

GOING ALL OUT FOR GOD is not University of Notre Dame ...today as yesterday for all
restricted to religious and Religious Bulletin laymen in every walk of life.
clerics, but is expedient.... January 19, 1951 Consult the FIRST COMMANDMENT.

Not A Whale Of A Difference!

Apropos of yesterday's Bulletin we might add that time and again the question is raised about the difference between contemplative and active Orders. Young men, and young women, too, for that matter, holding the vocational doorknob in their timid fists, peek through the crack in the door and see the wide vista of religious Orders. "Which one is for me?" Or, "Which one is the best?" they ask. Some boys have already talked the matter over with their pastors who have pointed out the needs of dioceses. However, if the recruit is considering the religious life and the priesthood he has a job selecting that one which will suit him best.

Since Thomas Merton has written so eloquently and well on the Trappist way of life, many of his neo-followers wonder about becoming contemplatives. They want to go "the whole way," or "plunge deep," as they call it. Invariably this problem comes up: What is the difference between the contemplative vocation and the active vocation? Father Thomas Kilduff, O.C.D., writing in "Contact" for May, 1950, explains it thus:

Comparisons are odious. . . but many young people do compare the active orders with the contemplative orders when they are considering the call of God. They wonder whether they should "go all the way" with God and join a strictly contemplative order, or compromise (as they would put it) and enter an active community.

First, you must give all you have to God, whether you enter the active life (and this includes the diocesan priesthood) or the contemplative life. There are just two different ways of giving everything for the cause of Christ. There cannot be a compromise in either one without failing to measure up to the call of God.

Father Kilduff goes on to explain that contemplatives go more directly to God, whereas the active orders go to God "indirectly" by serving Christ in His members actively through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

WATERS OF SILOE Thomas Merton calls the difference a matter of emphasis: "All religious Orders therefore strive to produce the highest Christian perfection in their members: but they are also dedicated to the spread of the Church. It is a common end of all religious Rules to contribute, in some way, to the salvation of souls. . .

"Contemplation and action necessarily have their part in every religious Rule. The two must go together, because Christian perfection is nothing else but the perfection of charity, and that means perfect love of God and of men. This is only one love. But emphasis can nevertheless be placed on one or the other of these two subjects (God or Man). The religious Rules that aim most of all at the love and service of souls are termed active, while those Orders whose members concentrate more exclusively on the contemplation (which implies the love) of God are called contemplative."

Which Religious Order Is The Best?

Again referring to WATERS OF SILOE: "The fruitfulness of all the religious Orders, and their contribution to the beauty and vitality of the whole Church does not depend on the exterior and material evidence of their energy. The best religious Order is not the one that has the most schools and colleges. . . . nor is necessarily the one with the strictest Rule, the most fasting. . . . Those are not the standards by which we judge the efficacy of a religious Rule. . . . In the concrete, the Order which comes closest to keeping its own Rule perfectly and which, at any given moment, best achieves the end for which it was instituted, will be, in point of fact, the best one for the Church at that moment." (Take your pick but pick Holy Cross -- Editor)

Prayers: (deceased) grandmother of Pat Henry (O-C); mother of John Neeson, '35. Ill, friend of Joe O'Brien (How); mother-in-law of Bob Horan (Dil); Ed Snyder (Far) hospitalized. Special intentions 3.