first exemplar of our Carthusian life when he retired alone to the desert and gave himself to prayer and the interior life; treating his body hard with fasting, vigils and other penances; and conquering the devil and his temptations with spiritual arms (cf. Matthew 4:1-11).

And now, dear reader, ponder and reflect on the great spiritual benefits derived from solitude by the holy and venerable Fathers — Paul, Antony, Hilarion, Benedict, and others without number — and you will readily agree that for the spiritual savor of psalmody; for penetrating the message of the written page; for kindling the fire of fervent prayer; for engaging in profound meditation; for losing oneself in mystic contemplation; for obtaining the heavenly dew of

purifying tears, — nothing is more helpful than solitude.

The reader should not rest content with the above examples in praise of our vocation; let him gather together many more, either from present experience or from the pages of Holy Writ."

Hugh of Balma – Five Ways of Praising God

Although God is unnameable in and of Himself, nevertheless we name Him in terms of His works. And on the basis of these works we praise His magnificence.

We praise Him *first* in accordance with the fact that He is the Origin and Beginning of every creature, both physical and spiritual.

Secondly, somewhat more sublimely, we praise Him according as He stands in relation to those contemplating Him in His glory, viz., angelic and human minds, whom He beatifies by means of their contemplation of His ineffable beauty, which they behold as it is, and from whom He eliminates, in this way, all neediness.

Thirdly, still more sublimely, we praise Him according as He stands in relation to all creatures, whom, as Most High, He commands; and all creatures, both rational and non-rational, obey Him as their Majesty.

Fourthly, we praise Him in regard to His most noble creature, viz., man. We praise Him principally in regard to men who serve their Creator in love.

We praise Him with respect to the following: that the Father foreshows to His sons, still dwelling in this life that is subject to misery, many gifts of inner consolation.

These gifts are certain indicators of a future happiness, or bliss – indicators for men who, barely existing, are as sons of the Most High.

Fifthly, and lastly, we praise Him in regard to those sinners who have for a long time existed in sins, however great, and have protracted their wicked deeds.

Notwithstanding, when they beat upon the door of divine graciousness, the divine mercy gathers them into the bosom of its love.

And God mercifully forgives them for the sins committed – forgives them in such a way that from Him, against whom they have so abominably offended, they will one day obtain, more than do the innocent, quite abundant and quite precious benefits flowing down from Heaven.

For in these men the divine goodness is shown – shown from the initial manifestation of divinely diffused grace all the way down to the dregs of those existing in sins.

And these five praises are succinctly included in the following five words: "good," "beautiful," "lord," "sweet," "merciful."

And after God has been praised with these words, one will be able, without fear, to ask for that which he intended to, viz., the full remission of the wicked acts that he has done.

But because, on account of exceeding carnality and mutability, the mind cannot obtain all those foregoing goods, according as would be expedient, it must act expediently after the fashion of those who have important business at the palace of a regal court or of a supreme pontiff.

These men, seeing that they cannot obtain what they propose, approach some important member of the court in order that what they cannot obtain by themselves may be obtained by the interceding reverence of that intermediary.

Now, suppose that this needy man locates some outstanding individual who meets the conditions of being humble enough to listen to the petitions of the needy man and of being distinguished in the court, so that (if necessary) many others on the court will intercede with him for the needy man – an outstanding individual beloved by the supreme pontiff, so that the pontiff, being bound to him in affection, wishes to deny him nothing at all.

In such a case the needy man will obtain, without any subterfuge or any outright refusal, that which he desires.

But because, among the other saints, the foregoing features are found most excellently in the Blessed Virgin, let the mind flee unto her, speaking as follows:

“You, who are most merciful, who are more humble than all others, who are someone most powerful who inclines herself toward sinners, because through you the fallen angels are restored, through you the door of life is opened to the saints:

“For these reasons, if you intercede in favor of a needy one, all others will likewise join you in interceding with the most beloved Eternal King, whom you have suckled at your sacred breasts, so that He is joined to you by an ineffable bond of love.

“I beseech you, then, to assist me in my need, so that in this way I may obtain through your assistance the true purgation of my sins, so that, at length, I may by means of perfect love constrain Him whom you have loved with all your being.”

Thereafter, let the man’s mind say “Ave Maria” forty or fifty times – either at the same time or dividing the forty or fifty by a certain number, if he wishes to, according as it will seem best to him.

Let his mind address these immediately to her face, rendering them to her daily for a tribute and as a sign of love and of spiritual homage, saluting her,

attentively and affectionately, not in a picture of her on the wall or in a wooden sculpture of her, but in Heaven . . .

But in order that the mind obtain the fulfillment of its desire, it must imitate the divine inflow.

Thus, just as the spiritual sun of the heavenly city of Jerusalem shines, as far as concerns itself, upon the good and the evil with rays of its goodness, so it is necessary that the mind prayerfully seek, with all its might, the mercy of the Creator not only for itself or for its kinsmen but also for all those who are engraven with the image of the most blessed Trinity, so that just as God created all and redeemed all so too He may deign mercifully to aid all without distinction of persons.

And, assuredly, by means of so praying, the mind will quite quickly call forth the divine mercy – insofar as the mind imitates the vestiges of the Creator-of-all-things and the Redeemer-of-all-mortals, who sheds His love on all men most diffusely.

Unless for a brief while the intercession of the one praying both for himself and for others is concentrated in a particular way (although love is always such as to be diffused), the one who is earnestly praying will adopt, for others as for himself, the same affectional manner (regardless of the measure of its smallness), speaking as follows:

“O good, beautiful, sweet, merciful Lord, have mercy on all sinners, whom You have redeemed by Your most precious blood.”

And then, as best he can, let him have the following representation when he says “have mercy”: that the entire world be inclined toward its Creator through true worship and very worthy reverence . . .

Although this purgative way seems puerile to some, especially in regard to the subsequent two ways, nevertheless unless the mind passes through this way, being careful and attentive in its approach to engaging in divine matters, it will never in the present life be able to ascend, in practice, unto a knowledge of divine matters or of God;

nor will it be able to ascend unto the fervor of unitive love, nor will it be able to be separated from those lower objects that consume those who possess them.

Therefore, the soul ought to humble itself in such a way that, first, it recalls its sins in some private and very hidden place (especially in the secret silence of the night).

Let the soul recall its greater sins succinctly, lest the devil expose it to delighting in that thing for which it was supposed to obtain medicine.

Raising its face toward Heaven, let it, as best it can, enumerate before God (as if speaking to Him) its greater sins (up to ten or twelve); and, in enumerating, let the soul sigh, exalting God in every

respect and disparaging itself in every respect, and saying as best it can:

“Lord Jesus Christ,” (or phrasing it in whatever manner it prefers) “I am the most worthless, most miserable sinner, more wretched and more abominable than all others.

Although this purgative way seems puerile to some, especially in regard to the subsequent two ways, nevertheless unless the mind passes through this way, being careful and attentive in its approach to engaging in divine matters, it will never in the present life be able to ascend, in practice, unto a knowledge of divine matters or of God;

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respect and disparaging itself in every respect, and saying as best it can:

“Lord Jesus Christ,” (or phrasing it in whatever manner it prefers) “I am the most worthless, most miserable sinner, more wretched and more abominable than all others.

“I have offended against Your majesty and mercy by means of so many and so grave wrongdoings that I am unable to count them – even as the sands of the seashore, because of their multitude, cannot be counted.”

And let the soul sigh and groan as effectively as it can. For just as a file brings it about, in the case of a piece of iron, that with each single rubbing some rust is removed, so each sigh and groan removes some of the rust of sin – the rust which remains even after the outpouring of grace.

And in this way the soul, purifying itself more and more, is elevated more and more by divine assistance – elevated unto perceiving things that reason does not investigate and that intellect does not behold.”

Hugh of Balma (13th-14th Century): Mystical Theology, Via Purgativa, 12 (translated by Jasper Hopkins).

THE BLESSED TRINITY AND THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE

by a Carthusian

PROLOGUE

*Per ipsum et cum ipso et in ipso
est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti:
in unitate Spiritus Sancti, omnis
honor et gloria*
Canon Missae

In the pages which follow, the writer has made no attempt to present a complete treatise on the dogma of the most Blessed Trinity. Nor is it his desire to treat of any particular problem of the interior life, or to suggest new solutions. His aim has simply been to invite the reader's attention to the more general vistas of the supernatural life. We shall view the whole horizon of the Faith, with its practical consequences. We shall start with the consideration of the Source — the Blessed Trinity, the most intimate life of God — in order to come back finally to the consummation of all things in this same mystery. The life of all created things, and in particular the higher and interior life of man, will thus appear as having both its root and its end in the depths of the divine being.

If one is to arrive at the term, it is essential that one should know the direction. God invites us to set out upon the way which will lead us to himself. This way we must know if we are to walk with surety. The vision of the end will give us the desire, which will give birth to confidence, and this confidence in turn is the source of all strength.

Our humble attempt will have achieved its aim if it has helped to make us aware of our dignity as children of God. It is true that God, according to the inspired Word, dwells in light inaccessible (I Timothy vi, 16). But it is also true that thanks to the redeeming Blood of Christ we are raised to a supernatural state and are become children of God. Does not, indeed, the Apostle say: *In ipso vivimus et movemur et sumus* – *in him we live and move and have our being* (cf. Acts xvii, 28). *Filii et haeredes* – *sons and heirs* (Romans viii, 17).

It suffices – and it is, in fact, necessary – that we should live solely under the influence of the Holy Spirit if we are to become fully his 'sons'. *Qui Spiritu Dei aguntur ii sunt filii Dei* – for whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans viii, 14) And it is by the same Spirit that the Father will become our Father: *Abba, Pater*. But there is a conflict between the Spirit of God and our narrow self-interest. Nothing will give us so great an impulse to die to ourselves as this knowledge of our true destiny. To convince ourselves of our greatness will be the surest way to make ourselves so 'little' that we keep back nothing for ourselves. Then only will

we draw deep breaths of the divine life, a foretaste of our eternal happiness.

- In God ->
 - The Dogma
 - The analogies of knowledge and love
 - The inner life of God
- From God to Man ->
 - The unity of God's Designs
 - The Person of Christ
 - The Work of Christ
- From Man to God ->
- Man in God ->

(Translated from the French by a monk of Parkminster, The Carthusian Order © 1962)

IN GOD

The Dogma

God is subsistent Being itself. The word 'being' applies strictly only to God. *Deus solus vere essentiae nomen tenet* – God alone has the name of true being (St Jerome). For all other things, ourselves included, compared to that pure and perfect substance, are not even shadows. That is why God gave his name when speaking to Moses as *He who is* (Exodus iii, 14). *Tam verum enim esse Deus habet, quod nostrum esse, suo comparatum, nihil est* – so truly has God being, that our being, compared to his, is nothing (St Bonaventure).

God is one. He possesses unity in a super-eminent manner: or, more accurately, he is unity itself, absolute simplicity. In him there is no distinction of parts, no accident, no change. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord* (Deuteronomy vi, 4). Nonetheless, this one God is three Persons. God is Father: he begets a Son in a unity of nature, without division or change. And from the Father and the Son Son proceeds equally the Holy Spirit. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; and these three are but one and the same God. This trinity of Persons is no less necessary than the unity of being.

The Trinity is essential to God just as much as his divine nature. The divine processions are not something added to his essence, already formed and complete: they are the very substance, the very perfection of God. To be in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is in reality the same as being God, although our intellect cannot grasp the equivalence of these statements. Both propositions, nevertheless, bear witness to the same necessity, and if we are able to state them separately it is because we only know God in in-direct ways, in the obscurity of faith. We must be on our guard lest we attempt to measure the mystery of the Trinity by the narrowness of our weak and discursive concepts.

The divine eternity is a changeless present, wherein the Father begets the Son, and both breathe forth the Holy Spirit. St. Augustine compares the Son to air, ever filled with light, receiving at every moment a renewal without change of the whole light of the sun.

The divine generation did not take place at the beginning of time, once and for all. It is a divine act, or rather it is the divine act, eternal and unending, which never ceases and is never interrupted, any more than is the divine Being from whom, in reality, it cannot be distinguished. *Now* — at every moment of time — this act is being accomplished : the Son is born of the Father. *Ego hodie genui te — this day have I begotten thee* (Psalm ii, 7).

The divine Persons are subsistent relations. Amongst creatures, relations such as paternity or sonship are only accidents. Take away the 'accident', and the father and the son remain just men. In God, however, everything is simple, all is subsistent, all is God. That is why in the Blessed Trinity the fatherhood is the whole being of the Father, which is identical with the divine being. So, too, the sonship of the Son is the whole being of the Son, and the same holds of the Holy Spirit. According to his whole being, the Father is *ad Filium*; and, according to his whole being, the Son is *ad Patrem*. Were our supernatural vision sufficiently pure, sufficiently deep, we would see in this not only the perfect solution of the apparent contradiction between these truths — God one, yet three — but the necessity of the one included in that of the other. 'Each of the Persons' says St Gregory Nazienzen, 'refers not less to the others than to himself; and that is the reason for their reduction to unity, which is utterly beyond our comprehension'.

The divine Persons are really distinct. That is why there can exist between them those interchanges of

knowledge and love, which can only belong to subsistent personalities. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father: the duality is so real and so true that it suffices to constitute the requisite number under the Old Law for the value of a witness. *If I judge, my judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. And in your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true* (cf. John viii, 16-17).

Yet, although the Son is a different Person from the Father, he is not something different: *alius non aliud*. In order to be truly the Son, he must stand in opposition to the Father by a real relation and it is precisely this relation which brings him back into a unity of nature with the Father, a unity more perfect than any unity men can conceive.

The analogies of knowledge and love

IN the account given in the book of Genesis, on the sixth day, before the creation of man, God spoke thus: *Let us make man to our image and likeness* (1 Genesis i, 26). The plural seems to underline the action of the three Persons. Images of God, we carry within us a certain reflection of the divine generation. The Fathers and Doctors of the Church have studied this signature of the creative Spirit engraved in our very nature, and the deductions they draw from it give us some idea of the nature of the processions which constitute the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. It is quite true that we can only approach such an

understanding by a very distant analogy. Nevertheless, it is not without a providential disposition that such comparisons have been stressed by Christian thinkers who were at the same time contemplatives and saints. Their origin, their antiquity, their admirable correspondence with the scriptural texts confer on these speculations a singular authority.

A spiritual being has two vital operations—to know and to love. Now since God is being in its absolute plenitude, these two operations belong to him by necessity of essence and nature. The first vital operation of God is the act of knowing. By that act, which is his essence itself, God produces a perfect concept of what he knows perfectly; that is to say, himself. It is the procession of the interior Word. In that divine Word, God, so to speak, defines himself. The Word, that is, is the adequate expression of the Father. The Word *Logos*, which St John uses in the first chapter of his Gospel, means both word and reason; for it is the reason of God, as it is the reason of everything else. That Word is rightly called the Immaculate Mirror, the Image of the invisible God, the Splendour of his glory, and the of his substance (Wisdom vii, 26; Colossians i, 5; Hebrews i, 3).

This intelligible fruit of the divine knowledge is also called 'generated knowledge' — *notitia genita, Deus intellectus*. In so far as this essential representation of himself proceeds from him - perfectly equal and similar to its source in the of the same nature — God is in the truest called Father. Fatherhood belongs to

God it before it can ever be attributed to men. It is from that divine and primal paternity that all paternity in heaven and earth has its origin and name... *of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named* (Ephesians iii, 15).

The Word is thus truly the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father, co-eternal, enjoying me omnipotence and the same immensity. Of all the ways in which a being can produce another being, the most perfect is by generation. For he who generates imparts his own nature to the one generated, and pours into that being his own life. And since no dignity can be wanting in God, generation must be found in the Godhead. *Shall not I that make others to bring forth children, myself bring forth, saith the Lord* (Isaias lxvi, 9). There is no doubt that generation is infinitely greater than creation, for the Creator does not give himself, whilst the Father is in the Son with his whole being and essence. *The Father is in me, and I in the Father* (John x, 38).

The Word is also named Truth and Power *by appropriation*: that is to say, in terms which can be referred to the other Persons, but which seem specially to belong to him, because of his procession according to knowledge. We venerate in the Father unity, eternity and power; in the Son, equality, beauty and wisdom. The Son is also called *Ars Dei*, Life, the Ray, the Dawn, because he is the integral manifestation of the divine Essence. It is in him that the Father knows himself, and that we shall one day know the Father. *He that seeth me, seeth the Father also. If you know me, you know also my Father; and from*

henceforth you know him, and you have seen him (cf. John xiv, 9 and 7).

The Father and the Son meet eternally in essential beatitude. They give themselves to one another in a most intimate unity and from that union leaps up an immaterial flame, the ardour of infinite Love, namely the Holy Spirit. For the act of the will produces in the one willing a new reality, and it is this reality, subsistent and eternal in God, that is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The name Love is peculiarly his, for he is the love with which the Father loves the Son and the Son the Father. He is called Spirit by analogy with the life-breath which animates us, and records the rhythm of our emotions. He is the Gift par excellence, for the essential character of love is to give, and the first thing that love gives is itself. Goodness is attributed to the Holy Spirit by appropriation. The Fathers also called the third Person the Divine Fire, the Spiritual Balm, the living Source, the enjoyment and communion of the Father with the Son, for he is the embrace which consummates their union, the seal of plenitude upon the mystery of the divine processions.

St Thomas summarizes thus the cycle of the operations ad intra. "Both in us and in God" he says, "there is a certain cycle in the acts of the intellect and the will, for the will tends towards that which was the beginning of the understanding. But whereas in us the circle ends in that which is external — the external good moving the intellect, and the intellect moving the will and the will by appetite and love tending to

the external good — in God, the circle ends in himself. For God, by comprehending himself, conceives the Word, which is the type of all things comprehended by him (inasmuch as He comprehends all things by comprehending himself), and from this Word he proceeds to love all things and himself. Thus someone has said that "the One engenders the One, and reflects its own heat upon himself" (Mercurius Trismegistus: Poemand IV).

And the circle being closed, nothing more can be added, so that a third procession is impossible' (St Thomas: *De Potentia Dei*, Q.IX, art. 9). And the Angelic Doctor concludes with a word which opens out for us the perspective of a new mystery, an extension and echo of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. 'There remains only room for that external procession, which we call creation'(ibid.)

The inner life of God

These analogies serve in a way to introduce us to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. For now, by enlarging our noblest thoughts to infinity, we shall endeavour to arrive at some conception of the beatitude of the three uncreated Persons.

The Father expresses himself wholly in his Son, imitating himself in the latter with infinite satisfaction. He imparts his whole substance to him and finds himself wholly in him. And the Son in turn contemplates in the Father the inexhaustible treasure

of the Essence which he is himself. *Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased* (Mark i, 11). *And all my things are thine, and thine are mine* (John xvii. 10).

The Father's thought and the Son's thought are the same — unique and absolute, one truth, one expression of that truth, with the sole difference 'Thee' and 'Me'. *No one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither doth any one know the Father but the Son* (Matthew xi, 27). It is, as it were, an eternal and motionless exchange of uncreated light, a perfect correspondence of knowledge and mutual recognition. *As the Father knoweth me, so I know the Father* (cf. John x, 15). The Son receives continuously life the Father, and therein is all his being. *For as the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son also to have life in himself* (John v, 26).

When two opposing currents in an ocean meet and mix, the very violence of their embrace produces an immense wave, which seems to assault the sky. The Holy Spirit has been likened to such a wave. The Father and the Son, essentially united in the same love, form but one Source for the breathing forth of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, who is called *Holiness of God*, proceeds from their union in the same essential unity: *Caritas de Caritate*. The life of the Father and of the Son is thus the breathing forth of the Spirit in love, and the life of the Spirit is to proceed from the Father and the Son, and therein lies the eternal superabundance of charity without end. Charity is the bond of perfections (Colossians iii, 14).

This reciprocity of infinite love, in the simplicity of the same essence, is the substance of the real. All that we see or take for events or beings, what are they but an echo or faint and almost extinct reflection of that unique Reality?

So, then, the life of the three Persons can be summed up in one phrase: *God is Love* (I John iv, 16). 'To be several Persons in the same divinity is nothing else than to be three with but one and the same love. It is the supreme love, but with a different property in each Person. The Person is nothing else than the supreme Love with a distinctive property' (Richard of St Victor: *De Trinitate*, Bk. V, c. 20). In this very nature of God, considered as subsistent Love, the same writer (and others after him) have thought to have found the most profound analogical reason for the divine processions. *Amor extasim facit*. 'Love does not leave the one loved in himself: it causes him to go out of himself, and enter wholly into the beloved' (Denys the Areopagite). Without cessation, the Father goes out of himself wholly, and enters into the Son; and the Son unceasingly returns to the Father with the whole of his being, and the Father and the Son pour selves forth in like manner into the Holy Spirit.

The Greek Fathers insisted on this mystery. They not only considered in the divine hypostases the static co-existence and the mutual compenetration, but also that eternal effusion and reflux of the Persons in the unity of the Essence. Such is the original meaning of the word *Perichoresis*, which we translate *circumincession*. It indicates reciprocal

circulation of one thing to another, in such a way that each attracts the other, while at the same time they are in opposition to one another'. These are, indeed, the relations of origin which constitute the Persons, and distinguish and unite them in one and the same nature. Each Person, by what is proper to himself, is then drawn wholly towards another. 'Let us admire' says one theologian, on the subject of the *Perichoresis*, 'that sublime conception which reveals to us the movement of the divine life, not only in the faculties of knowing and willing, not only in the depths of their nature, but even in the very constitution of the divine subsistents. Oh the per-beatitude of the three Persons ! Any satiety is unthinkable in you, for you are not simply that placid happiness that one experiences by being in the company of another, but rather that shock of joy which comes when one has found the other, never more to part!' (Père de Régnon).

The Jews and the sages of pagan antiquity venerated a lone and solitary God. Revelation has taught us to adore in our God the living truth of three Persons, who coexist in an eternal embrace. Mere human thought could never have conceived such a mystery; but having found it by a divine grace, our concept of the primal Essence has become incomparably richer and more profound. In order to accept this new and wholly divine knowledge, we must break with the categories of our natural knowledge. It was in this sense, possibly, that the prophet glimpsed the thought of God invading the earth, like the all-powerful tide of a new ocean, causing its waves to

overflow its shores, overthrowing its ramparts, inundating the plains and covering the mountains. *Repleta est terra scientia Domini, sicut aquae maris operientes for the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the covering waters of the sea*(Isaias xi, 9).

Note well, with Cardinal Cajetan, that in raising ourselves to God according to our natural ideas, we surely deceive ourselves if we do not pass utterly beyond them in order to lose our-selves in the abyss of the divine Essence. ` We imagine the distinction of the absolute and the relative as anterior to the divine reality, and so we think that we should place it under one or other member of that division. But it is the reverse that is true. For the divine reality is anterior to the concept of being and all its distinctions. There is not in the divine reality on the one hand unity of nature and on the other, and as it were supplementarily, a trinity of Persons, but a one inexhaustible truth, one same incomprehensible secret, one same transcendent and sovereign necessity'.

FROM GOD TO MAN

The unity of God's Designs

EVERYTHING, material and spiritual, all men and each of us separately, have, from all eternity, existed in the Mind of God. The life of all of us pre-existed in

the Word. *Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat* (John i, 3-4). In begetting the Son, in knowing himself in the Son, God conceived us, called us and loved us from all eternity. *Pater dicendo se dicit omnem creaturam* (St Anselm). By the Word, the Father expresses in himself all things; the Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit, love one another and all men. Creation is thus an external reflection, an ever-changing and diffused mirror of the riches contained in the divine Essence. The universe — the divinely uttered word which vibrates and projects itself into time and space — is none other than an echo of the uncreated Word. It is his secret, the unique secret that God pronounced in what St Augustine calls 'the hymn of the six days' — *universa saeculi pulchritudo velut magnum carmen ineffabilis modulatrix* — and above all in man : for man is the resumé and conclusion of all creation.

God has only one secret, and that is his own being. What he has created for himself and himself alone, must therefore in some way return to him. The imperfections of sin can in no way upset the divine plan, which is beyond (at the same comprising and bringing to their final purpose) the acts of free causes in the same way as it does those of necessary causes.

Adam was created to know and love God: *Homo nexus Dei et mundi*. Man must therefore cleave to God and restore to him the world as a vast sacrifice. Still more, God raised Adam to a supernatural state, and in consequence invited him to share in his intimate life, and made all the preparations in him necessary for this return to the primal Being, which is to complete

the work of creation. Adam was thus a son of God, but sin to sever the bond of that filiation. Man's disobedience opened an abyss between God and the creature. By the promise of a Redeemer, however, God made known his mercy towards him who had offended against his justice and, from the moment of man's fall, at once began to raise him up, the Fall being but a pretext, it would seem, to reveal the splendours of the divine goodness. The demands of the sovereign justice required that a man-God, as son of man, should, as son of man, expiate man's sin and, as the Son of God, reconcile us with the Father by the infinite value of his expiation. And this wonder of love was realized. *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth* (John i, 14).

We can, in considering the realities that divine Providence has created and their order of dignity, follow, as the Apostle is constantly telling us to do, the main lines of the plan of Providence itself. It is a continuation of the divine processions in an external circle. *Amor extasim facit*. The love which causes the Father to give himself to the Son, and which the latter in the Holy Spirit returns to the Father, is the cause of both creation and redemption, with the return to the Father of those souls that are sanctified and transformed in Christ.

It is by nature that the divine processions take place. By nature the Father begets the Son, whilst both breathe forth the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it

was by a free act of the will that God decided from all eternity to create the universe, but by the same design and the same act to create it, not only by the Word but *for* the Word incarnate. The Person of Christ, indeed, is infinitely superior in dignity to all creatures, both heavenly and terrestrial, and it is in Him *de facto*, that they find their end and the very reason for their existence and consummation. The creation of man, capable of the Fall, and the glorification of the humanity of Christ — the fact that God permitted the Fall, and the will to give man a Redeemer — have never been separated in God's intention.

When we contemplate the mysteries of divine Providence and Love, let our gaze be simple. The simpler our concepts the deeper and truer they will be. For it is in the measure of their simplicity that they will approach the concepts in the Mind of God.

Whether he is creating the world or resting on the seventh day; whether he is redeeming fallen man or permitting him to share in his glory, there is no change in God. He does one thing only — *He is who is* (Exodus iii, 14). It is his being that he contemplates and loves in his Word: *speculum sine macula* (Wisdom vii. 26). It is his Word that he looks upon with infinite complacency in Christ: *imago Dei invisibilis* (Colossians i, 15). It is his Christ whom he sees and loves in sanctified souls: *conformes imaginis Filii sui* (Romans viii, 29). It is in uttering the Word that he operates all things, and it is in this same Word that they return to his substance in the Holy Spirit. The Adam who had

to leave the Garden of Eden was also a figure. His archetype — the eternal Adam and the new Man — is Christ: *Ecce Homo (John xix, 5)! The Son of his love... the image of the invisible God; the firstborn of every creature. For in him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations or principalities or powers. All things were created by him and in him. And he is before all, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he may hold the primacy; because in him it hath well pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the Blood of his Cross, both as to the things that are on earth and the things that are in heaven (Colossians i, 13-20).*

Thus all things are restored in Christ, and gathered together again under the primacy of the Word, who rejoins eternally the Father in the breathing forth of the Spirit, in the plenitude of the Essence.

'There is need to consider in creation' says St Thomas, 'a certain cycle, according as all beings return to the Source from whom they came, so that the First Cause is also the End. All beings, therefore, must return to the End by the same causes in virtue of which they came from the Source. And just as the procession of Persons is the reason for creation, so it is also the cause of our return to the End. It is by the Son and the Holy Spirit that we have been created, and it is by them that we shall rejoin him who has made us' (St Thomas: In I Sent: Dist. XIV, Q. 2).

The Person of Christ

The second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man. He took our human nature — assumed it, in the language of the theologians — in the unity of His Person and of his being. Thus two natures subsist in Christ, but by the sole subsistence of the divine Word.

The acts which the Word accomplishes by his human nature are called *theandric*. They have value and dignity corresponding to the Person positing them. The Son of God being infinite, the least of his acts have an infinite value, since acts are attributed to the Person — *actus sunt personarum*. The least act of the incarnate Word would thus have sufficed to redeem the whole of kind. But the mysterious exigencies of the divine justice and love carried the Son of dilection to that excess which utterly surpasses our reckoning of reasons and causes: *supereminentem scientiae caritatem Christi* (Ephesians iii, 19). Obedient to that wisdom in the eyes of men, he desired to immolate himself even to the shedding of the last of his most Precious Blood . . . *becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross* (Philippians ii, 8).

The work of Christ

IN his priestly prayer after the Last Supper, Our Lord bore witness to the fact that he had made known to the world an unknown Name: *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work thou gayest me to do . . . I have manifested thy Name, O Father, to men* (cf. John xvii, 4 and 6).

What is this mysterious Name? According to St Hilary and St Cyril, it is the very name of Father. 'The greatest work of the Son has been to make known to us the Father' (St Hilary). The whole meaning of revelation and of redemption is comprised in this : to open to men the divine circle of the personal relations, and to draw men's souls into the stream of God's own life. Not only to make good the fault of our first parents, as one would pardon a slave a moment of revolt, but much more — to make of this unfaithful servant a child of adoption. Such is the amplitude and depth of the gesture of mercy on the part of divine Love. *In caritate perpetua dilexi te, ideo attraxi te miserans — I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee* (Jeremias xxxi, 3). *Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore you are no longer servants but sons, and if sons, heirs also through God* (cf. Galatians iv, 6 and 7). *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children, through his well-beloved unto himself* (Ephesians i, 3-6).

The incarnation of the Word is continued through the sacraments, above all in the Holy Eucharist. The Bread of Life is not changed into our nature like earthly food; on the contrary, it transforms us into him. *'Nor shalt thou convert me, like common food, into thy substance; but thou shalt be converted into me'* (Augustine: Confessions, Bk. VII, 10: *Nec tu me in te mutabis, sicut cibum carnis tuae, sed tu mutaberis in me*). By the sacramental life and by our life of interior prayer and contemplation, given birth to and sustained in souls by the sacraments, we become 'sons of the Father', identified in some way with the Word, and truly divinized. The Word was made flesh in order to give to all who receive him the *'power to be made the sons of God'* (John i, 12). God became man, that men might become God (St Augustine).

The infinitely gentle yet powerful action of Our Lady who loves us and protects us as her children, develops in us this resemblance to and assimilation with Christ, which makes us truly sons of the Father. One understands better the role of Mary as co-redemptrix if one thinks on these lines: the whole of the supernatural life consists in our becoming 'other Christs'. And as it belonged to Mary and to her alone to give birth on earth to Christ, so it is by Mary, in Mary and from Mary, that we receive all spiritual gifts. It is Mary, co-redemptrix, who introduces us into the life of God. *In te et per te et de te, quidquid boni recepimus et recepturi sumus, per te recipere vere cognoscimus* (ibid).

The Christian thus becomes aware that he is surrounded, enfolded and encompassed on all sides, by the divine Reality. *In ipso enim vivimus et movemur et sumus* (Acts xvii, 28). Far more, he truly enters into this Reality, he penetrates into the very intimacy of God, he is son of the Father, not by a metaphor, not by the mere accident of a hyperbolic phrase, but as St John attests: *Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God – ut filii Dei nominemur et simus* (I John iii, 1) ... *For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son; that he might be the firstborn among many brethren* (Romans viii, 29).

Jesus is thus our brother, and the Holy Spirit likewise our spirit. *Qui Spiritus Christi non habet, hic non est ejus – if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Romans viii, 9). It is he who speaks and prays in us, who makes known to us the mysteries of divine truth, who is our essential life, making us partake of the very breathing of God. *God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts . . . For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you . . . But we all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord* (Galatians iv, 6; Matthew x, 20; 2 Corinthians iii, 18).

By the sacred humanity of the incarnate Word the soul is raised up even to the divinity. Then will it feel crushed by the divine justice; yet drawn by his mercy it will plunge into the divine love, where it will contemplate for ever the eternal beauty, goodness

and truth. Reconciled by Christ and in him, we have access to the Father in the Holy Spirit. *Per ipsum habemus accessum ambo in uno Spiritu ad Patrem* – for by him we have access both in one Spirit to the Father (Ephesians ii, 18). Here we have in a word the economy of all the divine mysteries revealed in time. Creation, incarnation, redemption, glorification – these miracles of love but to make known the mystery of infinite Love, one in three Persons: *the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations, but now is manifested to his saints* (Colossians i, 26).

FROM MAN TO GOD

And so the divine life pours itself out for us with an incomprehensible liberality. If these waves of love do not penetrate our hearts it is because the latter are filled with created vanities. The divine light is completely compelling of itself, and if we are not aware of it it is because our own life, the feeble life of our ego, keeps us in our blindness. *Man shall not see God and live* (Exodus xxxiii, 20).

The first phase in our spiritual life is to empty ourselves of ourselves by a ceaseless and merciless war against every form of self-love. For sin, in sundering the bond between the Creator and the creature has destroyed the interior harmonies of the latter. Our life, separated from its Source, is utterly disorientated and disturbed. We are in revolt against God, and hence our senses are in revolt against reason.

By nature, our hearts should be turned towards God: *os homini sublime dedit* (Ovid: *Metamorphoses*, I, 85). Instead, however, of keeping them in the divine light we have be-come earthbound, and the desire for material things has captivated us. But God made men up-right, as the Scripture says: *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright* (cf. *Ecclesiastes* vii, 30). It is in order to get back that first rectitude that we must fight against our twisted nature and our disordered senses. *I chastise my body and bring it into subjection . . . If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross daily, and follow me* (I *Corinthians* ix, 27; *Luke* ix, 23).

This is not the work of a day. Each one of us must climb his own Calvary step by step; must lay himself down upon the cross of sacrifice for a long agony, and endeavour with all his fallen nature to die. To this work of purification we must bring a constant, uninterrupted application, and even when we think we have at last won the day, we still have to keep a ceaseless watch over ourselves. For the lower forces of our being are ever ready to rebel, and with one moment of relaxation we shall see them regain that tyrannical domination from which we have suffered so long. With courage and determination we must drink the deathly chalice of which Christ our elder brother drank before us; and bow our heads under the sword red with the Blood of the Lamb. *Because for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter* (*Psalms* xliii, 22).

But the body is not our deadliest enemy, nor the most tenacious. Sin has penetrated in us more deeply still. It is at the very centre of our mind that it has planted pride. It is there in truth that self-love hides its elusive roots; and if to all outward appearances we seem dead to self, we may never forget that the deep germ of the evil has lost nothing of its virulence. The terrific battle between the Spirit of God and our own spirit takes place in our heart, and its issue, favourable or otherwise, will fix our destiny.

Anyone who wishes to live in keeping with his dignity as a reasonable being must undertake this struggle. The sages of antiquity have given us an example of it, but the combat in which mere nature endeavoured to triumph over itself could only end in that barely disguised self-esteem, in that vanity with which the virtue of the greatest Stoics left off. For us, the means are indicated by that Revelation which calls us to our divine inheritance, and it is from Christ alone that those means will come to us.

Perilous will be the illusion of those who think that they can, by their own efforts, raise themselves to that higher life in the supernatural order to which we are called. Most certainly we have to make every effort on our own part, but it is grace which calls forth those efforts, and accompanies and sustains them. It is grace also which crowns them. *Deus est qui operatur in nobis et velle et perficere* – it is God who worketh in us, both to will and to accomplish (cf. Philippians ii, 13) . . . Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us (Titus iii, 5).

To understand this doctrine is one of the greatest favours we can receive from the liberality of the divine Master. And that knowledge of our nothingness is at the same time the freest of gifts, and the reward which follows inevitably in proportion to our generous and sustained efforts. In the struggle with ourselves there will always be some victories, but if we push our endeavours still further, we shall understand more and more the immense task which remains for us to carry through, and the absurd inadequacy of our doubtful conquests. It is then, at last, that we turn utterly to God, certain henceforth that of ourselves we can do nothing, abandoning ourselves to his all-powerful and beneficent action. Convinced of our nothingness, we shall lose ourselves in the certitude that God is all.

Even our failures and our faults will thus become the cause and occasion of our final victory. And the tears in which we have bathed our faults will be the initial baptism of a life of abandonment and pure confidence, and our weakness will be our strength. *Gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me ... for when I am weak, then am I powerful . . . My grace is sufficient for thee . . . I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me* (2 Corinthians xii, 9-10; Philippians iv, 13).

Christ not only gives us the means to attain our end: it is through him that we must pass: *Ego sum ostium – I am the door* (John x, 9). He himself is the Way: *I am the Way . . . no man cometh to the Father but by me* (John xiv, 6).

Our intimacy with the Lamb will purify us. It is the clean of heart who will, already here below, see God (cf. Matthew v, 8). Their inner vision will begin to catch something of the eternal glory, that *light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world* (John i, 9). They will at last have the strength to allow themselves to be wholly taken by God, and he who is already their Way will show himself to them as the Truth and the Life. *Now this is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent* (John xvii, 3).

And so, dead to ourselves, we shall begin to live in God. *Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit . . . I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead shall live* (John xii, 24-25; John xi, 25). Having overcome the trials of the first part of the way which leads to divine union, we hear the voice of the Saviour saying: *Amice, ascende superius – friend, go up higher* (Luke xiv, 10). Then the breath of the Holy Spirit will fill our soul with gifts and virtues, which will purify it and ennoble it, like a heavenly, healing balm. *Surge, aquilo, et veni auster; perfla hortum meum et fluent aromata illius – Arise, O north wind, and come O south wind: blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow* (Canticle of Canticles iv, 16).

The soul is thus ready to be penetrated with the uncreated light. Illumined and ablaze with these supernatural rays, we begin already on earth to taste the inheritance of the sons of God. *That the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of*

revelation, in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us (Ephesians i, 17-19) ... For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also: heirs, indeed, of God and joint heirs with Christ; yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him (Romans viii, 16-17).

MAN IN GOD

WE can be, then, even in this life, as the Apostle does not cease to remind us, sons of God, and become by grace and participation what God is by nature: *divinae consortes naturae* – *partakers of the divine nature* (2 Peter i, 4).

This transformation of the soul has already begun in everyone whom the sacraments have purified from sin. But in the case of those who pursue the way of sanctity to its term, it attains a mysterious consummation, which would appear to be beyond definition, for the soul no longer seems itself: *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me* (Galatians ii, 20).

Arrived at this degree of union, the soul, filled with light and carried away with love, is unable to find words with which to express what it experiences. The texts of Scripture have taken on for it a new wonder and a fragrance hitherto unknown.

The divine sonship by adoption of the Christian soul is only too often a theme worn thread-bare by theologians when dealing with the subject of grace. But these same propositions that endeavour to explain the prerogatives of the just sound altogether different to those who, prepared for it by a life of renunciation and contemplation, have personal knowledge of the divine indwelling. That divine life is like a fruit of whose bounty many get a glimpse but only those who are dead to themselves and generously faithful can taste its real sweetness. *Fructus ejus dulcis gutturi meo* – *his fruit was sweet to my palate* (Canticle of Canticles ii, 3). Although such a soul remains unquestionably distinct from God substantially as in operation, still it is transformed in him by faith and love. *Per fidem et caritatem sic conjungimur Christo quod transformamur in ipsum* (St Thomas on John VI, Bk. 7). For this reason, all that we say of the only-begotten Son absolutely, can be said by participation – that is, according to the union of love – of the sons by adoption, who have been incorporated in him.

When such souls, in the enjoyment of the divine union, speak of their interior state, it would seem sometimes – to hear them – that they think themselves freed from all the bonds which are necessarily inherent in the creature, or from that frailty which human nature can never lose while here on earth. But we have to understand the language of such souls who, forgetting themselves and being turned completely towards the divine object, are absorbed by its splendour. *If we say that we have no sin,*

says St John humbly, *we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* (I John i, 8). Nonetheless, to those *who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God is given the power to become the sons of God* (John I, 12-13). And so, inasmuch as we are born of God, and inasmuch as we have received the Holy Spirit and through him the divine life, we shall taste even now the eternal victory, which that same St John calls 'a present joy'. 'The Holy Spirit' says St Thomas, 'is a spiritual seed which proceeds from the Father, and that is why he can generate in us the divine life, and make us sons of God (St Thomas on Epist. to the Romans VIII). *Omnis qui natus est ex Deo peccatum non facit, quoniam semen Dei manet in eo* – *whosoever is born of God committeth not sin, for his seed abideth in him* (I John iii, 9).

In the soul that abandons itself and gives its consent to the complete sacrifice in which all love finds its fulfilment, is realized more and more fully that spiritual generation which is nothing less than a reflection altogether supernatural of the eternal generation of the Word. Such a soul no longer belongs to earthly generations: it is no longer a child of the flesh, nor of its own will, but moment by moment is born of God. It lives the divine life; it knows God with the knowledge whereby God knows himself, and loves him with the love with which he loves himself. It is changed into Truth, into perfect praise; it is uttered with the Word. And, finally, it conforms to the archetype included from all eternity in the divine Mind. It is exactly what God wills. In it is verified the prophetic word of the inspired Book: *I shall dwell in*

thee because I have chosen thee; thou shalt be my rest for all eternity. As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee (cf. Isaias lxii, 5).

A soul transformed in Christ is obedient. Its submission to the Father is spontaneous like the beating of its heart. It follows the divine inspiration without deviation or calculation, with a movement so direct and so prompt that the world marvels at it. For the ways of the world are complicated, and the steps of human prudence are uncertain. But he who dwells in perfect humility is completely pliant under the mysterious breath of the Spirit. *For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God* (Romans viii, 14).

The soul hears the voice of the Master: *Maria audiebat verbum Domini* (Luke x, 39). It gives itself up to that occupation, of which it will never more be deprived: . . . *qui non auferetur ab ea* (Luke x, 42). Far removed from earthy cares, it is wholly abandoned to the divine will and altogether silent. So silent that it may forget itself, forget the name by which it is known. *Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name ... thou shalt be called My Pleasure in thee, because the Lord hath been well pleased with thee* (cf. Isaias lxii, 2 and 4).

This multiplication of life is a kind of perpetual miracle, of which all other miracles are only a figure. Divine love is reproduced in souls and, without in any way being divided in itself or exhausted, pours out upon them its essential treasure. Every child of God receives the fulness of the graces of which it

stands in need, and can expect its desire to be balanced by the light it receives.

True, the act of a creature remains finite, but the divine object which it enjoys in that fulness is infinite. That is why the soul is, as it were, saturated and, according to the word of the contemplatives, 'seems to have all the rights and all the prerogatives of the only Son of God' (Consummate). 'It now only sees unity' (Suso). *My dove, my perfect one, is but one* (Canticle of Canticles vi, 8). All the divine secrets of which such a soul is guardian, all the graces with which it is enriched, are for it comprised in this single phrase: *This is my beloved Son* (Matthew iii, 17).

We live, it is true, in a world of enigmas. God dwells in us in a manner always hidden. It is in a deep shadow that, by his love, he manifests himself to souls who live in union with him. Theologians speak very truly of a 'hidden experience which, although obscure, makes us feel that our soul is living in contact with a higher life, permitting us to enjoy really and truly the presence of the divine Persons' (John of St Thomas in I.P. q.43. Disp. 7, no. 14); but 'through a veil which will never be torn here below'. It is given to us to 'taste God' — *patis divina* — experimentally (Ibid. no. 12); but only in a dark manner. The beloved is present to us, as the Canticle of Canticles says, *quasi stans post parietem* — *behind the wall* (Canticle of Canticles ii, 9). *Truly, thou art a hidden God* (Isaias xlv, 15).

Nevertheless, the soul, docile to the teachings of divine Love, understands the word of Christ: *All things whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you* (John xv, 15). In faith, in the impenetrable depths of pure faith, God gives to the soul a presentment of those truths hidden in himself, which will one day be our beatitude. This 'all' that Jesus makes known to us, says St Gregory the Great, 'are the interior joys of charity and the delights of heaven that he discloses to us day by day by the inspirations of his love. By the fact that we love all the joys of heaven, we already know them; for love itself is knowledge: *quia ipse amor notitia est*.

I will give thee hidden treasures and the concealed riches of secret places . . . The wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory . . . that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man . . . to us God hath revealed them by his Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God (Isaias xlv, 3; I Corinthians ii, 7-10).

This wisdom is the reflection in the intellect of the love with which the soul is altogether penetrated, like a fire which consumes and divinizes. *In fuoco amor me mise*. Or, better, as St Catherine of Siena says: *La mia natura è fuoco*. It is enough to be on fire in order to cause other fires, near and far. *For many waters cannot quench charity . . . the lamps thereof are fire and flames* (Canticle of Canticles viii, 6-7). *I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled* (Luke xii, 49). *Our God is a consuming fire* (Deuteronomy iv, 24).

That such souls should produce nothing in the eyes of men, or that they should spend themselves in a thousand works, means nothing to them. Indeed, they do but one thing: they live in God. Such is their work. It is the Father who works in them: *Pater in me manens, ipse facit opera* – the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works (John xiv, 10).

Such souls, then, are 'simple with the Simple'; and if they gaze deep within themselves discover there an abyss of simplicity that nothing can disturb. It is just that simplicity which constitutes their treasure and strength, and their inexhaustible joy. They rest in the purity of God. *Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest* (Psalm liv, 7). *Be ye simple as doves* (Matthew x, 16).

And it is because it is simple that the soul is still. No one in this life is absolutely proof against temptations and faults, but when, by an excess of divine goodness, our gaze penetrates the mystery of the divine filiation in us, we cannot feel fear. *Fear is not in charity* (I John iv, 18). *I am sure that neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, Our Lord* (Romans viii, 38-39).

A soul given over to divine Love possesses this intoxicating knowledge: that its enemies are only mortal; that is to say, things which are not. And he whom it has taken for a friend and lover, who is its centre and form, its all and only love, is *he who is* (Exodus iii, 14). Such a soul laughs, with the Apostle, at life and death, at the present and future, at

principalities and powers, for its joy is vaster than all the oceans, and its peace deeper than all the depths.

The spirit of man longs to pass beyond finite things. It can only breathe freely if it can at last raise itself above time and number and space. We are frail, and our eyes are weak until they are turned towards the Sun of Being. But when the intellect is at last replete with eternity, it finds again that 'delightful health', that equilibrium of our first parents, for which it has felt so persistently a mysterious longing. *Being rooted and founded in charity, we are able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth: to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge . . . we are filled unto all the fulness of God* (Ephesians iii, 17-19). The influence radiating from these centres of charity is incalculable, for by virtue of their union with Christ, such souls are the spouses of the King: they save the world.

And thus, by acting solely in God and with and for him, the man of prayer places himself at the centre of hearts. His influence is world-wide : he gives to all the fulness of grace with which he himself is filled. *He that believeth in me, as the Scripture saith: out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water* (John vii, 38). *Now this he said, adds St John, of the Spirit, which they should receive who believed in him* (John vii, 39). Having become perfect man, he sees accomplished in himself the desire of humanity; one with Christ, he becomes, so to speak, the well-Beloved himself, *the desire of the everlasting hills* (Genesis xlix, 26).

With much more reason than the Latin poet can he say that he is a man, and that nothing human is foreign to him (*Homo sum : humani nihil a me alienum puto*. Terence: *Heauton* I, 1.25). He possesses treasures for all who are in need; wine and milk for all who thirst; sacred and healing balm for all who are wounded.

He who is lost in the embrace of the divine Essence, who allows himself to be born anew together with Christ according to the will of the Father, becomes, indeed, a consoler of souls. He gives to others, expecting no return, the eternal happiness with which he is aflame. He enlightens and warms the world, because his only care is for God. He can apply to himself the prophetic words: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me. He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach release to captives and deliverance to them that are in bondage* (cf. Isaiah lxi, 1).

He who possesses God possesses in him everything – the archangels, the grains of dust, the centuries past and to come. So St Thomas does not hesitate to apply to the sanctified soul the words of the Psalmist: *Thou hast subjected all things under his feet* (Psalm viii, 8), as we read in the passage in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Corinthians where he explains the verse: *For all things are yours . . . whether it be . . . the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come* (I Corinthians iii, 22).

The stability of a soul that has truly found God in itself and is buried in him, defies all created powers.

Henceforth, it is placed in the single centre where the lines of the strength of divine Providence converge. Formerly, it depended upon circumstances and events, but it would seem that now all things serve and obey it. 'All that comes to pass' says the Angelic Doctor (St Thomas: In Ep. ad Rom. VIII), 'serves the universal order, and that is why nothing exists which has not as its end these heights, the wonders of which surpass all creation ...' It is to the saints of God that we can apply those words in the Gospel: *Super omnia bona sua constituet eum* (Matthew xxiv, 47); and St Paul's: *We know that to them that love God all things work together unto good; to such as, according to his purpose, are called to be saints* (Romans viii, 28).

The mind, entirely penetrated by the light of the Word, henceforth enjoys a great liberty. It is raised above the judgments and opinions of the world for, in the light in which God has established it, the foolishness of these things appears to it with a clearness which allows of no hesitation. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men that they are vain . . . And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* (Psalm xciii, 11; John viii, 32). Thus transformed, the soul dominates the fluctuations of selfishness and interested complacences. It has no more regrets, no consolations that it can call its own. Its only aim and desire now is the greater glory of God, and it seeks with all its strength to serve him. *For what have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire upon earth* (Psalm lxxii, 25).

The soul thus divinized lives in a sacred depth, for its life is buried with Christ in God: *Vita vestra abscondita*

est cum Christo in Deo (Colossians iii, 3). Such a one is hidden from the sight of men but knows himself known to God, just as he knows that God recognizes himself in him: *Sicut novit me Pater, et ego agnosco eum* – *as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father* (John x, 15). The Holy Spirit now makes him say unceasingly *Abba, Father*, and his whole life is given to recognizing this Paternity. That word from the depths of his soul is the offering the Father accepts above all others. *As the Father hath taught me these things, I speak, and he hath not left me alone. For I do always the things that please him* (John viii, 28 and 29).

All souls ennobled with the dignity of sons of God are one in the communion of saints, and thereby form the Mystical Body of Christ. Each of them represents the whole human race; each one is a Christ. And their union, even in this life, constitutes but one Christ, the only-begotten Son, in whom all things are gathered and return to the Father. *Particeps sum omnium timentium to* – *I am a partaker with all them that fear thee* (Psalm cxviii, 63) . . . *That he might make known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in him; in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to re-establish all things in Christ, that are in heaven and on earth, in him. In whom we also are called ... to be unto the praise of his glory* (Ephesians i, 9-12).

This is the dawn of eternal life. That life, which the transformed soul begins even in this life, is a participation in the life of the most Blessed Trinity. Of the inner secrets of that mysterious communication of the divine life we have, when all is said and done,

explained nothing. Nor will we attempt to do so of ourselves, or stretch out an over-bold hand towards the veil which hides the glory of the sanctified soul. *Super omnem gloriam protectio* - *for over all the glory shall be a protection* (Isaia's iv, 5). To attempt to write in unsanctioned words the absolute character of that eternal union which silent love demands, anticipates and possesses even now, would be a profanation. Let us, then, allow him whom the Church calls the Mystical Doctor to utter the words which will leave us at the threshold of the ultimate secret.

'It is only in heaven that the soul will know God as it is known by him, and love him as it is loved by him. Then, indeed, will its love be none other than the love of God itself . . . Then will the soul love with the will and strength of his love . . . and there will be only one love, namely the love of God. Until the soul arrives at this consummation, it is not satisfied. . .

'It is by the Holy Spirit' continues the same Mystical Doctor, 'that the soul in heaven will be able to breathe in God with the same aspiration of love which the Father breathes with the Son and the Son with the Father, which is the Holy Spirit himself . . . For the soul's consummation would not be a true and total one, were it not transformed in the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, in a clear and manifest manner. And even when that communication is received in this life, no mortal tongue can describe it, for the soul, united with God and transformed in him, breathes

God in God, and that aspiration is that of God himself (St John of the Cross: *Spiritual Canticle*, stanza 38).

'As soon as God has bestowed upon the soul so great a favour as to unite it to the most Blessed Trinity, whereby it becomes like unto God and God by participation, is it altogether incredible that it should exercise the faculties of its understanding and perform its acts of knowledge and love — or, to speak more accurately, should have it all done in the Trinity together with It — as the Blessed Trinity Itself? Is it not in order to allow the soul to attain to such a life that God created it in his own image and likeness? But no knowledge, no intellectual power can explain that mystery . . . Yet the Son of God has obtained for us such a grace, in giving us the power to become children of God. It was his express request of the Father: *Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me* (cf. John xvii, 24). Which is the same as saying that they (the souls) may do by participation in the Blessed Trinity what Jesus does naturally: that is, breathe the Holy Spirit' (St John of the Cross: *Spiritual Canticle*, stanza 39).

And Jesus goes on to say: *Not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. I pray for them whom thou hast given me, for they are thine. All that is mine is thine, and thine is mine, and I am glorified in them . . . Holy Father, keep them in thy Name, whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we also are one* (cf. John xvii, 9-11; 20-23).

The Spirit and the Bride say: Come. And he that heareth, let him say: Come ... Behold I come quickly, and my reward with me. Amen: come, Lord Jesus ... (cf. Apocalypse xxii, 17-20)." – A Carthusian

*The Blessed Trinity and the Supernatural Life,
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The Carthusian Statutes

Excerpts from the Carthusian Rule of Life and
Writings of St. Bruno, Blessed Guigo, Hugh of
Balma and Other Writings

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