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FROM FIVE TO NINE

Daily Life in a Modern Benedictine Monastery

by

Bruno McAndrew, O.S.B.



A GRAIL

PUBLICATION

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Nihil Obstat:

✠ *Aidan Williams, O.S.B.*

Censor Congregationis Angliae, O.S.B.

Nihil obstat:

Joseph D. Brokhage, S.T.D.

Censor librorum

Imprimatur:

✠ *Paul C. Schulte, D.D.*

Archbishop of Indianapolis

Advent, December 2, 1952

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A Grail Publication

*Dedicated to
Saint Benedict
Patriarch of the Monks of the West*

1. Point of View

Who has not seen the spire of a monastery soaring up behind high walls in some city, village or meadow of the United States? Who has not wondered as he walked or rode by there how the monks were occupied all day in their apparently motionless and untroubled retreat? Do they read or pray or study or teach all the day long? Are they artists, craftsmen, gardeners or farmers? To answer these questions, the following little sketch has been written. Hour by hour we shall accompany the monks throughout the day, standing beside them in church, in their cells and study halls, and on the grounds. To make clear the meaning of their many activities, we shall have occasionally to refer to history, liturgy, theology, monastic constitutions and many other things which play a part in their lives. Yet we shall try to avoid too much abstract discussion and use these subjects only to throw light on what is being done at each hour of the day.

In order to do this, we shall select a particular Benedictine monastery, situated in a large American city, and engaged principally in the work of education. Here we shall live through a complete day with the monks. If we understand this one

house, we shall have made a large step towards understanding any Benedictine monastery in any part of the world or from any one of the fourteen centuries of their history. We shall also learn many of the basic principles of community religious life which are practiced in many Orders and Societies of the Church. There are today hundreds of different Orders and Societies with different rules and constitutions. But the earliest one to be founded was the Order of St. Benedict, begun in the sixth century. Here was established a pattern which has influenced to some extent every other religious group in the Church.

Throughout the centuries there has gradually developed a division of labor among religious Societies; modern communities might have such different purposes as retranslating the Bible, or penetrating the mountains of Peru. Behind these secondary aims there is the primary one of living a religious life in common with others. From this point of view the Benedictines are especially worthy of study, for St. Benedict did not propose any specific work for his monks. He legislated only for the daily religious routine, of which we shall learn much as we follow it for one day. Since we are endeavoring to portray American Benedictinism of the present day, particular names of places and persons will be omitted, though there is no secret about the monastery here described, and it can be easily identified by those familiar with the Order in this country. Our aim, however, is to present a generalized portrait, more or less applicable to any group of Benedictines, and points of variation among houses will be briefly noted in passing.

Last of all, a word of caution. Religious life is concerned directly with the individual soul, and this is beyond the scope of this essay. We shall not attempt to go into the inner life of

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the soul, but shall confine ourselves to externals, to the setting. It is God's grace which transforms a soul, and this is not a theological treatise. Like rain, grace falls from the heavens; and like a green garden, the monastery is carefully laid out to catch and utilize it. Our purpose is to tour the garden, and not to consider the operations of the heavens. This is not, then, an essay on the spiritual life, but merely a description of a Benedictine day, its homely details, its usual routine, as they might appear to an interested observer.

2. Daybreak

Our day begins at 4:30 in the morning. Most of the year it is pitch dark; in summer there may be enough faint gray light to make out the homes on the suburban street adjoining the grounds; all are still and dark. But inside the monastery there is a prolonged clanging of the interior bell; lights appear in windows, and down the dim corridor comes the caller, knocking at each door as he says, "Benedicamus Domino" [Let us bless the Lord]. He pauses until he hears the sleeper answer, "Deo Gratias!" [Thanks be to God]. Even after years of practice this early rising is difficult, and each monk rolls out reluctantly, trying to shake himself awake. Over the necessary linens he dons his habit, or uniform of his profession. It is very simple, consisting of only three pieces which are worn always. They are the tunic, a plain, black cover-all, reaching to the wrists and ankles, and buttoning down the front; the scapular, a long rectangular piece of cloth, also black, with a hole in the center for the head; it is dropped over the head and reaches the feet in front and back. Lastly comes that part of a monk's dress which is most distinctive, the bag-like cloth which envelops his head. It is correctly a hood, though often misnamed a cowl. It is usually left hanging down the back, but put over the head at certain times in church. The fourth

garment is worn only during services in church, and then only during winter months, being too oppressive for summer. This is the stately cowl, said to have been the remote origin of academic robes. It is a loose black outer robe, like that of a judge in court; it is fastened around the neck, and falls in numerous pressed pleats completely to the floor. The sleeves are so wide that when the hands are held up, the cuffs fall nearly to the knees. The layman may wonder why religious use seem to be odd costumes. Why do they not dress like ordinary people? The religious is in so many ways already separated from the person of the world that a distinctive habit is merely in keeping with the rest of his life. There is, however, a deeper reason. Every occupation, and most sports, have costumes which are peculiar to them with many features that are useful to the special activity. This is true of the monastic habit, which we might call the costume of prayer. Any person in a cowl, no matter how awkward he may be in reality, takes on an aspect of dignity and stateliness. This helps him to rise above bodily distraction, and thus aids him in the principal business of his life, recollection and lifting up his mind to God.

To do this at five o'clock in the morning, the hour for the opening choral prayer—called 'Matins'—is at first difficult. The problem is perennial, and many mornings the monk struggles through Matins never fully awake. On other days, however, when the mind does come fully awake, it has a serene clarity which is perfect for prayer. The stillness of the church, the stillness of the earth and sky outside, the stillness of the city—all help to induce an inner quiet of soul. The gradual and majestic approach of sunrise, ribboning the east with pink and gold and lighting up our main church window, is a fitting background to the psalms. It is something like an answer to

these prayers, which plead for light and warmth. Below still are the shadows of night, and we are like the psalmist who walked in the midst of the shadow of death, but feared no evil for God was with him. It is symbolic of our lives, and all human life—this prayer amid shadows with the dawn approaching.

Glancing around our chapel, I have often been struck with the timelessness of its material construction—brick, wood, glass, metal—materials with which the ancient Egyptians were familiar, and worked nearly as well as modern craftsmen. The only twentieth century note is the electric lights. The carved oak stalls, the wooden altar, also elaborately carved, the tabernacle with its silk covering, the twisted-iron candlestands, occasionally a few vases of flowers—every one of these pieces of furnishing could have been used a thousand years ago in medieval Europe, or centuries before that in some ancient Roman or Greek chapel. The tabernacle especially seems to look down a long corridor of time that reaches back to the very origins of man, at least to his first glimpses of revealed truth. It is derived from the Latin 'tabernaculum' (tent), which refers in the Bible to the tent in which the Hebrews kept the Ark of the Covenant before the building of Solomon's temple. The Jewish tabernacle was about forty feet long by fifteen wide, and draped in gayly colored cloths. In the first section were the incense altar, a golden candlestick, and a table with tiny loaves—the loaves of proposition as they were called. In the other section, called the Holy of Holies, was the ark containing the Ten Commandments. Thus side by side from remotest times, ritual and morality, worship and warning, have come down to us as partners in religion. Today in our small tabernacle on the altar, it is God Who is with us in the Holy Eucharist, and

our worship is carried on before His sacramental Presence.

The prayers we say also come to us bearing the echoes of centuries. The basic plan of our official prayer book, now called the Breviary, was laid down fourteen centuries ago by St. Benedict, who remarked that if his "arrangement of the psalms be displeasing to anyone, he should, if he think fit, order it otherwise, taking care in any case that the whole Psalter of one hundred and fifty psalms be recited every week."* After enduring more than fourteen hundred years, his arrangement is still pleasing to many thousands of monks throughout the world. This choice of psalms, Scripture lessons, selections from the Church fathers, hymns, prayers, versicles, and incidental parts make up what is called the Divine Office.** In the monastic Breviary there are seven 'hours' of prayer in the day, but I hasten to add that the word as here used does not mean sixty minutes, but rather a certain time at which a period of prayer is held. The monk spends between two and three actual hours in choir daily. The 'hours' or times of prayer are called Matins and Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. This Latinated terminology might be roughly Anglicized as Morning Praises, First, Third, Sixth, Ninth hours, Evening and Night prayers. The reckoning of the hours is from ancient Roman time; and the First Hour meant actually the first hour of the day after the sun had risen—about seven o'clock. The others mean approximately nine o'clock, noon, three o'clock; Vespers comes about six, and Compline about eight o'clock.

Matins starts about an hour before sunrise, and is always immediately followed by Lauds, which is supposed to correspond

* Rule of St. Benedict. Chap. 18.

** Since St. Benedict's day, the Divine Office has naturally grown with the addition of new saints and feasts. But his plan is the same.

with the rising of the sun. On an ordinary day when there is no feast (a feria), St. Benedict requires twelve psalms to be recited during two periods called 'nocturns' in each of which six psalms are completed. The choir is divided into two groups facing each other on opposite sides of the altar; the sides alternate in reciting aloud verses of the psalms. At the end of one nocturn, lessons are read from a bookstand between the choirs. These are chanted by a single reader. The lessons are quite short on ferias, but on feast days they are much longer and describe the origin and meaning of the feast. On feasts also a third nocturn is added, the lessons of which are always a sermon on some part of the New Testament. Matins and Lauds together take up a little less or more than an hour, depending on the length of the lessons and the number of nocturns.

Lauds derives its name from the expression, 'Laudate Dominum' (Praise the Lord), which is said repeatedly in the concluding psalms of this hour. The very name—Praises—gives the mood of this prayer, one of praise and thanksgiving, timed approximately to meet the rising of the sun. Thus a symbolic connection is made between the sun's triumph over night and the coming of Christ. For instance, the hymn at Lauds on Sunday contains the following verses, addressed directly to Christ:

"Thou, O Light, awaken our eyes,
Scatter darkness from our minds;
Let our voices sound Thy praise
As we pay our tribute to Thee."

The strongest link, however, in this chain of light between Christ and the sun is the hymn called the 'Benedictus.' It is recited every day at Lauds near the end, and forms a crowning climax. It is taken from the New Testament.* When John

* Luke I, 68-79. Confraternity Version.

the Baptist was born, his father Zachary spoke a prophecy which began: "Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel" (Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel). He continued, "Because He has visited and wrought redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us. . . . For thou (i.e. John) shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, 'to give to His people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the loving-kindness of our God, wherewith the Orient from on high has visited us,' to shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." This 'Orient on high' is a mystical reference to God, and points also to the sun, which is coming up during these moments. The connection lingers in the monk's mind through the day and helps lighten its darker hours.

Thus the morning Office is made up of parts of Scripture and selections from great ecclesiastical writers, but mostly of the psalms, those poetic prayers composed principally by David about a thousand years before Christ, and arranged by St. Benedict fourteen centuries before our time. They seem to bring with them the whole history of humanity, not in an antiquarian way, but filled with life, with human desires and fears, joys and hopes. They still have the power to stir the heart more profoundly than any other literature, religious or secular. They are the greatest prayers and at the same time the greatest poems ever composed. Their ideas are so penetrating, their sentiments so exalted, that they can literally reach to the bottom of a man's soul and lift him out of himself, as we know from the writings and lives of the saints. They give meaning, form and precision to man's confused longings, and place on his lips words of supreme eloquence by which he can speak to God. "As the hart has longed for the springs of fresh water, so has my soul

for Thee, O Lord." How many would be capable of saying that had not God given them the words in His own Scripture?

What a way to begin each day—by plunging the mind into the sea of divinely inspired writing! Surely when this is done over years it ought to result in an impress on the soul, an ennoblement, enlargement, sanctification. Such at least is the monastic idea. And sanctification is not, so to speak, a selfish, personal gain. Whatever goodness or genuine greatness is achieved by one man redounds to the benefit of all men. The world needs that greatness of soul which results from constant prayer. The very presence of men who give much of their time to spiritual cultivation is an inspiration to others who are immersed by necessity in business or family cares and do not have the time for much inner life.

In choir recitation the psalms are not merely spoken out loud, but are sung or chanted '*recto tono*,' on one note. It is therefore a kind of music in the same sense that the humming of bees is musical. It is the unadorned beauty of the voice with its overtones of feeling. The great ideas of the psalms reflect themselves in the tone of the reciter so that different emotions can be expressed without change in the pitch. The clear and strong vowels of Latin are better adapted to this than the sounds of the vernacular tongue. To many modern people it may sound strange to speak of the music of prayer. Too many people today think of prayer as something deeply personal and private, said in seclusion and in strict confidence between God and the soul. Yet a glance at any of the great religions of man will show that silent prayer is the exception rather than the other way around. The Quakers alone have given first place to silence as a form of prayer. All other religious groups have always used hymns to proclaim their love of God. The chanting of

the psalms is a type of hymn in which the ideas take precedence over the musical frills. Professional singers and operatic gymnastics may have obscured this plain music, but it is still there to the sympathetic listener.

The kind of music for which monasteries have become known is really nothing but a development of chanting on one note. It is called plain chant, or Gregorian chant, from St. Gregory, who did much to stabilize its forms. Without pretending to give a learned analysis of it, we can recognize approximately three stages in it. The simplest is what we have spoken of—music on one note. For very early in the morning this is about the most an average person can do. However, at Vespers in the evening, a little more music is introduced. It is still basically singing on one note, but the beginning and ending are varied in pitch. This variation may simply amount to dropping a few bars at the end, or falling, rising, and then falling again in a sort of musical S curve on the last four syllables of one line. The same variation is repeated throughout one psalm, and a different variation is used for the next one. These little melodies are called psalm tones and there are eight basic ones for the eight modes of Gregorian music. Precisely where they came from is not known; but if one listens attentively, they bring with them rich overtones of history, of ancient times and the East. Probably the Christians took them from the Jews, and they were probably used for many centuries before Christianity. One authority says: "The beginnings of Gregorian chant are first of all in Hebrew art, then in Greco-Roman. . . . From Hebrew art—that is true without question. The first Christians were converted Jews and they continued, as we learn from the Acts, to attend reunions at the Temple (of Jerusalem). Would it have been possible for them in their Christian assemblies to

chant the psalms on airs different from those of the Jewish meetings?"*

From this second stage, a simple variation repeated, to a complete piece of music is an easy transition. An entire verse of any psalm is taken out and a melody written for all of it, not merely the concluding syllables. No harmonized parts were used, however; and so the term, plain chant, is still accurate even when used of the most elaborate flights of this kind of music. All voices follow one line of melody. Several modern popes have stated that Gregorian is the music best suited to church services, and I think the reason for their statement is clear from this little analysis. First, the verse of the psalm was chanted on one note as a prayer; then a touch of music was added; finally a complete melody resulted. It is like a flower which has sprung from a root of prayer. The music is closely related to the sentiment of the prayer, and is itself a kind of prayer. Anyone who recites with attention and devotion the psalms will call forth in his own soul the very moods which Gregorian Chant has put into music.

Therefore in the monotonous hum of monastic chant at five o'clock in the morning, there is under the surface the raw material of song and poetry. At times inspiration may make recitation a sweet and pleasant labor. But it is not in search of such inspiration that the monk rises so early to pray. On more than half the days an average monk is not up to such flights, but he knows that the more important thing is saying the prayer regardless of passing moods. Choral recitation is work and most monks look on it as such; St. Benedict refers to it as the "work of God." To search for aesthetic or religious experiences of some sort while doing this work, the monk knows from prac-

* Felix Raugel in *Liturgia*, Paris, 1930. P. 410 seq.

tice, is a grave error. And he knows, too, that his feelings have nothing to do with the success or failure of prayer. Prayer is a spiritual activity and cannot be gauged by any physical yardstick. God has told us that He is pleased with prayer and will answer it, and so the monk carries through his morning Office often against coldness, drowsiness, slight illness or absent-mindedness—natural objections from the unwilling flesh.

The real reward is not in any emotions, but in God's grace, an intangible thing. There is, nevertheless, a visible effect—self-discipline or training of the spirit. Without regarding the supernatural, consider a choir merely from the outside, as a visitor from Mars might see it. Here is a group of men who rise at a bleak hour to recite in unison passages of an ancient and difficult tongue, and to perform precisely fixed actions—rising, bowing or kneeling—out of respect and honor to the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Is it not an excellent social training? Alertness, courtesy, respect for others, in a word, a high degree of *esprit de corps* is developed by this. Choir recitation is a real art, calling for attention and control. Each individual must at the same time give his whole heart and blend his own performance into that of the group.

This is not so easy as it sounds. As in every art, there is a series of techniques that must be mastered to produce good results. Have you ever heard of scooping, chipping, sagging or dragging? Even though they sound like foul plays in football, these are only a few of the things that can go wrong in choir recitation. The scooper is a person who shovels his words out like a coal heaver; he starts low, swoops up, and lets go his words with a crash of volume. Now the ideal of the choir is an even flow of sound like a swift river. If there were many scoopers, it would sound more like a storm at sea. The sagger is

the opposite; he starts evenly on key, but imperceptibly he sinks. Like a short-strided marcher, he is three paces behind the line after every ten steps. In truth, sagging is common to everyone, especially at a very early hour. The remedy for it is a little tuning fork, which is struck after every few psalms, and brings the line back on to one note for a time.* 'Intoning' also helps; that is, the first line of a new psalm is given out by one individual, and then the choir joins. This intoning passes in turn down the choir in order of seniority, and everyone gets a chance to rise and give out his own verse. The chipper and dragger are complementary types—they are the jumpy man and the phlegmatic one. The chipper begins everything too soon—he speaks, stands or bows a little in advance of the others—whereas the dragger is found lingering after others have finished; his voice is the last to die out, his head the last to come up. He is like an echo of the main event, and always some part of him protrudes from the compact mass.

Similar accidents happen whenever men try to act in unison. But there are few persons who receive a more severe or regular experience of them than the members of a monks' choir. They know all the difficulties of acting in harmony with one's neighbor. Daily they are trained to keep on the alert and in step. In the world today, where individualism has caused so many tragedies, this training is of great value to society. It makes a man in truth socially conscious, really considerate of his fellow man, far more so than listening to speeches on cooperation would do. It is accomplished naturally without any of the forced methods of the military dictator. These are the major and minor satisfactions. If a monk makes some error which disturbs the whole choir, he must go out to the center and bow

* Many other means of keeping the note up have been used.

over until the Abbot knocks on the stall, indicating an acknowledgement of the satisfaction. For lesser errors, such as a mispronunciation, a monk is supposed to rise and kneel for a second in his place. The harmony that results from this is real; it grows from the inside and is not imposed from without, and it is daily renewed in the work of the choir.

I have tried to bring out this social aspect of the choir because it may seem to an observer to be an unsocial performance in some ways. At Matins, for example, there is very rarely any congregation present; at Vespers during the week there may be only a few. It may appear that the monks are performing to an empty church. History tells us that this was not always so; we read that in the Middle Ages kings and queens frequented the monastic hours. Yet it seems unlikely that Matins was ever very heavily attended. The explanation is that monastic services are open to the public, but not done merely for them. They are directed first of all to God, then to the salvation of the monks' souls, and finally to the good of mankind. It makes no difference whether anyone is there or not. In fact, most of the world's work is done under like circumstances. Take the Post Office. There thousands of letters are sorted and sent daily by men unseen by the public. But if one of them began sending letters according to his own whim, the public would know about it very soon. Monks also direct messages, spoken ones to God, and they have their bearing on the common welfare. If they are lax, they are failing in their duty. As monastic prayers are more fervent, as more men devote themselves to the work of God, the spiritual level of all humanity will rise. It is with this in mind that the monk appears daily before God long in advance of the working world—to plead for himself, his brethren and all men.

3. Mass

Sometime before or after six o'clock, Matins and Lauds are completed. About this time the first sign of the world outside comes to our ears: it is the morning milk truck, which rumbles up to the back door and deposits several large cans there. This is also the time for the first Masses of the day. These are private Masses said at the many altars located throughout the monastery with only the celebrant and his server present. The Mass has been considered as a part of the Divine Office, the crown or completion of it, the action which follows the words. In the Mass Christ fulfills the prophecies and answers the petitions of the psalms. This is exactly what happened in history. The great prophets of the Old Testament prepared the way for Christ by preaching, but their words were not always clear before His coming. With His entrance into the world, Scripture suddenly flared into meaning like a flame. "Behold," said Isaias, "a virgin shall conceive and bear a child." More striking is Psalm 21, which gives a detailed description of Christ's sufferings. "They have pierced my hands and feet . . . They have cast lots for my clothing." With his mind filled by many like expressions from the psalms and

Scripture, the monk, as he says his private Mass, is made keenly aware of the realities contained in his ceremonial actions.

The Mass is the sacramental re-enactment of Christ's crucifixion. It is not merely another prayer, but a real action, Christ's sacrifice. It is no mere symbolic or dramatic representation, for we know that the bread and wine after consecration become the Body and Blood of Christ. God's presence there is called sacramental because the accidental appearances of bread and wine remain, whereas in substance they are His Body and Blood. Calvary with its blood and suffering is not repeated historically in Mass, for Christ suffered only once. One writer has said that the Mass presents reality, but represents history. When the priest consumes the bread and wine, it is a real and sacramental entry of God into his soul.

Therefore the long hour of prayer comes to its climax in direct contact with the Supreme Reality. Has not this been the object of all the religions of mankind? Unless our prayer were to arrive at this goal it would be too bodiless, for as men we need more than thought to sustain our devotion. Time for private reflection, however, is encouraged in the monastery, and one of the periods for it comes directly after the private Mass. All the monks file back into their stalls and kneel in perfect silence for some time, each turning his mind to God in his own fashion. This practice is called mental prayer and is the complement to spoken prayer. All monks are carefully trained in it, and most constitutions make it a rule for every monk to spend at least a half hour every day in its practice. After this, the first of the 'little hours,' Prime, is recited. It takes only about fifteen minutes, and the same is true of the other little hours—Terce, Sext, None—originally said at the third, sixth and ninth hours in Roman time, but now recited sometime before nine o'clock.

in the morning when the community disperses for the day's work.

Between Prime, finished about seven o'clock, and the conventual or public Mass, about eight, there is a pause to break fast. Meals in a monastery are neither sumptuous nor meagre. Although St. Benedict forbade the use of flesh meat, most modern monasteries have relaxed this rule, and brought monastic fasts into accord with the general fasts of the Church. Monastic food is probably simpler than that of lay-folk, less varied and without trimmings, but equal in amount. The austerity here which might be observed by a visitor is the appearance of the dining hall, or refectory. Its floor is uncarpeted, its walls bare stone, and its tables, varnished wood without covering. On ordinary days each monk serves himself from a table containing cereal, eggs, toast, and coffee; on fast days there is only unbuttered toast and coffee.* At the other meals, every monk save only the superior takes a turn in serving the brethren. The meals here are prepared by monks, and the cleaning up done by them. Many monasteries, however, have hired help in the kitchen.

Shortly before eight o'clock the tower bell is rung for the first time as a signal for the public or conventual Mass. The monks line up in the slype, or corridor leading to the church, and remain there in silence for a few minutes—a custom known as '*statio*'—in order to attune the mind for the service to follow. This Mass is called conventual because the entire membership of the house—the *conventus*—usually is present. § It is

* This is an average menu. It varies from day to day, and in different communities.

§ In larger monasteries some of the monks, in charge of residence halls or out on missions, are not at the conventual Mass. Those who are able always attend.

always sung, the community serving as choir, and is celebrated in turn by each priest of the house; it is always in honor of the feast which has been introduced at Matins, except on a Memoria, when the saint's name is mentioned only at Lauds, Vespers and Mass. On major feasts the superior is always the celebrant, assisted by a deacon, subdeacon, master of ceremonies, thurifer, and acolytes; but on most days there are only one priest and his server. The full performance of the Church's liturgy is one of the tasks monasteries have specialized in, mainly because they have the facilities to do it. Parish priests are often hindered by other duties, or a lack of assistants and choir. A good-sized monastery is one of the best places in which to observe the unabbreviated form of any of the Church's public religious ceremonies, her liturgy.

The Mass is the greatest work of art in human history. It is in a sense irreverent to consider only the external aspects of it when we think of its spiritual meaning, the offering to God by Christ and His Church of the Sacrifice of the Cross. However, in keeping with the spirit of this little essay, I shall try to describe only its outer appearance, leaving aside deeper, theological questions. Furthermore, true art springs from reverence, a loving attention to detail; art does not or should not detract from reverence. The Church presents in the Mass the reality of Christ's sacrifice with every aid that art can furnish to bring out its spiritual significance. It contains elements of drama, poetry and music—of still-life, and pantomime. These are all so subordinate to the meaning that most people never advert to them, but keep their minds and souls steadily on the main point, the worship of God through Christ and His Church

There is no better place to look at the artistry of the Church's liturgy than at the monastic, conventual Mass. The central act

of the Mass is a sacrifice; the priest takes bread and repeats over it the words of Christ: "This is My Body." In the same way he repeats Christ's words over the chalice of wine: "This is the chalice of My Blood which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins." Thus he acts out the role of Christ at the Last Supper. On the next day Christ showed the full meaning of these words when He offered His Body and Blood on the cross. The sacrifice is complemented by a banquet, a spiritual banquet in which the Holy Eucharist is consumed by the priest and any of the faithful who wish to receive. For a ceremonial representation of these two notions, there are two requisites: the table of the banquet, and the cross of sacrifice. Every altar is basically a table; and if we look into the historical development of altars, we will find that some very early ones were plain wooden tables. And above every altar is the symbol of sacrifice, the cross. The very church itself can be considered a symbol of the cross, often being cruciform in shape. Even the simplest rectangular church is reminiscent of a cross, if we consider the center aisle as the upright, and the crossing aisle in front of the communion rail as the beam. Here, then, is the general setting for the ceremony.

Starting from the altar as the focal point of the church, we find an orderly arrangement of the other parts which is filled with meaning. On the altar is Christ's home, the tabernacle. Just before this is a small square stone, set in the altar and containing the relics of a martyr; on this stone the Body and Blood of Christ will rest during the sacrifice. The striking symbol of Christ being supported by one of His martyrs originated during the centuries of Roman persecution. In the catacombs the early Christians always offered the Holy Sacrifice on or over the tomb of some martyr. When it became possible

to offer Mass in the light of day, "the Church had become so accustomed to the martyrs' tombs as the only places of sacrifice that to this day she orders their relics to be placed in every altar, and the service of the consecration of an altar is, practically speaking, nothing else than the burial with all accustomed ceremony of a Christian martyr who has died for his religion."* Between the altar and the people stands the priest as man's representative before God. Surrounding the priest and aiding him are various minor ministers: deacon, subdeacon, and acolytes. Then in a monastery church come the members of the household, the monks, in their two straight lines of the choir, extending away from the altar on opposite sides. Immediately below them is the communion rail, which marks the dividing line between the sanctuary, where only officials of the Church may enter, and the body of the church, where the congregation sits. At the very back of the church usually are the confessional boxes, as though sins were to be left at the church door.

This outline is filled with color. The very air within is often richly tinted from the great stained glass window, which faces east and catches the light of the morning sun as it pours down into the sanctuary. Most churches are thus oriented, though not all. The altar coverings and priest's vestments are varied in color to accord with the feast being honored: white, for Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin; also for bishops, virgins, and doctors of the Church; red, for martyrs; violet, for days of penance; green, for ferias; black in Masses for the dead; and on exceptional days, rose or gold. The incidental furnishings also add touches of color—the glow of the oak choir stalls, the gleam of brass candlesticks, the quiet winking of the candle

* A. S. Barnes. *The Early Church in the Light of the Monuments*. N.Y. 1913. P. 48.

flames, or the brighter glint of silver or gold from the chalice or ciborium.

Here alone is a scene which possesses superb beauty as still life, but the picture is a living and moving one. There is scarcely a moment when the attention is not carried deftly from one significant action to another. It all begins with the procession into the church, the community first in their black cowls, followed by the priest in his white alb and vestments. When all have genuflected before the altar and taken their places, the priest makes a sign of the cross and bows over to make public confession of his and all men's unworthiness by reciting the Confiteor. Then he advances to the altar, kisses the altar, walks over to the book, and with hands joined says the first words of the Mass.

In turn, his actions are accompanied by song. As soon as the priest begins, the choir sings the Introit, literally, the entrance to the Mass of the day. Gregorian music is perfectly suited to this setting. With its lack of showy solos or harmonizing, and its gradually mounting or falling line of melody, it is as though the picture had gained a voice natural to itself which expresses in music the words and actions of the priest.

Is all this to be considered merely a tawdry show? How often has it been said that Catholic ceremony is excessively rich; we hear of 'sumptuous vestments,' 'thick incense,' 'jewelled chalices,' etc. Or the opposite tack may be taken, that Catholic churches are full of cheap tinsel, chalk statues, gaudy lights, and poor ignorant people, impressed by a sort of colorful circus. There are churches and services which may have given rise to this impression, but if so, they represent the decay and not the norm of this great art.

The keynote of the liturgy is restraint. Although I have tried to describe the artistic symbolism at length, there is a simplicity in it which amounts almost to severity. There is never any play-acting, or display of persons or things for themselves. It is first of all religious worship in which symbols are used in a subdued and dignified manner. An authority thus describes it: "One finds in it the Roman genius such as it flourished in the best period with its marks of simplicity, sobriety, dignity, and force, and at the same time with its realistic and practical tendencies. Nothing of the superfluous, little of the symbolic, a piety which is serious and even austere, not without unction, but suppressing all effusiveness, noisy demonstration, or theatrical elements."*

It is realistic and practical because it accomplishes a twofold purpose simply and effectively. They are prayer, or petition to God through the priest; and instruction, or the presenting of God's word to the people. The actions and choral parts never interfere with these purposes. Before every prayer the priest faces the people and sings, "Dominus vobiscum" (The Lord be with you), and turning to the cross chants, "Oremus." The simple melodies used for the prayer are intended to make its words more audible as well as more lovely. In a large railroad station I have heard train arrivals and departures called out over a public address system in simple musical intervals, which made them more easily heard. This is the same idea as Gregorian, at least in the simple chants used for prayers.

When God's word is to be announced to the people, all other elements are subordinated to it. Take, for instance, the singing of the Gospel in a solemn Mass. The deacon, who is

* Liturgia. P. 506.

to sing it, brings the book to the altar, bows and asks a blessing of the celebrant. Then a little procession is made part way down the sanctuary towards the congregation. Partly turned towards the people, the deacon incenses the Gospel, makes the sign of the cross on it and on his lips, and begins to sing. While this is taking place, everyone at the altar, in the choir, and in the church, is facing the deacon and the Gospel. The whole setting helps to bring all minds to focus on the words about to be sung. The chants for the Gospel also never obscure the words, though some of them are fairly elaborate on major feast days.

At this point an objection arises from those who speak for the lay folk. Why should the sung parts, especially the Epistles and Gospels, be done in Latin? There is a growing school which argues for some part of the liturgy in the vernacular. In the United States a leading exponent of this is Gerald Ellard, S.J. in his *Mass of the Future*. An important recent critic on the other side is Dom Illtyd Trethowan in his *Christ in the Liturgy*. Without wishing to be involved in a difficult controversial question, let me hazard a few words of opinion from a monastic point of view. Does a Latin liturgy obscure the meaning for the laity?

The fallacy in this objection is in the use of the word 'meaning.' After all, everyone knows the meaning of any religious service, the lifting up of the mind and heart to God. There are many levels to this, from the simple piety of a child to the learned sanctity of an aged monk. Is translating the liturgical words into English going to have a noticeable effect on this central act? I am not arguing in favor of ignorance; everyone ought to understand the moral and dogma of religion. But what is involved here is a question of method. Is a vernacular

liturgy a good method for the improvement of piety and religious knowledge? My answer is a qualified "No."

With the aid of a missal containing Latin and English in parallel columns, most people, whether they know little, much, or no Latin, can follow with fair accuracy the Mass. There is a much stronger case for using English at Baptism and weddings, for then certain important statements are made by the parties, and they ought to be clearly understood. But in the general and public worship of the Church, the individual is merged in the devotion of the whole congregation, often a very large one. The praise of God is couched in exalted and mystical language, which is capable of bearing a number of meanings. Putting them into English will not make them clearer, and might detract from their dignity. In all respects religion stands above the rapid changes in popular life. Such things as vestments, religious symbols, the civilian dress of priests, do not conform to fashions of the moment. This is the case with the Church's language, which cannot even fairly be called a dead or archaic tongue. It has a vigorous modern life, and like a monk, is entirely dedicated to the worship of God.

When we address God, there is a fitness in using a tongue free from too many associations. The popular mind is a cloudy sea and nothing passes through it without soiling. But Latin, being in the world but not of it, does escape being twisted and made to bear unintended meanings. "Nigra sum, sed formosa, filiae Jerusalem," declares one of the antiphons, and means literally, "I am black but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem." Does plain English improve that? No, Latin is a language that guards His dignity among men.

The meaning of the great public acts of the Church cannot be tied down to precise words. It is spiritually beyond the power of

words to express absolutely. Children and the uneducated can grasp the significance of the solemn worship of God. Joy, sorrow, praise, pleading, are clear to them from many things besides the words, and they are able to join in spirit the mood of the occasion. The best prayers are often deep and unexpressed sentiments. At Mass all Catholics understand what is being accomplished. The gestures of the priest, the offering up of host and chalice, the bowed head and uplifted hands, tell the story without words. This is, of course, the lowest degree of understanding, but not even the greatest saint ever claimed to exhaust the full meaning of God's word.

For the monk who is daily present at this great and artistic act, there is no problem of literal understanding. He is familiar with every detail of the most elaborate functions and knows practically all the prayers or lessons to some extent, and can easily follow from his own book. For him Latin has all the advantages of the vernacular, and none of its drawbacks. It provides a perfect channel for his devotion, and truly mystical experiences are probably not uncommon in the history of religious communities. His devotion is true because it is centered on God. One of the dangers of religious emotion is the strange directions it takes when left to individuals; we read of Shakers, or Holy Rollers and the like in the fantastic history of religious enthusiasm, but these deviations are impossible to the monk at Mass.

Daily two things are presented to him—the greatest beauty joined with the truth. At the moment of God's descent to the altar, the consecration, all other action is stopped. A bell is sounded, the priest raises the white host, and everyone looks upward for a moment in adoration of the Body of Christ. Immediately afterward the choir continues its song with the

words: "Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini" [Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord]. Here is truth elevated in a setting of beauty and proclaimed in words of unmistakable meaning. These moments of God's daily epiphany are the keystone of the monk's day; towards them his morning prayer has led, and after them will follow his hours of work. They give an integration to his life, which greatly aids the inner harmony necessary to fruitful work. Centering the longings of the heart on a worthy object is the answer to much of modern man's restless search for peace; the secret, if it can be considered one, has been practiced for centuries in the monastery.

Taken in a larger aspect, the Mass offers much more than this to the monk. To grasp fully the implications of one Mass, it is necessary to see it in relation to the entire year of worship. As a general rule each day's Mass differs in its proper parts; the prayers, Epistle, Gospel, Offertory, and Communion. The feasts are distributed on an annual framework, called the Liturgical Year. Though I do not wish to describe it in detail here, some idea of it is needed for an appreciation of daily monastic worship. It is the real unit of monastic life. To some people it may seem that monks go through the same routine every day, but that is an error. Each day differs, and it is the year which is repeated; even the yearly cycle has variety, because a large part of it, the proper of the season, is reckoned from Easter, which can move forward or backward by a month.

In a broad way the liturgical year recapitulates the life of Christ. Advent is devoted to the preparation for His coming; Christmas and following weeks to His birth and childhood; Lent, to His sufferings; Easter, to His resurrection; Pentecost to the Holy Spirit; and the season after Pentecost, to His teaching and parables. Thus there are six liturgical seasons, each

with its characteristic spirit. Advent and Lent are penitential, using violet for altar decorations and vestments; Christmas and Easter are joyous, with white as the dominant color; the season of Pentecost uses red as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and following it comes the ordinary post-Pentecostal season with green as the color. In harmony with the seasons many items of the daily monastic routine change; for example, the colors, the length and tone of the prayers, the Scriptural selections, the type of music, and some of the choral actions. And this is true not only of church services, but of many small customs throughout the monastic day.

The total effect of these is to establish in the monastery a succession of supernatural seasons, as comprehensive in a way as those of nature. They are in accord with different stages of Christ's earthly life. Always the monk is conscious of some part of this—the winter of Christ's passion, the spring of His resurrection, the summer of His teaching, and at the very end of the year, just following the longest nights, of His birth into the world. Is it accidental that these fall in approximately with the natural seasons? It is, of course, but the idea of seasonal change surely is not, for nature is a dim reflection of supernature.

Each day's Office and Mass are like tiny stones in a great mosaic, which grows to completion each year in a full picture of Christ, His Holy Family, and His prophets and saints. This liturgical picture is a masterpiece of artistic arrangement with light and shadow, background and accent. The background is the green of the ordinary days. Then come the feasts, with their varied color and solemnity. There are actually seven different grades of feasts—from the simple Memoria, in which only the Mass is proper to the saint, up to a double of the first

class, which devotes the entire day of prayer to the saint's praise, with a summary of his life and work at Matins. Such then is the monk's worship, not a mere repetition, but a changing picture, part fitting into what preceded, part leading to what follows, the whole yielding each year deeper insights to a thoughtful mind, forming it gradually to the great annual mosaic of Christ, His saints and His doctrine.

4. Work

A little before nine o'clock, as the monks file out in silent procession from conventual Mass, another bell sounds, not this time a sweet and solemn cadence from the tower, but a strident electric clang from the school, which adjoins the monastery. Already there in the corridor, about a hundred boys are gathered, awaiting opening prayers of the school day. When the procession has arrived in the passageway, all turn and bow to the Abbot, who always walks last; and immediately the restrained and ceremonial bearing of the monks dissolves into a business-like hurry to get to various jobs. Mail is distributed on a table in the common room; coats, hats, books, papers are seized; a car draws up to the front door for the monks who go to the nearby university. There are between ten and twenty minutes to get from Mass to our daily work. As I view this scene of hurry, that ancient calumny, repeated by so many men since the Reformation, comes to my mind, the "lazy monks." Perhaps in history there were houses which gave rise to this description, but here it would be the poorest of jests. After a long and rigorous morning of prayer, these men are going forth to a day's work equal to that of people of the world. Some of the more conservative monks, especially of Europe, profess to be scandalized at the vigorous activity of American monks,

accusing them of undervaluing the contemplative life. Although it is not true that they undervalue this, their working day does not leave them much leisure for spiritual reading and reflection, at least from nine to five.

Amid the superficial confusion of movement in the common room, there are four orderly directions in which the monks move. First, the lay brothers proceed to the manual work of the house. Then the novices, after a few chores around the church and sacristy, retire to the novitiate, a part of the building reserved to them. Next, the juniors set out for the university, where they carry on college or seminary studies. Finally, the priests make ready for a day of teaching, either in the monastery school, or the university, which is at some distance from the monastery and not a part of it.* Lastly a few of the elderly monks retire to their cells to write conferences or sermons, or, in the case of the very oldest, to await a better world where the rush of time will be no longer. At five minutes past nine, an unbroken stillness reigns over the cloisters and chapel. The monks have gone into the daily hustle of twentieth century life with the hope of bringing some of the recollection and peace of God's house into its activity.

These four classes make up the hierarchy of a modern monastery. At the top is the Abbot, whose word is final if he wishes to use all his authority, but he usually consults the Council or the brethren before making decisions. At the bottom in authority are the lay brothers, who do the manual tasks and forego advanced study and priestly orders. After four years of

* In the past some large monasteries have operated universities; in the United States at present, thirteen monasteries have colleges and seventeen have seminaries; practically all the rest operate day or boarding schools for boys of high school age.

trial, they are ready for lifetime vows and find employment as cooks, carpenters, tailors or handymen. They are closer in some ways to the monks of the earlier centuries than are the priest-monks. It was not St. Benedict's intention to establish an Order of priests. He wanted simply to set up a framework of disciplined life wherein men could pray, contemplate and work in religious retirement. The breakdown of civilized order following the collapse of Roman administration gave his idea its original impetus. In his time the monastery offered not only a haven of religion, but an island of civilization amid the sea of disorder that broke over Europe. Spreading across the continent, these islands formed the starting points of modern Christian civilization. Eight centuries later, about the fourteenth century, there were probably more than thirty-five thousand of them according to the Catholic Encyclopedia.†

From their ideals of regular living and piety, Christian civilization was born anew from the ruins of the ancient world. Perhaps one reason for the revival of monasticism in the twentieth century is that world conditions today are so similar to what they were in late Roman times. The modern barbarians are again sacking and destroying cities. In the intervening centuries, however, many changes have taken place in monasticism. The lay brotherhood has declined greatly in numbers. This trend began early. Within a short time after St. Benedict, monks were bound by Church law to be ordained to the priesthood. Then a special class of manual workers developed; they sat below the regular choir in church, and could not join the Divine Office. They had prayers of their own in the vernacular. They were a picturesque group of men, sometimes called

† Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 2. P. 446.

barbati (bearded ones) from the fact that in some monasteries they wore full beards.

In the centuries before the Reformation, when machine civilization was as yet unknown, these lay brothers accomplished many marvels of manual labor. Their work was done without material reward, and in a deep spirit of reverence. They were in all respects monks, but their zeal would find its natural outlet in laboring with their hands to glorify God's creation. Although it is impossible now to separate their work from that of the priest-monks, they worked side by side with the priests in all the magnificent achievements of the monasteries in the fields of architecture, art, agriculture and countless other branches. § Today the kind of work they excelled in has succumbed to mechanization. When field and hand labor are absorbed by the machine, the lay brother loses to some extent his place, and the whole of civilization suffers a certain loss. Many modern social reformers, like Ruskin or Elbard Hubbard, were unconsciously groping after the spirit of the lay brotherhood in attempting to restore the dignity of hand work. But in comparison with St. Benedict their efforts are impractical and impermanent. Even Communism derives its specious attraction from an appeal to the dignity of the laborer, a false appeal, it is true, which pretends to offer him the peace the lay brother had in reality. There is a sting of truth in the jest that "Russia is a country of unwilling monks ruled by a fanatical Abbot."

Nevertheless, the spirit of the Benedictine rule can still consecrate labor in the modern world. It will work now as it did before if men will give it a trial. A few monastic groups have deliberately kept prominent the spirit of religious manual labor;

§ For a complete treatment of monastic work, see Montalembert, *The Monks of the West*. London, 1896. Vol. 5. pp. 86-194.

such are the Cistercians, an offshoot of the Benedictines, who do farm work principally. In England, Prinknash Abbey, a house of the Benedictines of the Primitive Observance, has devoted itself to training men in various handicrafts. In the United States a special training school for lay brothers has been started in St. Meinrad's Abbey, Indiana. These, however, are only a few leaves on a tree otherwise barren. This tree can bloom again; but first of all more lay brothers are needed, particularly in the United States. Too few workers in this country are willing to work for any reward but money.

Those who embrace this life find that, once they have overcome the artificial desire of 'getting ahead in the world,' they have a career filled with dignity, peace and fruitfulness. An old lay brother shows in his countenance and his skill with his hands, the outward values of his kind of life, and they are only signs of its inner quality. The lay brother is usually longer lived than the priest, often going on to the eighth decade, and free of the penalties of a sedentary life. Health, peace of soul and mind, security, quiet satisfaction with work done for God and the good of his brethren—are these not rewards worth having? Especially when they lead to a blessed end with every possible assurance of the greatest reward to come? By comparison, social security, wage increases, unemployment insurance and the like are at best temporary benefits. Let us hope that the few who keep the monastic buildings, grounds, clothes and food, will find more companions in the future and that the lay brotherhood will once again regain its ancient numbers and splendor.

There is an intermediate group, who are neither lay brothers nor monks; they are the oblates. They might be called followers or friends of St. Benedict. Lay oblates are persons living an

ordinary life in the world who meet regularly at the monastery and study the spiritual ideals of St. Benedict under the direction of one of the monks; they may say some part of the Divine Office privately. If they wish to live in the monastery, they may be accepted as choir oblates. A choir oblate wears a slightly simplified form of the habit, does not study for Holy Orders, and makes only a simple promise of obedience to the Abbot, which may be terminated at any time by either party.

The next regular group are the novices, those in the first year of monastic life intending to go on to Holy Orders. In age they range from post-high school years to early manhood, with occasionally a mature man trying his vocation. When he first arrives at the monastery, a person is allowed to live there for some days as a guest, simply observing the routine. If he wishes to take the first step towards becoming a monk, he asks to become a postulant, or one seeking admission. He wears the regular habit, except the hood, and lives exactly as a monk. Usually, after a few weeks of this life, he has decided for or against taking the next step, which is to enter the novitiate. The novitiate is a year of trial, during which the novice is grounded in all the basic essentials of monastic living. To become a novice, the postulant must receive a majority vote of the Counsellors, and answer in writing certain questions regarding his past life, general reputation, knowledge, etc. The ceremony of admission, performed in the church, is called the "clothing," in which he receives the full monastic habit from the hands of the Abbot, and a new name by which he is to be known in religion, such as Brother John, or whatever name he has chosen.

During the novitiate year he is asked to do no work or study outside the monastery. He may not even leave the grounds except in the company of a professed monk. Daily he is trained

in the basic essentials. Under the direction of the Novice Master, he studies the rule of St. Benedict, and the constitutions of his congregation, as well as customs peculiar to his own monastery. He is taught the art of mental prayer and spiritual reading; he learns to chant the Divine Office, to sing Gregorian music, to read aloud to the community during meals, and be of assistance in the chapel and house. He has also every day, usually in the afternoon, a period of manual labor, but it is not heavy work and helps keep him in good physical condition for the hours of study and prayer.

This year is one of mixed sweetness and trouble; there is joy in discovering the quiet rhythm of monastic routine, but also embarrassment in stumbling against many new rules and customs. The errors of novices are not of great importance to the house, but they seem very great to those who commit them, for it is a time of careful scrutiny. The very purpose of the year is to form a judgment on whether a person has a monastic vocation. Of his own will he may ask at any time to leave, and this is granted without question. Three times during the year the Council holds a meeting wherein it is discussed whether the novice shows enough promise to be kept. If the answer is in the affirmative, a little ceremony is held in the church, called the 'perseverance,' in which the novice is encouraged on his way and warned of his shortcomings by the Abbot. Near the end of the year, every person in the house is called separately before the Council and asked his opinion of the novice; after this a secret vote is cast by all the monks, who must indicate by a majority their assent to allow the novice to be professed as a junior.

A junior is professed in temporary vows, that is, for three years. A vow is a deliberate and free promise made to God

and binding as such. It is therefore much more than a mere good resolution, and it cannot be altered without some formal release. The three customary vows of all religious Orders are chastity, poverty and obedience. By them a person gives up to God, as represented by the Church and his religious superior, three natural human rights: by chastity, the right to marry; by obedience, the right over his own will; and by poverty, the right to property. Their purpose is to aid in living a life of perfect dedication to God. They are, then, beyond the requirements of the Ten Commandments, and not expected of Christians in general. Here again the monk sets himself apart by a public promise of striving for perfection.

On the day of his profession the junior reads from a paper bearing his signature the following words: "I promise for three years before God and His saints, stability, *conversio morum*, and obedience, according to the rule of Our Holy Father, St. Benedict . . ." These three Benedictine vows, though worded differently, include the classic vows described above, but also go beyond them. Stability, peculiar to Benedictines among all Orders, means that the monk will remain in the house of his profession for the rest of his life. '*Conversio morum*' is a phrase whose literal translation is misleading. In effect it means a sincere effort to live the life of perfection as set forth in the Rule, and hence includes chastity and poverty.

The juniors are the students of the house. They immediately take up their formal education where it was interrupted on entrance. From this it can be approximately estimated how many years of study face a young candidate. There are four years of theology ahead of the college graduate, provided he already has the required philosophy; six years of study before the minor seminary graduate; and eight years before the high

school graduate. Only then is a candidate ready for ordination; therefore, some time in the course of his theological studies, the junior is ready to become a fully professed monk. Whenever a group of monks is seen in earnest discussion of some point of metaphysics, or a technical point of the liturgy, it is more than probable they are juniors. At nine o'clock each day they hurry out to the university and follow the regular courses there. Freed from the close confinement of the novitiate, the junior still faces formidable difficulties, not the least of which is his full program of study combined with the Divine Office. He may also come into contact with the outside world again in his university studies. Many larger monasteries, however, avoid this danger by conducting full colleges and major seminaries under their jurisdiction. But in any case the junior is freer than the novice. Yet he is still in a period of trial. He has a good number of academic hurdles to clear in the course of his theological studies; and before receiving any major orders, he must present letters of recommendation from his home diocese. In the monastery there are no more character scrutinies or ballotings for him to pass. He is still, however, subject to dismissal from temporary vows if the Abbot and Council consider it necessary. He may himself ask for dispensation if he has grave reasons; and either return to the world as a layman, or continue his clerical studies, no longer as a monk. If he perseveres for three years, he is again voted on by the entire Chapter of monks, but this time the vote is merely consultative, and the final decision rests with the religious superior and the monk concerned.

Therefore, after a minimum of four years' trial, and customarily it is somewhat longer, a person is ready to become a full-fledged monk. He does so freely and against difficulties since there have been many hardships during these years, which

St. Benedict requires to be pointed out by the superior in his conferences to young monks. Every monk in solemn vows is there by his own choice, and he possesses a considerable amount of independence. If it seems paradoxical to say this of a person whose every act is done under obedience, remember that the state was a free choice and that obedience frees as well as restricts. It is something like a railroad track—it aims all movement in one direction, but greatly facilitates it. That direction is towards the improvement of the soul, growth in Christian virtue. The vows of poverty and chastity also, though they forbid certain things, free a man from burdens such as property management and family responsibility. These vows are properly renunciations, and it is not correct to consider them repressions or restrictions, since their purpose is to free, to disengage the mind from natural obligations of men in the world. Renunciation is a different thing from repression. The latter implies crushing some natural desire; but the longings of the heart can be cherished and developed, by a life dedicated to God, in a different way from a life of married love, but just as wholesomely. The supernatural is not unnatural. In psychological terms, basic human drives are sublimated. All Christians in various ways cultivate a love of God, but the monk makes a profession of it. Such a life does not result in frustration. The picture of a monk as a man locked up, looking enviously on a free world outside, is far from the truth. Rather he is like the merchant in the New Testament who has found a pearl of great price, and sold all else to possess it.

Once they are firmly fixed in a spiritual state of life, monks are able to join in work of the world, and cooperate vigorously in the upbuilding of society. It is not true that monks have been in flight from the world, as monastic history clearly shows;

there is a withdrawal, precisely in the novitiate and juniorate years, only to lead to a beneficial return. The history of monastic work is so long and varied that it is impossible even to outline it in brief. During fourteen centuries monks have done practically every type of work; they have furnished some Popes and Bishops to the church; but there have been among them artists, scientists, writers, builders, educators, agriculturists and missionaries. They have conducted many kinds of businesses, from printing to vestment making, from farming to Biblical commentary. (One house in Europe is largely supported by its popular brand of shoe polish!)

In modern times, however, education has become the main activity of the monks, second only to the Divine Office. The Catholic Directory shows that in the United States, out of twenty-eight Benedictine monasteries, twenty-five conduct schools, among which are colleges, seminaries, high schools and mission schools. The statistics for the whole Order show that throughout the world Benedictines conduct 398 schools with over 54,000 pupils. If we add to this 548 schools with over 100,000 pupils taught by Benedictine Sisters, it needs no further proof that education has largely absorbed the working hours of the monks and Sisters today.

Why is this the case? St. Benedict did not found his Order to advance education; yet by its nature the monastery gives birth to the school. It is like a family in many ways and the family is the first natural school for its children. There are many individuals, differences of viewpoint, a center of authority, and certain rights, duties and privileges. Adjusting to all these things makes up the first lessons of a child. In a more mature and systematic manner, the same problems of community life are dealt with in the Benedictine rule, which thus

becomes the basic schoolbook for the monk. Beyond this task of harmonious daily living, the monastery from the beginning has carried on a full liturgical program. Because of this it was forced to train its members in Latin, singing and many related skills.

The first monastic school, therefore, must have been born in the cloister of the first monastery. Chapter 37 of St. Benedict's rule deals with old men and children; chapter 59, with the sons of nobles or poor men, that are offered. Now while it is true that the children here written of were not ordinary school boys, but were intended to become monks, still the monastery had to train them. They were called 'oblats' (offered ones) and the school for them was internal, or inside the cloister, that part of the monastery from which the outside world is excluded. The oblats were gradually trained to all the duties of their state, which called for a full education for the priests, and special scholarly training for those who copied manuscripts or cared for the books. Therefore some monks have always been and still are very highly educated within the cloister. In time it must have happened that there came to be mingled with the oblats, outside boys sent to the monastery solely to be educated. There is on record a law passed in 817 in France, requiring all monasteries to conduct an external school. This shows that some of the houses of that time already had schools outside the cloister for the use of the general public. From then right down to the present, monks have been professional educators, giving training to those intended for other careers in life besides the Church.

The monastery then is a natural home of education, a cultural as well as a spiritual center. It is after all only to be expected that cultivation of the mind should be a natural corollary

of cultivation of the soul. There is such a thing as a Benedictine spirit in education, though it is inaccurate to generalize too much about monastic education because such schools have existed in so many different countries and throughout so many historical periods. However, there must have been and still is an underlying unity because all have followed the same rule of life. The round of daily work and prayer forms monks in a distinctive mould, and this formation is handed over to their students.

Considering their educational activity as an overflow from their lives, we are brought face to face with the principal community effort, the recitation of the Divine Office. The discipline of this is very comprehensive, and in an earlier chapter we have tried to sketch some of its influence on character. But it has a great influence on the intellect as well; Cardinal Schuster observes that in the early Middle Ages it was a substitute for college or university training. "The Divine Office," he says, "contained everything knowable at that time, for in form eminently dramatic, it was at the same time prayer, Scripture study, patristic study, poetry, music, and history of the Church . . . Standing in the choir and assiduously singing the Divine Office, the monk became acquainted with all those various disciplines. Thanks to this intense higher instruction, imparted to the Benedictines with ability, method, and constancy, the Patriarch of Cassino became and remained for seven centuries the master of the Middle Ages."*

With this dual discipline of intellect and character, the monk had his teacher-training course right at home. When he was called on to train others, he would model their minds according to the same pattern that had already been impressed on him-

* Ildephonse Schuster, *St. Benedict and His Times*. London, 1951. P. 235.

self. It is not true that this results only in making monks of the students. These virtues—constant awareness of God's presence, obedience, humility, self-restraint, sense of team work, charitableness, alertness—are needed not only in the cloister, but in every business in the world. But the cloister is a supreme place for an early and deep impression of such virtues, for there they are hourly and deliberately practiced, kept before the mind of the monk, and consequently of his students.

In a single phrase, the spirit of monastic education is a reverential sense of God's presence in all His creation. This sense is deep within the monk's soul, but also externally in his garb, and even in the buildings he inhabits. Reverence pervades the corridors of the monastery, and young people breathe it in the very air of the place. This is the strongest influence of the monastery, and does not depend on the skill of the teacher to be imparted, though it does depend on his spiritual advancement. Being supernatural, it springs from sources other than textbooks or lectures. Since it is part of the atmosphere, it is probably best given by the boarding school where the student lives completely within its orbit. Probably the majority of monastic schools have been boarding schools, but the same influence will operate in a day school. It is a spirit particularly needed by youth today. So many factors of modern life tend to scatter the attention, to uproot from fixed ideas, to startle or amuse, that the deep, age-old sense of stability and permanence in the monastery should be a most valuable counter-check to the hectic quality of our century. And this is the distinctive spirit of monastic education.

We can find examples of it throughout the centuries of monastic history—the way the monks built, for instance, or some of

the books they made, still usable after many centuries. A modern French monk writes, "The French Revolution marked the momentary disappearance of monachism in nearly all Europe."* This momentary disappearance lasted at least a half century. Yet what is that compared to fourteen centuries? The original monastery of St. Benedict, Monte Cassino, is now being rebuilt after its destruction in the second World War, and the bronze door includes pictures of the various means by which it has been leveled in its more than thousand-year history. In Scotland recently a monastic building has been reinhabited after about four centuries of abandonment.** The life of the modern monks will not differ greatly from the last group that was there about the time of the Reformation.

These are cited only as instances of the atmosphere in which monastic education is carried on—an atmosphere of eternity, serenely unmoved amid the whirling changes of the moment. After all, man's spirit is eternal, and the same over the world, regardless of the type of civilization in which it happens to be. There are different material expressions of it, but the substratum remains. Monastic education comes to grips with the unchanging elements in a man's soul. For that reason it can bring history to life; the prayers of the Jewish prophets—still said daily by the monks; the philosophy and art of Greece—an important part of their mental training; the legal sense of Rome—from which their rule is derived; all these are as vital today in the monastery as they were in centuries gone by. It is a type of training especially valuable in contemporary America, where

* H. LeClerq, in *Dictionnaire d'Archeologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*. Paris, 1934. Tome II 2nd Part p. 1947.

** Pluscarden. The buildings, abandoned for hundreds of years, were reoccupied without much extensive alteration being needed.

the rapid material advancements have wrought spiritual and mental confusion.

Beyond education there have been certain other occupations cultivated by the monks, and they still are carried on though in a lesser degree than formerly. Agriculture, scholarship and the arts flourish in these surroundings. Every community has some men devoted to these; the lay brother farmer, the priest scholar, the artist monk, are common types still in monasteries. Some houses have refused to take on the labor of education, regarding it as unsettling to the quietude of contemplation. Yet they are a minority, and the rule of St. Benedict makes no precise regulations about the type of work; it is flexible enough to allow of different degrees of removal from the bustle of the world. In a busy monastery of the big city, or in a quiet one in the heart of the mountains, the same spirit can be cultivated and brought to whatever degree of perfection the individual is capable of.

About four or five o'clock in the afternoon the monk is able to drop the burden of the day's work, and return to the silence of his cell. His day has come round a full circle, beginning with morning prayer and contemplation, and returning to it after his working day. There is a comparatively free hour here at the day's end; monks make use of it according to temperament for their physical or mental refreshment. Some may be seen laboring on the grounds in plain work clothes, others may be in the library or chapel for spiritual reading, and some may take a nap of thirty minutes. As the day draws to a close, let us leave the monks to one of the few free periods they have.

5. Evening

A few minutes before six the tower bell rings, and again the monks assemble in the slype for Vespers, the prayer of twilight. This is the most beautiful of the canonical hours whose spirit intermingles prayer with poetry. In keeping with its spirit and the time of day, it is always sung, with simple and repeated variations for the psalms (the psalm-tones), and more elaborate melodies for the antiphons. Less rigorous than Matins, less solemn than Mass, Vespers seems to have been placed here by the Church as a graceful tribute to the day's close. Who does not feel the mood of music at sundown? In that brief time between the hurry of day and the stillness of night, the world seems to call attention to her own beauty. With deepening shadows and colorful highlights, she presents herself in an aspect of loveliness to men as they lift their eyes from work. People slow up their pace, greeting one another and remarking that it is a 'lovely evening.' That is the natural mood of contemplation, the raw material of prayer. All it needs to become true prayer is to be directed to God as the author of all beauty.

That is exactly what Vespers accomplishes. We find in it, not so much the spirit of penance or pleading, as a grateful lifting

up of the heart, an exclamation of praise at the wonder of the world. "All Thy works give testimony of Thee, O Lord, and we, Thy followers, bless Thy name," declares the opening verse of Saturday's Vespers. And the second psalm begins, "Praise the Lord, O my soul; I shall praise God as long as I have life." The poem which follows the psalms links the thought of God to the setting of the sun:

O Light, O Blessed Trinity
And all-embracing Unity,
Now that the fiery sun recedes,
Infuse Your light into our hearts.

The versicle and response, following this, compress the whole spirit of the hour into two lines:

*"Vespertina oratio ascendat ad Te, Domine,
Et descendat super nos misericordia Tua."*

May our prayer at twilight ascend to Thee, O Lord,
And may the kindness of Thy heart descend upon us.

Thus Vespers takes a natural mood of the hour and supernaturalizes it in words of surpassing beauty and dignity. Its construction is very similar to Lauds, the prayer of sunrise, which it recalls to mind, linking the day in a certain unity. There are four psalms, a brief poem, a versicle and response, and as a climax, the *Magnificat*, which comes near the end like the Benedictus at Lauds. Lastly comes the collect of the day. In all, Vespers requires about half an hour.

The *Magnificat* has been called the greatest poem of the Christian religion. It was first spoken by the Blessed Virgin when she visited her cousin, Elizabeth, after she realized she was to be the mother of the Messiah; it is filled with joyful gratitude. We may translate parts of it freely as follows: "My soul speaks of the splendor of the Lord" [a poor rendition of

'*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*'] "and my spirit exults in God, my Saviour." The note of exultation is in perfect harmony with Vespers, and it is not by any means a selfish joy. When the monk chants these words, he is thinking of Mary, and of the wonderful fact of God becoming man through her; his joy is because he is a member of the redeemed human race. "Because," Mary continued, "He has looked favorably upon the lowliness of His servant, and has done a marvellous thing to me"—that is, He has accomplished the incarnation of Christ through her. "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." What a statement for anyone to make! It sounds like the ultimate in conceit, but has turned out to be no more than a modest and accurate truth. For every day at Vespers, all the clergy, all the Orders, monks as well as nuns (and who knows how many laity?) say Mary's poem, the *Magnificat*. And there are hundreds of thousands of them. Every time the monk repeats these words, they bring to his mind all the generations of Christians since Mary, fulfilling this astounding prophecy to the letter.

In this way Vespers is Mary's own prayer. The music of her *Magnificat* antiphons is one of those exceptional places where Gregorian shows its power of artistry. Some of these are very beautiful and elaborate pieces in themselves, like the Alleluias at Mass. Thus the beauty of the hour is matched by the beauty of the liturgy. The Blessed Virgin is mentioned in all the hours of prayer; she stands, so to speak, in the background as she did in Christ's life. This is accomplished by the final antiphons of Our Lady, which are said at the conclusion of any period of choir prayer. There are four of them for different seasons of the year. The best known is the *Salve Regina* [Hail, Holy Queen], which is said from early summer until Advent.

From Advent until the Feast of the Purification in February is said the Alma Redemptoris Mater [Fair Mother of the Redeemer]; from the Purification until Holy Saturday, the Ave Regina Coelorum [Hail, Queen of Heaven]; and during the Easter season, the Regina Coeli, Laetare [Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven]. In these antiphons Mary accompanies Our Lord and the saints throughout the liturgical year and is always present to the monk's mind.

After Vespers, from 6:30 to 7:00, comes supper; it would be more accurate to call it dinner since it is the principal meal of the day.* At noon, in accordance with American custom, only a light lunch is served. There is no talking in the dining hall, or refectory, during meals. Instead an ancient monastic custom of reading is observed. For a week at a time, each of the monks in turn is required to read aloud to the others during meals. At noon the book may be an ordinary history or on some secular subject, but in the evening, a book dealing with some spiritual matter is used. In this way in the course of a year the monks hear read many religious and literary classics which they might not otherwise have time to read.

After dinner, from 7:00 until 7:45, is a period of recreation, which really means a time for the community to get together for informal conversation. There are two such periods in the day: immediately after lunch at noon, and after dinner in the evening. They are held in a large common room, the calefactory, so called because at one time it was the only room in the house containing a fireplace where one could thaw out during the winter months. Recreation plays an important part in the daily routine. It was not St. Benedict's idea that the monks should keep silence at all times. His references to

* This varies. Some monasteries have the principal meal at noon.

talking in the Rule prove this point.* As it works out in practice today, there are two different types of silence, the lesser and greater silences. The greater silence is observed only at night after the brethren have retired to their cells. It means that a person is not to communicate at all, except in case of necessity, and then he writes out what he wishes to say. The lesser silence is observed during the day, and means simply that the monk should not waste his time in idle talk, although no hesitation is shown in talking over matters of business. One branch of the Benedictines have become famous for their rule of perpetual silence, the Cistercians, or Trappists. They are, however, a minority and have a number of strict practices which are not observed by the majority of monks. In the popular mind the white-robed and ever silent Cistercian may have become the symbol of monasticism, but this is not accurate. Monks are really expected to indulge in sociable conversation during the times of recreation.

Most monks today also have opportunities for other kinds of recreation. In the school it is usually a monk who directs the athletic and dramatic performances. He may conduct a club or follow some hobby in his spare moments. Exactly where to draw the line about these matters is left to the Abbot and Council of each monastery. Concerning games and hobbies, St. Benedict says nothing at all in his Rule. He probably felt that it was a matter better left to individual discretion. Modern constitutions deal indirectly with it in describing the furniture of a monastic cell. Each cell is to have a bed, desk, two chairs, crucifix, some religious pictures, lamps and bookcases. Anything beyond these is contrary to the letter of the law. Yet many good monks may have such items as scientific specimens,

* Chap. VI. Of the Practice of Silence.

musical instruments, books of secular learning, or art works not on religious subjects in their cells. Considerable variation will be found on these matters, depending on the discretion of the Abbot, and the needs of the monks.

Smoking is another of these minor relaxations which has caused some difference of opinion. In practice today novices are strictly forbidden the use of tobacco, but it is tolerated among the juniors and fully professed. St. Benedict's attitude toward such things can be perhaps guessed from his mild remarks on the use of wine. After stating that wine should not at all be the drink of monks, he goes on to say that since monks of his day could not be persuaded of this, let them at least be sparing in the use of it. He would probably take the same attitude towards other minor self-indulgences, whether tobacco, hobbies, or secular pursuits of various kinds. Flexibility here is his attitude. Many statements in the Rule could be quoted to show this. "It is with some misgiving," he remarks, "that we appoint the measure of other men's living."* Or again he allows considerable difference in the amount of food for different monks, but remarks that if a man needs more, he should be sorry for his weakness. The Scriptures have nothing to say about these things. Probably at most they are accidentals, not of sufficient importance to warrant special treatment in connection with the great principles of supernatural living. Only when games or secular pursuits interfere with a full and conscientious performance of daily prayer and duties do they become evils.

The last prayer hour of the day is Compline, immediately after recreation, about a quarter to eight. The word comes from the Latin 'completorium,' which means the completion

* Rule. Ch. XL.

of the day. It takes only about fifteen minutes, and is recited usually, though it may be sung on great feasts. Since the same psalms, hymns and prayers are said each day at Compline, it is one hour the monk quickly learns to recite without a book. The chapel is in total darkness except for two tiny points of light from the candles on the altar. § It is a most suitable prayer for retiring with many references to the peace of night, and reliance on God until the morrow.

This is the only hour in which some use is made of English. At the beginning, a monk comes to the bookstand, and while the others are seated, reads in the vernacular some spiritual book such as the *Imitation of Christ*: then at a sign from the Abbot, he closes the book and makes a profound bow. The choir stands and recites in a more subdued tone the three psalms of Compline. The low murmur of the choir, the darkness of the church save for the two candles flanking the tabernacle, make Compline one of the more dramatic hours, a good one for the visitor to begin with. Here he senses better the real atmosphere of monastic living than during the busy day. He can see briefly and essentially what a monastery is—a small group of Christians, separated from the world by dress and manner of life, under a superior, and dedicated to a life of prayer in common before the dwelling place of God. At the end of the recitation, an antiphon to the Blessed Virgin is sung; then the Abbot passes up and down the lines of monks sprinkling each of them with holy water—his final benediction of the day. Then come several minutes of complete silence, in which the monk makes a brief examination of conscience. At a sign from the Abbot, the hour is ended and the monks are free to go

§ Custom varies; some monasteries insist on illumination; and some always sing Compline.

to their cells or remain for private prayer in the chapel.

Now is the time of greater silence; the profound stillness which reigns everywhere brings out the contemplative character of monastic life. In walking through the halls the monks place their hoods up over their heads, and pass one another without sign. Since Compline is over a little after eight, there is still an hour or two for study, and usually the monks spend this time preparing the next day's lessons, whether as students or teachers. Sometime between nine and ten o'clock the lights in the windows disappear one by one until the house is left in total darkness. There is no precise regulation about the time for retiring, and a few exceptional monks may work late into the night, but the average is in bed sometime before ten o'clock. His long day has come to an end.

What a beautiful day it has been! Every part of it has been skillfully linked to thoughts of God and the life beyond this one. Its prayer, its work and recreation, its times of action and repose, have been consecrated and beautified by the sweet and solemn spirit of the liturgy. In its regulations are crystallized the soul of its founder, St. Benedict, who was a genius of contemplative and holy living. The great gift of contemplation is not given to many men, though they may have a desire and some talent for it. But the average person could never alone persist in the program of prayer carried on by the monastery. Yet by following the monastic routine in company with others and under obedience to a superior, anyone with a vocation, a fair willingness and some natural bent will find in it riches a thousandfold for developing this side of his soul.

St. Benedict's method for moulding the spirit resembles the way in which nature effects vast changes throughout the world. It is by repetition, slow, patient, daily, and unending. Consider

an ocean wave as it rides slowly toward shore, spills over, and sprawls out on the beach. Its irregular white curve might well serve as nature's trademark—a force thrown out unhurriedly on matter, leaving but a slight trace of change as it recedes. The effect is very small. But multiply this thousands of times daily for many years, and the effect becomes irresistible. It will in time transform anything, moulding the hardest substance to its shape. The same curve appears in a sea shell, a pearl, the rings of an oak tree, a field of wheat moved by wind, or, figuratively, in the soul of a man.

This is the secret of monastic routine—the cumulative effect of repetition. The simple prayer, 'Deus in adiutorium meum intende, Domine ad adjuvandum me festina' [Hasten, O Lord, to my aid] is used as the opening line of each of the monastic periods of prayer, which are seven in the day. Therefore this prayer is said twenty-five hundred times in a year. The monk who reaches his silver jubilee—no great feat—will have said it over fifty thousand times, and it has become engrained in his soul, like a pearl slowly formed by nature. It will help to determine the whole attitude of his soul toward God at all times. This example is a very minor point.

Monastic customs and practices are concerned with very important matters; centuries of experience have gone into their making, and they are solidly based on the Scriptures, the Sacraments, and the authority of the Church. The cornerstone is the rule of St. Benedict, in which he freely gave to all men everything but his own greatness of soul, which he could not give. But his method still works. There are many things besides the external order of the day, which we have followed in this sketch. A whole treatise on principles of spiritual life could be drawn from St. Benedict without reference to daily activities.

They furnish a golden setting for the real jewel of man, his soul. The lustre of this jewel does not depend upon the setting. Spiritual growth is to an extent mysterious and unpredictable, and finally depends on God's will for each soul. Yet is it reasonable to suppose that a monk who faithfully observes over many years the daily routine will not prepare the way for a great increase of grace? Anyone who follows carefully over many years the external ordering of monastic life must, according to God's grace, undergo a steady growth in the life of the soul, and shine with some of the splendid virtues of his father, St. Benedict.

A TYPICAL MONASTIC HORARIUM

- 4:30 A.M. Rise.
- 5:00 A.M. Matins, followed immediately by Lauds.
- 6:00 A.M. Private Masses.
- 6:45 A.M. Prime.
- 7:00 A.M. Breakfast.
- 7:45 A.M. Terce (sometimes Sext and None)
- 8:00 A.M. Conventual Mass.
- 8:45 A.M. Sext and None.
- 9:00 A.M. Beginning of Working Day
- 12:30 P.M. Lunch (in many monasteries, Dinner).
- 6:00 P.M. Vespers.
- 6:30 P.M. Dinner (or Supper).
- 7:00 P.M. Recreation.
- 7:45 P.M. Compline.
- 8:00 P.M. End of Monastic Day; Greater Silence.
- 9-10:00 P.M. Retire.

There are many variations in the above schedule, but it presents an approximate average of the modern arrangement.

BENEDICTINE MONASTERIES IN THE UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

St. Bernard's Abbey¹
St. Bernard, Alabama

Founded 1891. Minor Seminary,
Junior College. 109 Religious in-
cluding 71 priests.

ARKANSAS

New Subiaco Abbey²
Subiaco, Arkansas

Founded 1878. Minor Seminary, Col-
lege, Parishes, Missions. 102 Re-
ligious including 56 priests.

COLORADO

Holy Cross Abbey¹
Canon City, Colorado

Founded 1896. Parishes, Prep School,
Summer Camp. 68 Religious includ-
ing 49 priests.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

St. Anselm's Priory⁴
S. Dakota Avenue & 14th St.
Washington 17, D. C.

Founded 1924. Prep School, associated
with Catholic University. 35 Re-
ligious including 20 priests.

FLORIDA

St. Leo Abbey¹
St. Leo, Pasco Co., Florida

Founded 1889. Prep School, Junior
College. 50 Religious including 26
priests.

ILLINOIS

St. Bede's Abbey¹
Peru, Illinois

Founded 1910. Prep School. 87 Re-
ligious including 57 priests.

St. Procopius Abbey¹
Lisle, Illinois

Founded 1885. Parishes, Mission, Col-
lege, Prep School. 159 Religious in-
cluding 90 priests.

Marmion Abbey²
Butterfield Road
Aurora, Illinois

Founded 1933. Military Academy. 49
Religious including 27 priests.

INDIANA

St. Meinrad's Abbey²
St. Meinrad, Indiana

Founded 1854. Parishes, Missions,
Major & Minor Seminary. Publish-
ers of THE GRAIL. 189 Religious
including 99 priests.

KANSAS

St. Benedict's Abbey¹
Atchison, Kansas

Founded 1857. Parish, Seminary,
Prep School, College. 163 Religious
including 105 priests.

LOUISIANA

St. Joseph's Abbey²
St. Benedict, Louisiana

Founded 1890. Preparatory Seminary,
Major Seminary of Abbey Clerics.
67 Religious including 38 priests.

MINNESOTA

St. John's Abbey¹
Collegeville, Minnesota

Founded 1856. Parishes, Major &
Minor Seminary, Prep School, Col-
lege, Publishers of WORSHIP. 324
Religious including 200 priests.

MISSOURI

Conception Abbey²
Conception, Missouri

Founded 1873. Missions, Major and
Minor Seminary, Publishers of AL-
TAR AND HOME. 134 Religious
including 72 priests.

Pius X Monastery
R. R. 1
Labadie, Missouri

Founded 1951. Contemplative. 9 Re-
ligious including 3 priests.

NEBRASKA

Benedictine Mission Home³
Schuyler, Nebraska

Founded . Mission Home. 10
Religious including 3 priests.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

St. Anselm's Abbey¹
Manchester, New Hampshire

Founded 1893. Seminary, College. 52
Religious including 39 priests.

NEW JERSEY

St. Mary's Abbey¹
528 High Street
Newark 2, New Jersey

Founded 1857. Parishes, Prep School,
Dependent Priory at Delbarton with
Seminary. Publishers of THE
AMERICAN BENEDICTINE RE-
VIEW. 118 Religious including 73
priests.

St. Paul's Abbey³
Newton, New Jersey

Founded 1924. Seminary, Missions. 52
Religious including 19 priests.

NEW YORK

Mt. Savior Abbey⁵
P. O. Box 272
Elmira, New York

Founded 1950. Contemplative.

NORTH CAROLINA

Belmont Abbey¹
Belmont, North Carolina

Founded 1884. Parishes, Missions,
Seminary, Prep School, College. 86
Religious including 50 priests.

NORTH DAKOTA

Assumption Abbey¹
Richardton, North Dakota

Founded 1893. Parishes, Seminary
Prep School, College. 79 Religious
including 52 priests.

OHIO

St. Andrew's Abbey¹
2900 East Boulevard
Cleveland 4, Ohio

Founded 1922. Parishes, Prep School
Press. 72 Religious including 49
priests.

OKLAHOMA

St. Gregory's Abbey¹
Shawnee, Oklahoma

Founded 1876. Parishes, Seminary,
Prep School, College. 54 Religious
including 35 priests.

OREGON

Mt. Angel Abbey²
St. Benedict, Oregon

Founded 1882. Parishes, Seminary
Prep School, Press, Publishers of ST.
JOSEPH MAGAZINE. 88 Reli-
gious including 55 priests.

PENNSYLVANIA

St. Vincent Archabbey¹
Latrobe, Pennsylvania

Founded 1846. Parishes, Seminary,
Prep School, College. 253 Reli-
gious including 178 priests.

RHODE ISLAND

St. Gregory Priory⁴
Cory's Lane
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Founded 1919. Prep School. 26 Re-
ligious including 15 priests.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Blue Cloud Abbey²
Marvin, South Dakota

Founded 1952. Indian Missions. 41
Religious including 26 priests.

TEXAS

Corpus Christi Priory²
Corpus Christi, Texas

Founded 1927. Seminary, Prep School
College. 17 Religious including 12
priests.

WASHINGTON

St. Martin's Abbey¹
Olympia, Washington

Founded 1895. Parishes, Seminary
Prep School, College. 83 Religious
including 53 priests.

WISCONSIN

St. Benedict's Abbey²
Benet Lake, Wisconsin

Founded 1945. Apologetical Writing.
Home Missions. 45 Religious in-
cluding 9 priests.

¹—American Cassinese Congregation

²—Swiss-American Congregation

³—St. Ottilien (German)

⁴—English

⁵—Under Abbot Primate



