

~~Trappist~~ Raymond, Father, 1903.  
The God-man's double  
ADX4639

A Trappist  
Tells of  
The God-Man's  
Double



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A BOOKLET FOR PRIESTS

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TO  
MY BROTHERS  
FATHER JACK and FATHER ED  
with the  
PRAYER  
to the  
ORIGINAL  
that we may  
DOUBLE PERFECTLY  
for Him  
WHO HAS CHOSEN US

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## Foreword

“The most HONEST body of men in the world.” That is the character given to the priesthood of America by a retreat-master who has worked in many a diocese. I believe him. I believe that we are fundamentally honest and never more so than when we are alone by ourselves and in a reflective mood. Then we priests face facts; then we look reality straight in the face and give things their proper value.

Relying on this conviction and on the above appraisal, I pen these few pages to my fellow priests of America. I am going to be very honest; I feel sure that you will be the same.

You know, one time my father, St. Bernard, tried to help his fellow priests and, as a reward, he received a letter from a Cardinal to the effect that, “it were better for Cistercian frogs to remain in their marshes and not disturb the world with their raucous croaking.” I hope I am not croaking. I further hope that no one of our thirty thousand priests in America will see fit to say: “Like father, like son,” and then add: “Let Trappists be what they

are supposed to be — dead men —; for ‘dead men tell no tales.’”

It is my conviction that, if we all live the thoughts contained within these few pages, no one of us will ever die in the strict biblical sense, and that our natural death will, in all truth, be an awakening to the ‘facie ad faciem’ vision of Him for whom we have doubled.

Fathers, you are HONEST. What do you honestly think . . . am I right?

Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani  
Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul  
January the twenty-fifth  
Nineteen hundred and forty



PART I

**COULD MORTAL MAN ASK  
FOR MORE?**



## What Is a Priest?

"Look at them, Father, all fakes! Every single one of them! Just hiding behind masks, hypocrites to the core! Yes, old Shakespeare was right, 'Life IS a stage,' and we are all actors, just actors . . . and most of us 'ham-actors' at that. Do you know, Father, that there is no one in this whole town who is really himself? It's all a show! All a sham! Just the great 'boob' man playing at 'make-believe' in the wonderland of 'Follywood'!"

"That sounds pretty bitter, Jimmie; what's wrong? Going sour on life?"

"Going sour? Ha! That's good! Tell me, Father, did you ever meet anyone who was sweet on it? That is, anyone who knew what it was all about?"

We were driving in from Hollywood. It had been a fascinating day for me. I had been out to one of the biggest of the studios, watching a 'super-colossal' in the making. Yes, it had been a fascinating day for me, but it had been a hard one for Jimmie. He was a stunt-flyer, and five times I saw him do a stunt that was openly courting death each time. He had done his part perfectly every time; but not so the camera man. Jimmie was mad, and he had reason to be. I took his talk now to be just so much 'letting off of steam.'

Jimmie was a product of the War, Prohibition and the Depression. When I have said that, I have said all, except that perhaps I should add . . . a State University after the War, during Prohibition and just before Pros-

perity went 'around the corner.' Electric with life and energy, hard with the glittering hardness of diamonds, brilliant with that superficial, catchy brilliance of ready word and apt phrase, sharp in his observation, but with little real depth of ideas and with next to no ideals . . . that was Jimmie. He made excellent company for those who would rather listen than talk and rather laugh than really think, for Jimmie was witty; witty with a caustic wit that was more satire than real humor, but laugh-provoking withal. In short, Jimmie was Hollywood. . . . Suspicious of everyone, skeptical of all virtue, self-centered, self-satisfied, and yet, heart-hungry and away down deep quite dissatisfied with self, with others and with life.

Jimmie had seen what he called life and love, and had found both very wanting. He had read this, that and the other thing as most of our present-day readers read: hurriedly, intently, greedily, but with little real attention and no reflection. Thinking that he was really thinking, Jimmie had concluded that there is no God, that religion was only for the weak, and that Omar Khayyam had the only worth-while philosophy of life: "Eat, drink and make merry," and Jimmie lived that philosophy. And yet, he had just asked me if I had ever met anyone who was sweet on life!

"Yes, Jimmie," I said, "I have met many who were very sweet on life. In fact, I am one."

I thought that he was going to explode. Hollywood Boulevard is known as "The Race-track" and, believe me, Jimmie did nothing to lessen that reproach.

"You, a priest . . . sweet on life!"

When he had 'just made' two more lights by driving that was positively dizzying, he said:

"Father, I haven't known you long, but you seem sane. Tell me, just what is a priest?"

For a moment I was stopped. What can you say to a self-confessed atheist, a scoffer at all virtue and religion, a present-day pessimistic skeptic? Sparring for time, I said: "Sure, Jimmie, I'll tell you, but you see, I'm Irish and we Irish have a very peculiar way of answering questions; we usually ask another. So tell me, just what are you?"

"Me? . . . Why, I'm just a 'sap' of a double. One of those 'dumb-bells' with no name, no fame, next to no money, but the one who does all the he-man stunts, all the difficult and dangerous things, all the real work. That's what I am, Father, just a fool that is ever ready to break his neck so that the Star may save his pretty face! That's what I am, Father, just a fool of a double, the donkey that does all the work and gets none of the credit. You saw it yourself today. Wait until that thing is released! Our 'pretty face' will get write-ups from coast to coast and from border to border. And for what? For what Jimmie did! Yes, for what Jimmie did! Everyone who sees that picture will think that he, that anemic amoeba, was the dare-devil who landed that old 'crate' of a plane on skids. The fan-mail will be heavy. I can see it piling up now! And you know his salary goes up with the weight of those mash-notes. They say that he is 'box-office.' But who does the real attracting? Your little Jimmie does it! Yes, my mother's little boy, James, who takes a relic that is ready to fall apart a mile or more up into the clear blue and then brings it down on skids. Of course, the only danger was that I might not wake up again! But what of that, as long as 'Baby-face' gets all the credit? So you see, Father, that's what

I am; just a dope of a double! How's that for a description?"

"Fair, Jimmie. But suppose I were a stranger to these parts and knew nothing of Hollywood 'slanguage,' how would you tell me just what a double is?"

"I don't know what your game is, Father, but here goes.... A double is a living-dead man, a person without a personality. He must have an anatomy, but he cannot have a personality. Which makes me think that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde was a very lucky person; he had a dual personality, but a Hollywood double is just a 'sap' who puts on the personality of some 'pretty-faced Star.' So you see, he lives, but he is dead; he is a person, but he has no personality. How am I doing, Father?"

"Fine, James, but could you be even a bit more explicit?"

"Sure, Father, I can be anything, for you see, I am a double! I can be even a bit more explicit. How is this? ... You know what a Star is? — The Original, the Leading Man, the Protagonist. — That emasculated atom with the pretty face that you saw on the lot today. Well, I've got to look like him. What I lack by nature, the Make-up Department supplies. I merely furnish the groundwork. I've got to be about the same height, have the same build, then I've got to walk like him, talk like him, sit like him, stand like him, act like him, in fact, I've got to BE just like him! For you see, there are times when the Original cannot act; there are things that the Original cannot do; things that the Original dare not do. There is where your little James comes in. For there is where I must do and act, and do and act in such a way that everyone looking on will say that it is the Original doing and acting. That is what a double is,

Father, not an imitation, not a substitution, but a perfect reproduction. I reproduce the Star and I do it in such a way that no one can tell the difference. I submerge my own personality; I deny my ego its expression, so that the Protagonist may get all the glory. As I said before, James is a double, a living-dead man, a person without a personality, one unknown to the wide, wide world, yet one who reproduces for that wide, wide world the Original . . . that pretty-faced sub-electron you saw today! Am I clear, Father?"

"Lucid, James, positively lucid! Why, you were even eloquent. I take it that you love your job."

"Yes, I do! Why, Father, there are times when I get so disgusted with the sham of it all, that I could start a revolution. I go out and all but break my neck, and the whole world gasps: 'Isn't he!' . . . that thing back there with the pretty face, who would get dizzy on a flying-horse . . . 'isn't he brave!' Oh, a double's life is a delightful Hell! But what are you getting me all steamed up about; you know what a double is!"

We were almost home. Jimmie's flow of talk with its brilliance and its bitterness had clicked a new notion into my head. It broke upon me with the force of revelation, I decided to try it on him. "Jimmie," I said, "you asked me a funny question. One that I did not know how to answer for your particular benefit; for you see, you and I talk different languages. My ideals and ideas are not yours and, for the moment, I did not know just how to translate my ideas into your language. But you have done it for me."

"What do you mean?"

"Just this . . . you asked me to tell you what a priest is. To you who laugh at religion, I

didn't know how to make answer. But now I can use your own language and tell you plainly. Jimmie, a priest is a double!"

Jimmie gave a quick turn of his head and a little squint to his eyes as he flashed a look at me. Then he said, "Y-e-a-h?" It was a long-drawn out 'yeah.' It was a question mark, telling me that Jimmie was suspicious, that he was looking for a catch somewhere.

"So a priest is a double, eh? Father, you are using my words, but I don't get your ideas. For whom do you double?"

"That is just the point you made for me, Jimmie. I had never thought of it before, but as you went on with your ever more vivid description of what a double is and what a double does, it flashed upon me that I, too, am a double and that every real priest is a double. Jimmie, A PRIEST IS A DOUBLE FOR JESUS CHRIST!"

\* \* \*

## A Double for Christ

Jimmie slid the car to the curb and came to a gentle stop. I'll say that much for aviators who drive cars, they don't know how to start, they don't know how to drive, but they do know how to stop. We were now before the rectory. Jimmie had glided there as gracefully and as gently as if he were landing a plane and taxiing her up to the passenger platform. He killed the engine, pulled out a pack of Camels and said: "Father, you don't have to go in just yet. Smoke this one cigarette with me and tell me just what you mean when you say you are a double for Jesus Christ. I read His life once. There was no Hollywood in His day and, I'm sure, He wasn't 'in pictures.'"



I laughed a hearty laugh. To find Jimmie interested, and even literal, was certainly amusing; but I laughed also to cover up a pause while I thought how far I could go, how far I should go with this product of loose-thinking, Twentieth Century America. But the idea had so gripped me that, before I knew it, I was pushing on. "Jimmie," I said, "I don't think that you will fully understand, but it is worth the try. Were you a Catholic the task would be relatively easy, but being just Jimmie . . . well, that makes things a bit more difficult. But listen and don't interrupt unless you really have to."

"Shoot, Father, I'm all ears."

"Jimmie, Jesus Christ is God."

"That's what you believe, Father."

"Yes, Jimmie, that is what I believe and that is what I am asking you at least to make-believe for the moment, make believe that you believe it, too. Jesus Christ is God who became Man. He lived on this earth thirty-three years. Over nineteen hundred years ago, He died; and yet He still lives, and lives on this very earth of ours! He lives in and through His doubles! Jimmie, you told me that a double had to walk like, talk like, look like, be like the Original, didn't you? You told me that that was why you were called a double, because you reproduce the Original. You went on and told me that people seeing you, saw not you, but the Star. You said that YOU had no name, no fame, next to no money, that you got nothing because all the credit went to the Star. Jimmie, Jesus Christ is our Star. He is the Original, and we priests are His doubles. We are supposed to walk like Him, talk like Him, look like Him, BE like Him! Jimmie, a priest works for no name,

no fame, no money; he works that Jesus Christ may get all the glory! That is the only reason for a priest's existence . . . to get glory for God! When people look at a real priest, they see not the individual, they see only Jesus. Jimmie, you got eloquent and said much about being a living-dead man, a person without a personality, didn't you? Well, you were very accurately describing a priest. His personality is subdued, denied, yes, in a way, annihilated, so that the Personality of Christ may shine out through him. A priest is a living-dead man in the strictest sense of the word; he should be dead to self, yet just vibrant with life for Christ and the cause of Christ. That is why I call a priest a double . . . he is consecrated to reproduce the God-Man! He is anointed for only one purpose . . . TO BE JESUS CHRIST ON EARTH! Jimmie, the only difference between your doubling and mine is that I am supposed to double for Jesus twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, while you double only in spots. There are some of the reasons why I say that I am a double."

Jimmie was silent. Perhaps I had become a little tense as I talked for the novelty of the idea and the tremendous truth of the concept fired me to near-eloquence. Jimmie's reply came slowly and softly: "Yes, Father, I catch the main outlines. Of course, there's a lot I don't get; but I get the main outlines. You ask me to believe. You know I can't; and I'll tell you why. . . . To me, it is all a beautiful dream, but that is all — just a dream; for the very idea is contradictory. Think of it, Father, Jesus Christ is supposed to be God and yet man. What a contradiction!"

"No, Jimmie, don't say that. Call it a paradox, if you will, but don't say it is a contra-

diction. It is a mystery, I admit, but not a contradiction."

Jimmie tossed away his cigarette, blew out a long inhale and then, as he stepped on the starter, said: "Father, I don't fully understand, but we are not going to argue about it. I gave up arguing on religion years ago and I am not going to start it all over again, especially not with you. But, Father, I must say this much ... if I could believe, if I could really believe that Jesus Christ was God, then there is only one thing that I would ever be. I'd be a priest! Money or no money, good time or no good time ... could a human being aspire to anything higher? COULD MORTAL MAN ASK FOR MORE than to be, as you say, A DOUBLE FOR THE GOD-MAN?"

Jimmie was almost in awe. His last words were reverent, worshipful. For one tense, tingling moment we sat; then Jimmie opened the door for me and said: "Good night, Father. I'll be seein' ya," and roared away down the street as if he were trying to 'take-off,' though actually he had less than a block to go.

I stood there in front of the rectory watching his exhaust disappear, while his tense words kept ringing in my ears: "COULD MORTAL MAN ASK FOR MORE THAN TO BE A DOUBLE FOR THE GOD-MAN?"

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## Mindful of My Dignity

At last I turned, but instead of going to the house, I went over to the Church and as I knelt there beneath the flickering sanctuary lamp, the wonder of my dignity as a priest of the Most High God burst upon me. Jimmie had crystallized it for me as it had never been

crystallized before. He had used the one word 'double' and in that one word I had seen my DIGNITY AND MY DUTY ... I am to DOUBLE for Jesus Christ!

Yes, it was true! I was not merely a follower of Jesus, I was not merely an imitator of Christ; no, I was more, I was much more, I was His very double. It is the one word that is adequate, the one word that fully describes my being, the one word that tells with exactness just what a priest is. All others fall short of the reality. Every Catholic is a 'follower' of Jesus; every member of His Church, His 'imitator'; but a priest is something more! 'Substitute' is a good word, so also are 'ambassador' and 'vice-gerent' and yet they are not quite adequate. For a substitute does not have to be 'like' and a vice-gerent or an ambassador can be very different from the 'original' and yet be a very good ambassador or vice-gerent; but a priest ... he can never be different from Jesus Christ and be a real priest! Even the age-old and generally accepted "alter Christus" is not so apt, not so adequate, not so perfectly descriptive, as the one word that Jimmie had given me when he told me what a double was and what a double does. Indeed, a priest IS a double for the God-Man!

When I stand with bread in my hands and, bending down, breathe words over it, what am I doing? Am I merely imitating? ... One who imitates keeps his own personality! Am I merely a substitute? ... A substitute acts for another, but in his own way! Am I only an ambassador or a vice-gerent for Jesus? ... No! I am more, for I say "This is MY Body. This is MY Blood" and immediately I am holding in my hands ... Jesus Christ! Vice-gerent, ambassador, substitute, could never do

this ... only His double could! In this Act of Acts I do not act 'like,' nor 'for,' nor 'in place of' ... I act AS Jesus!

I sit in my 'box' and listen to a tale of sin on sin; I raise my hand and say, '*Ego te absolvo*' ... I, the man? Only God can forgive sin and yet as I say "*I absolve you,*" the sins are forgiven! Why? ... Because I am a double for Jesus Christ! Oh! how true it all is!

I ascend the pulpit and speak, "as one having authority." I demand heroism from humans as I command things hard and repugnant to nature. I lay down a moral code that is strict and I tell man, woman and child to obey it. Whence this daring? Whence this almost imperious effrontery? ... It would be just that — imperious effrontery — were it not written: "He that heareth you, heareth Me." It would be just that, were I not the double for the God-Man!

Yes, the truth is there; the tremendous truth is there. I AM Christ's double. As the beauty of it all burst upon me, my heart swelled to the triumph of being — not mere man, not a mere follower of Jesus nor His close imitator, but of being His very double. Jimmie had seen the wonder of it and, atheist though he was, he could not help exclaiming: "Could mortal man ask for more?" As those words rang in my ears and the truth and the beauty of my position gripped my heart, I came nearer to weeping than I had since my Ordination. "Could mortal man ask for more?" and here I had been these long, long years anointed, consecrated, stamped with a character that will never fade as the very double of Jesus Christ and I had not been MINDFUL OF MY DIGNITY! What a dignity! What

a destiny! What a deification was mine! To be a double for the God-Man!

Kneeling before the Original hidden behind the tabernacle door, I struck my breast and said: "Oh, Christ of Mercy! forgive one who should have been doubling for You these long years through, but who too often has been acting and doing only for himself. From this day on grant me but ONE grace, my God; grant me the grace to be always, in all places, at all times and with all people, MINDFUL OF MY DIGNITY! Let me always remember that I am Your double, that I am to walk like, talk like, look like, act like . . . better, BE like You? Jesus, my Model, my Master, my King, my Star, help me to be always MINDFUL OF MY DIGNITY!"

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## Induimini

That very same night while I was still under the spell that had gripped me as I realized the truth that I was a double for the God-Man, I was startled by: "Well, what have you learned of Hollywood today?" I looked up from these few notes, that I had been jotting down, to see my brother, a priest like myself, but a member of a religious order, standing at my door, smiling at my absorption.

"Come in, Jack! Come in!" I cried. "You are just the man I want to see. Have a chair. Have a cigar. Let's have a chat."

"Whew! You sound serious. What's up?"

"Just this . . . I learned a lot about Hollywood today, but I really think I learned more about myself. Tell me, Jack, did you ever think of becoming a double?"

"A double? Ha! Hollywood has got you

already! No, I never thought of becoming a double. I've got a job."

"But, Jack, that is your job . . . being a double. It is my job, too, and I wonder how well we are doing it."

I told him then of my ride home with Jimmie, the Hollywood double, and of his question. I told him, too, of the visit I had made to our tabernacled God, and I ended by asking, "Does it all grip you the way it does me? Do you see the truth and the beauty of it? Do you see our dignity, our destiny, our duty?"

He looked at me long. Clouds of smoke were rising above his head. He had always been more temperate than I, a deeper thinker and a much more substantial talker. Many a time he had pricked the pretty bubbles that I had blown and many a time he had taken what was cloudy and confused in my own mind and, brushing aside the mists, showed me beauty and truth. He could really analyze; more than that, he could really express. He could take what I was stuttering, phrase it, put in the commas and the exclamation points, dot the 'i's and cross the 't's, and then give me with clarity and cogency, what I had but barely perceived. Arguments we had had by the hundreds, but never a real fight. Now he took a long last puff at his cigar, rose and started pacing. I knew that something good was coming. I waited.

"Yes," he finally said, "you've got something there. Something novel, something true. If one accepts your definition of double, the rest follows. Perhaps some of the formalists among the theologians may take exception to the way you have phrased the matter on the sacraments, but I think that all but the purists will accept the point. Suppose, Joe, that I grant your distinction between the word

double and the other more common terms of follower, imitator and vice-gerent; tell me this, do you substantially differ from St. Paul when he says: 'Induimini Jesum Christum'? Isn't your idea of double and that of St. Paul 'Put ye on Christ' about the same? Have you anything substantially new?"

"'Double' and 'induimini' are identical, Jack. 'Induimini' is a metaphor taken from the stage; it gives the picture of one putting on a character, assuming a rôle or a robe; hence, 'double' and 'induimini' do not essentially differ. But, Jack, I have my eye only on practicality. The accidentally new way of putting Paul's metaphor has its merits. Here, if I say to you: 'Put on Christ,' does it mean as much, does it grip your mind and your imagination with the same vivid, vital force that the command, 'Double for Christ every minute!' does?"

"No, it doesn't. But that may very well be because I never heard the command, 'Double for Christ every minute,' before. The accidental difference has that advantage, it grips me more."

"Then, Jack, it is a find! and a great find! Suppose that I keep that idea continually playing on the surface of my consciousness; suppose that I keep reminding myself that I am a double for the God-Man, what happens?"

"What happens? I'll tell you what happens. . . . You won't be so hasty, you won't be so impatient, so impetuous, so imprudent. You won't be so proud, so ambitious, so worldly. You won't be so self-satisfied, so self-centered. You won't be a lot of things you usually are. In short, Joe, you will be a real priest!"

"That's right from the shoulder, Jack, and right between the eyes. But that is just what I wanted you to say. Then, if I am ever



mindful of my dignity, I will be a real priest; is that right?"

"Right."

"Then I am ever going to be mindful of my dignity! I am always going to remember that I am a double for Jesus Christ and, oh! the consequences that follow."

"For instance..."

\* \* \*

## Be Ye Clean

"The first one that I have noted down is that I will hold myself UNTOUCHABLE ... UNTOUCHABLE BY ANY!"

"That sounds interesting, but before you go any further, tell me what is the object of all this?"

"Jack, we are over 30,000 priests in these United States. Our record, taken as a whole, is good. Defections there have been and defections there will be; yet our percentage is far higher than that of the College of the Apostles. We do not lose one out of twelve. Negatively, then, we are a goodly body of men. But, Jack, we are NOT great, and there is the shame! We are respected when we should be revered; we are fairly holy when we should be heroically so; we are good when we should be great! Mediocrity is our curse! We are mediocre preachers, mediocre teachers, mediocre leaders, mediocre thinkers, mediocre students, mediocre prayers, mediocre priests. Taken as a whole, what are we? Mediocre — and that is all! And that should not be!"

"Wait a second, Joe. We have some great men in our ranks, some truly great churchmen, some very good radio-preachers, quite a number of really excellent writers. We have many who are far above mediocrity."

"Granted, Jack, but the mass? The ordinary teacher and the ordinary preacher, the ordinary pastor and the ordinary curate, the 30,000 ordinary 'Roman Collars' like you and me . . . what are we? . . . Just ordinary, aren't we?"

"Ordinary is the word, Joe, but isn't the mass always ordinary?"

"The mass of priests SHOULD NOT BE! And that is my precise point. We are not mindful of our dignity and our duty, we are not mindful of the fact that we are doubles for Jesus Christ and that there is nothing ordinary about Him! The trouble is, Jack, that we do not hold ourselves UNTOUCHABLE!"

"You used that word before, Joe, just what do you mean by it?"

"Remember Isaias? He says 'MUNDAMINI qui fertis vasa Domini.' 'Be ye clean.' What a command to keep ringing in our ears! 'Be ye CLEAN! Be ye CLEAN!' Of old, Jack, the lepers used to cry 'Unclean! Unclean!' and the whole world stayed away from them. Today, if we priests continually cry 'Clean! Clean!' believe me, the worldlings will keep mighty far away from us. Jack, we should hold ourselves untouchable, not because we are unclean, but because we are consecrated. Therefore, we are untouchable by man, woman or child! We are untouchable by the world of politics and pleasure, the world of business and banking, the worldly world that is cheapening our priesthood!"

"Getting wound up, aren't you? Come down to particulars and stick to your point. You started with untouchable, went to mediocrity, then came out with 'mundamini' and now you are back on untouchable again. Just what is your point?"

"Just this . . . I am a double for Jesus Christ, therefore, I must be CLEAN! But to be clean, I must hold myself UNTOUCHABLE BY ANY!"

"You enumerated man, woman and child, then the world in general. That is why I am asking you to be more specific."

"Jack, I hold as the cause of many a collapse in the clerical life the *failure to hold oneself aloof from the world*. We don't look upon ourselves as absolutely untouchable. We mingle with all and we mingle as one of them. Instead of lifting them up to our level, we sink to theirs. We mix too freely and allow them to be too free with us. Now, Jack, the world is sordid, the flesh ever assertive and the devil never sleeps; so what comes of it all? Loss of dignity and the acquisition of worldly ways. I am not saying that we should be hermits. No, we should not even be distant. But we must always be dignified, for our dignity is that of Jesus Christ."

"Still, quite general, Joe."

"All right, then here are a few particulars. With men we should be friendly, but too often, we are positively familiar. Now I know that our Lord 'ate and drank with publicans and sinners,' but, Jack, do you think that we are actually doubling for Him when we drink with lay people? You know that I am not a teetotaler. I never joined 'Fr. Mat's' crowd and most assuredly never approved of Prohibition; and yet, I do wish that there were some Volstead Act to keep priests from indiscriminately drinking with lay people. To drink imprudently with laymen is bad enough, but when they go further . . . what a degradation! And have you noticed how true the saying is, 'Ubi Bacchus regnat, ibi Venus saltat'?"

"What you say is true, Joe. But never for-

get that drink is a creature of God, an indifferent thing in itself. Its abuse, not its use, is condemnable."

"And what am I condemning? I am not talking about a drink, I am talking about drinking! I know it's a creature, but what I am questioning is how many of us use it as a creature? It is a creature that was made to sharpen the appetite and to promote conviviality, but the only appetite it sharpens in some is the appetite for more drink and instead of conviviality, it promotes 'conbibiality.' It is a creature of God, all right, Jack, but only the real 'men of God' use it as such, only the perfect doubles for Jesus Christ keep from abusing it."

"I admit all that, Joe. Every priest with any experience will admit every syllable of what you have said. Drink can be a menace. Drinking, real drinking with lay people is most imprudent and degrading, and mixed drinking is precarious for many. But is it as widespread as you seem to intimate?"

"Oh, if it were only one, it would be one too many! But let us drop drink and tell me this, Jack, do you think that our Lord would have been a golfer?"

"That is a debatable question, Joe. You know the open air, the exercise of the links and the mental relaxation afforded by golf are mighty helpful for those who lead a sedentary life. And you must admit that it is a wholesome recreation."

"I know, Jack, but do you think that Jesus Christ would have made golf His full-time hobby?"

"If you mean, would He be as fanatic about a foursome as some of us are; would He become so engrossed in the game as to let it

interfere with His dignity and His duty, my answer is an emphatic NO!"

"And let me add this to it . . . if for some good reason, He thought He could help souls by playing eighteen holes, I'm positive He would never make the nineteenth the way some of us do!"

"All right, imprudent socializing, intemperate drink, and ill-advised and excessive golf . . . what else?"

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## Making a Liar out of God

"Need I go on? Isn't it only too true that we priests often make a liar out of God?"

"How?"

"He said: 'You are not of the world, for I have chosen you out of the world.' . . . Yes, it is true that He did, but we went back to it and, oh, so soon! Can it be rightly said that 'we are not of the world,' Jack? The world is money-mad and pleasure-mad, aren't we tainted? Look at our vacations and our recreations. Look at our cars and our bank-books. Why, the only thing unworldly about many of us is the way we wear our collar!"

"Now, don't get hyperbolic. So far, you have been pretty sane. Don't start exaggerating. Remember that we are entitled to some recreation and are obliged to provide for the future."

"Yes, I know, but the future that should get most of our attention is the future of the parish and not of the parish-priest. I'll allow a prudent amount for sickness, for old age and for Masses after burial; but I would really admire more complete trust in Him for whom we are doubling. He is Provident. He is Prodigal. He is Faithful to the faithful! The Will

of some pastors has been a scandal to the parish and a mockery to one who professed to be a follower of the Poor Christ."

"Again, Joe, I say that you are hitting the few."

"Maybe only the few have the actual bank-accounts, but many desire them, and that is just as bad. I am sure that Christ would never have been a banker or a broker. I'm positive. He'd never be found 'playing the market.' And for recreation ... why, Jack, I have heard some justify themselves on the grounds that they were professional men, on a par with the Judge, the Lawyer, the Doctor, and hence, entitled to all professional privileges."

"That's right, I've heard the same thing. What do you say to it?"

"Just this ... that the only profession that we have made is to be a double for Jesus Christ! Our profession is to try to be poor as He was poor, not only poor in spirit! Our profession is to be pastors of the flock and shepherds of the people, and who ever heard of a shepherd taking an extended tour or a long vacation? Our profession is to be 'crucified to the world,' not apes of its ways. Our only profession is to ... walk like, talk like, act like, live like, BE like Jesus Christ! And while He traveled up and down Judea, He wasn't a tourist! While He went to the mountains and the shore of the sea, never in His three and thirty years of earthly existence did He take a vacation! He recreated Himself by a change of phantasm and a change of occupation. For a rest He usually 'went up into the mountain to pray,' or else 'He took His disciples apart into a desert place, to rest awhile'; that is, to make a retreat! What poor doubles we make for the God-Man! Who of us has kept himself untouchable? Who of

us has verified the words of Christ 'You are NOT of the world'? Who of us can say with St. Paul, 'The world is crucified unto me and I unto the world'?"

"But, Joe, we are entitled to some vacation, particularly the older and worn-out."

"Oh, I am not talking about those who really need a rest; I am talking about the mass. And I say that if we MUST have a vacation, then let it be a vacation *for* priests, *with* priests and *as* priests. I'm sure that one of our greatest regrets for all eternity will be the Masses that we could have said and did not! If you know what I mean...."

"Yes, I know what you mean, all right; and I must say that you have quite a line-up under your first conclusion. Quite an indictment against a body that you said is good. Briefly, your charge is that we have not held ourselves untouchable and, hence, the world has ensnared us and made us a body of very worldly men. That's about it, isn't it?"

"That about sums it up, Jack. We have not been mindful of our dignity nor our duty. 'Mundamini' is our watchword. Keep ourselves CLEAN! Keep clean of the world and the ways of the world, for Christ has said that we 'are not of the world.' Keep clean of the world because we are consecrated and tomorrow with the dawn we will consecrate — not a chalice, not an altar, nor a church, but the Body and the Blood of the most Unworldly of all men and the Cleanest of all clean men; with the dawn we will hold in our hands Him for whom we are doubling! If I keep telling myself that I am untouchable and, when the need arises, telling others the same thing, then I will have little difficulty in keeping clean, in living up to my profession as a double for the Poor Christ."

“Then you bring it down to being mindful of our dignity?”

“Right. Our dignity and our duty summed up in the one word *double*. Jack, if we would only be self-conscious all the time, conscious of our real self, believe me, we would stay clean! Look here ... we never allow man, woman or child to touch a consecrated chalice, ciborium or monstrance, do we? We couldn't think of allowing a woman to come into the sanctuary and touch the holy vessels; yet, I am the living chalice of the Precious Blood, I am the ciborium for the consecrated Host and every priest is a breathing monstrance in which is displayed the Living, Breathing God ... and yet, what undue freedom do we allow and even encourage from men, and some of us, even from women! We should be much more untouchable than a chalice; that can lose its consecration; we can never lose ours! And let me tell you that no man, woman or child ever touched a priest without having been first encouraged. It is the priest's fault every time.”

“I think that you are right there....”

“I know that I am right there! What a sacrilege it is to desecrate the living monstrance of the Great High God! Paul said ‘Portate Deum in corpore vestro,’ if we would only listen to Paul and realize that our bodies are sacred things, we'd keep them untouchable. Then no man, woman or child would ever lay forbidden hand on the consecrated Temple of the Holy Ghost, the living Tabernacle, the breathing Monstrance for Jesus Christ. “Untouchable” is the slogan for these God-given garments of our immortal, our priestly souls. ‘Mundamini’ is the command!”

“There is substance in what you say, Joe, but I have been wondering as you've been



talking, if you're not hitting the 'noisy minority.' All that you say about priests is true, but it is not true about all priests. When one priest goes wrong, that's news; but when thirty thousand keep straight, that's nothing. That is the way the world looks upon it and that is really a tribute to us as a body. Now, you have been hitting at one element in the priesthood and, thank God, it is far from being the principal element. I willingly admit that we are all somewhat tainted by worldliness and that we all have a tendency towards what you have been decrying, but we are not all golf-fiends, or money-grabbers; we are not all followers of the philosophy of Omar Khayyam."

"Ah, but what I have been saying about our dignity and our duty; what I have been saying about untouchableness; — isn't that applicable to one and all? Aren't we all doubles for the God-Man?"

"The ideas that you have been putting forth are practical and can be used by all; I am merely objecting to some of the arguments and examples that you are using. To be a double for the God-Man is a thrilling idea. It should serve the thoughtful as a stimulant to gratitude and to greatness. The idea of keeping ourselves untouchable ought to serve all as a check against worldliness. But, do you know the most impressive point you have made so far is the one that you have not developed. I mean the point of mediocrity. That is certainly applicable to the mass. When you think of what we should be and what we could be ... you have to sum us up as mediocre."

"There is hardly any necessity to stress the obvious, Jack. Anyone with half an eye can see that we are mediocre and in some things even below par. What a condemnation for us

when we think of what twelve ignorant, uneducated, but prayerful fishermen did to the world 1900 years ago and we, over 30,000 in this country of ours and we haven't converted a single state!"

"There was only one Pentecost, Joe."

"That is my precise point, Jack. There should be more, and the fault is not with God! Look at all our systematized education, our years of philosophy and theology, our A.B.'s, our M.A.'s, our Ph.D.'s, and our S.T.L.'s, and yet twelve fishermen put us to shame."

"Yes, Joe, naturally speaking, we are much better equipped."

"Naturally, yes, but supernaturally ... oh! And the trouble is with us. We start out to evangelize the world, and in no time the world has completely evangelized us!"

"Why ... that is what I want to get at... Why?"

"Because we are not mindful of our dignity!"

"All right, Joe, to be always mindful of our dignity, to remember at all times, in all places, with all people, that I am a double for the God-Man would certainly rectify much that needs rectifying. It is *a* remedy. That I grant. But for a complete cure of our disease you've got to get to the focus of the infection. Find out just WHY we are so *forgetful of our dignity* and you have got something! Until you have gotten that deep, you are giving us temporary relief, you are not effecting a permanent cure."

"Doubling for Christ is a fundamental idea, Jack, and our basic ideal."

"Yes, but why is it that we so quickly forget the ideal? How is it that the idea, if it does stay, exerts so little influence on us?"

That is the root of our difficulty and the cause of our mediocrity. WHY are we so *unmindful of our duty and our dignity?*”

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## on Your Knees You've Got To Get Down

I went over to my desk and looked at the notes that I had jotted down. . . . “Here, Jack, this may sound like a digression, but it isn't. Here is something else that Hollywood taught me today. Jimmie was doubling for a well-known Star this morning and he did it perfectly. The Make-up men did their part, of course; but Jimmie put on the finish. He walked just like the Star; he stood exactly like him; he had even caught that characteristic spring on the toes, of which the Star is so fond when he stands looking off into space. From only a short distance, seeing them together, whether walking, standing or sitting, you could not tell who was the Star and who the Double. Now tell me, how did Jimmie acquire that perfection?”

“By aping the Star. Jimmie is an excellent mimic, you know.”

“Wrong, Jack! At least, not deep enough. Jimmie got that perfection from study, and only from study. He observed, he analyzed, he reflected; then, and only then, did he essay an imitation. . . . And, Jack, if I am to double for Jesus Christ, I must do the same thing! I must study Him, I must analyze Him, I must reflect upon His ways. In short, I must get down on my knees! If you are asking me the root cause of our failure to live up to our dignity and our failure to be ever mindful of it, I say . . . **NEGLECT OF PRAYER!**”

“Yes, I’ve heard that before. But look here, Joe, we pray an hour of the Office every day, and we say our Mass every day, and that, with its preparation and its thanksgiving, takes another hour; therefore, we give at least two full hours to prayer every day of our lives — that is to formal prayer — and you must never forget that work is a prayer.”

“Yes, Jack, work is a prayer when it is done ‘per Ipsum et cum Ipso et in Ipso.’ Work is a prayer when I use it as a means of keeping me close to Christ, a means of binding me ever more tightly to God. Work is a prayer when it is an elevation of the mind and the heart to God, when it is done for Him! But tell me, how many of us work that way? I once heard an Apostolic Delegate say: ‘There was a time when we priests had an actual intention before all our works, but soon we were satisfied with a virtual intention, then it became habitual and now . . . I wonder whether we can call it interpretative.’”

“There is something in what he says, Joe, but admit that it could be and that it should be a prayer. . . .”

“Yes, it could be and should be, but it isn’t! It isn’t for the mass of us, and we are talking about the mass of us. There are some who make their work a prayer; you’ve met them and so have I, but they were real priests! They were men of prayer! Men who gave an hour, or more than an hour, to the Holy Sacrifice; for they would never think of vesting until they had spent a good twenty or thirty minutes in meditation, preparing their heart and their mind for the Wondrous Act, and then spent another twenty or thirty minutes after their Mass, saying ‘Thank You’ to God. Men who with Augustine can and do say, ‘Psalterium meum, jucundum meum.’ Men

who really PRAY their Office, for they realize that they are the Lips of the Church, consecrated to praise, thank, impetrate and satisfy God for the rest of the Faithful. Men, I repeat, who PRAY their Office; but most of us . . . don't we only READ it? And how many of us know what we are reading? Oh, I know it isn't essential; but in all honesty, will you tell me what kind of praise it is when I don't know what I am saying and don't take the trouble to find out?"

"You gave the definition of prayer when you said 'elevation of the mind and heart to God.' Don't demand more than the Church!"

"I won't; but I would like to know what sort of an elevation of the mind it is when I am reading not sentences, not ideas, but only words, and words whose meaning I do not know! But, even if I read my Office 'digne, attente et devote,' even if I say my Mass devoutly, that is not enough! Those are public prayers and if I am to be a man of God, if I am to be a real double for Jesus Christ, I must have private prayer and plenty of it! I must get down on my knees often!"

"We are not contemplatives, Joe; ours is an active life."

"What a fallacy! I've heard you, yourself, explode it many a time!"

"Well, let me hear you do it now."

"Gladly! Ours is an active life. Granted. But the one activity to which we are bound, the one activity that is the heart and the very essence of our active life, is to reproduce Jesus Christ in self and in others. We have to be always in action and that action is doubling for the God-Man. But how can we reproduce Him in our every action if we do not know His every action? How can we ever double without an intimate knowledge of the

Original? A real artist never paints from memory; he has his model ever before him. A real sculptor works with hammer and chisel; but his eye is ceaselessly traveling to his model. And any priest who thinks that he can be a real priest without always keeping his eye on Jesus Christ; any priest who thinks that he can double daily for the God-Man; any priest who dares to do the active work of the active ministry, without having his Model, Jesus, ever and always before him, is attempting the absurd and essaying the utterly impossible! You can't follow unless you see the Leader! You can't reproduce unless you study the Model! You can't double unless you know the Original! In short, you can't be a priest unless you MEDITATE!"

"Are you pleading for formal meditation?"

"I'm pleading for nothing. I'm merely stating facts; I'm simply saying that unless I study Jesus, I'll never get to know Him; that if I don't really know Him, His manners and His motives, I can never double for Him and, if I fail to double for Him, I am not a priest! My claim is that the only right way to study Him is to study Him prayerfully. Books, 'qua books,' will never give me the intimate heart-knowledge that I must have. What I need is called 'illumination and inspiration,' what I must have is called GRACE, and that is won in, by and through prayer."

"Again, I ask, are you demanding formal meditation?"

"No, Jack, I am not demanding formal meditation, if you mean by that that I must have three points and a colloquy preceded by three preludes; but I am demanding that priests pray! That they really meditate! That they have almost uninterrupted converse with God! Formalism is a curse, I know; but you want

to know why we are so unmindful of our dignity and I say because we have not been formal enough. If we did make a formal meditation every morning, or some time during the day, we would not so often forget that we are doubles for Jesus Christ."

"Come on, Joe, make up your mind; either you are or you are not demanding formal meditation. Which is it?"

"Oh, Jack, when I say meditate, I mean be a man of prayer; when I say be a man of prayer, I mean be one who makes readings meditatively, one who uses ejaculatory prayer very often, a man who has a pure intention in all his works and who renews this intention frequently; I mean be a man who PRAYS his Office, who loves the sanctuary and is often seen lingering under its lamp, a man who prepares for his Mass and makes a real thanksgiving after it, a man who lives continually in the presence of God."

"Then I say that you are talking about contemplatives."

"And I say that I am talking about a very active priest in a very active parish."

"You're talking about the habit of prayer."

"Exactly! And I'm telling every priest that he can't be a real priest unless he gets the habit of prayer!"

"You're asking a lot, Joe."

"I'm asking the least that a man can give if he is to double for Jesus Christ. I am convinced from experience and observation that EVERY collapse in the priesthood is due to lack of prayer. I know that we are unmindful of our dignity only because we are unmindful of our duty to pray. *We've got to get down on our knees often!*"

"Yes, but look at what you're asking..."

"I'm asking about twenty minutes or half

an hour in the morning and five, or better, ten minutes every night. A good long look at Jesus in the morning and a good long look at myself in the night. Promise that little and I promise you a clergy that will renovate the earth!"

"But a moment ago you were asking for the one who walked constantly in the presence of God, was immersed in the atmosphere of prayer, a man who made of everything a means of uniting himself with God. Before you were describing a mystic, now you come down to a man. So that is all you want ... thirty or forty minutes of my day."

"Give me that, Jack, and the rest will follow. Give me thirty or forty minutes and I promise you sanctity. Don't laugh at mystics; for in our own mitigated way, we all have to be mystics. But give me thirty or forty minutes of your day and all the rest will follow."

"How?"

"Let me study Jesus for a little while every morning or some time during the day, let me study Him with the heart more than with the head; let me watch Him in action; let me thus study with an eye to reproduction and the rest follows! Formal meditation, as you call it, ends after twenty or thirty minutes, but the fruit of the meditation is to be found throughout the entire day. The matter of the meditation is never fully absent from my mind, the resolution from my will, nor the affections from my heart. What I saw before the break of dawn influences me from sunrise to starlight. My meditation does not end when I rise from my knees, it is then only really beginning! What I have seen of the Original in those twenty or thirty minutes, I reproduce throughout the hours of the day. That



little meditation is the dynamo of my day; whatever light, heat or energy marks my doings during the day as I double for Jesus, were all generated during those few moments in which I studied my Star. If my meditation ends when I get up off my knees, I have performed a pious exercise, maybe, but I most certainly have NOT been meditating! Real meditation goes throughout the entire day. That is why I say give me a clergy that will really meditate for twenty or thirty minutes every day, then let Stalin, Hitler and Cardenas dictate, let Communism, which is now smouldering all over the land, break out in all its flaming fury, let the very ANTICHRIST rise up in all his power, and I will not worry; for he will be met by a body that is as unbreakable as Gibraltar, as inflexible as steel, as unconquerable as the Christ for whom they are doubling! Let every one of our 30,000 priests *get down on his knees* every day for twenty or thirty minutes and look at the wonder of his ordination, marvel at the mystery of his vocation, realize the height of his elevation, be awe-struck at the actuality that God uses as His doubles, weak men; then let him resolve a man's resolve this ONE DAY to be mindful of his dignity . . . then we will have a clergy that will 'walk worthy of the vocation to which they have been called'; then we will have a saintly body of doubles for Jesus Christ!"

"Well done, Joe! Very well done. But how are you going to get it out of the ideal and into the real?"

"Simplicity will do, Jack."

"Simplicity?"

"Yes, Jack, simplicity in its purest form. If we become simple men, in no time we will be saintly men."

"How so?"

## Men of One Idea

“A simple man is a man of ONE, ALL-ABSORBING IDEA. He has but one ideal and that has gotten into his head and gone down deep into his heart; it is the jugular vein of his very blood-stream. When I say all-absorbing, I mean just that ... ALL-ABSORBING!”

“So that is your idea of simplicity, is it? That’s your concept of a simple man?”

“That IS a simple man, Jack. Such a man is an intense individual. His one idea has become his ruining passion. It is his single standard, the one and only norm he has for everything.”

“That’s a fine slant on simplicity, Joe; absence of multiplicity.”

“Exactly! And, Jack, it has worked already. Look at Paul ... his one idea was ‘Christ Crucified.’ Look at Bernard ... he was ever asking himself ‘Why have I become a monk?’ Aloysius’ question was ‘Quid hoc ad aeternitatem?’ Stanislaus kept telling himself that he ‘was born for higher things,’ and Ignatius was ever spurred on by his ceaseless ‘ad majorem Dei gloriam.’ Simplicity such as that means sanctity!”

“And for us today?”

“Just what I’ve been saying all night ... one only idea ... I am a double for Jesus Christ! Let that get into my blood stream, let that be my one and only norm, the standard by which I judge what is to be done and the way it is to be done; let that really grip my heart and I’ll be a real priest. And, Jack, let me insist that morning meditation will put it there and evening examen will keep it there.”

"Oh, so that is what you want me to do with the ten minutes in the evening? I had almost forgotten them. So you want a nightly examination of conscience?"

"Yes, Jack, and it is as important as, if not more important than, the morning meditation. It is a perfect check-up on what I am doing and why I am doing it. If I really examine myself every night, I'll get to know *when I fail, where I fail* and *why I fail* to double for Christ. Such an examen will be the mirror of my make-up. If I look into it every night, I'll see myself as I really am and not as I think myself to be."

"That is a very good point."

"That is my plan for a better priesthood, yes, I dare say it, for a perfect priesthood. A look at the Model every morning and a look at the man, who is trying to reproduce the Model, every night. That plan, faithfully followed, will have me living rightly and ready to die nightly. Simple, isn't it? But you must admit that it is sound and substantial."

"Yes, Joe, you've got a practical plan there and a very simple one. It is one that is easily within the grasp of all, for there is not one of the 30,000 who cannot spare twenty minutes or thirty in the morning and five or ten at night."

"To me, Jack, it is not a question of sparing them, it is a necessity to MAKE them!"

"Yes, I know, and you are right. But the thing that bothers me is whether you can get your idea across to them or not. You are enthusiastic tonight. A new idea has come your way, really a new grace. You are holding it up as the cure-all for the clergy. I've listened and I've thought. You've gone down deep and you've been most logical. You say we fail because we are not mindful of our dignity;

and you insist that we are unmindful of our dignity because we do not meditate. Hence, you hold morning meditation . . . one that will influence our entire day, as the universal remedy for our cursed mediocrity and for all things worse. It is A cure; that, I am not denying; but is it THE cure, and the ONLY cure? that is what I want to know. I'm going to sleep on it and when Eddie comes in tomorrow, let the three of us get together, pool our experiences, and see whether we can't arrive at what we need. . . . The cure for our condition, which, while not bad, is not all that it should be."

With that, Father Jack left, and long into the night I sat and thought; thought of the wonders that could be and would be wrought if 30,000 priests became fired with the realization that they had but ONE work to do in these United States and that is to

. DOUBLE FOR JESUS CHRIST!



PART II

**“MY GOD, WHAT A LIFE!  
AND IT IS YOURS,  
O PRIEST OF JESUS CHRIST!”**

(LACORDAIRE)

## See a Doctor

Father Eddie arrived the next day. He is our younger brother, like myself, a secular; but unlike myself, a very successful retreat-master. Three brothers, three priests, and yet, three as unlike in ways of thought, speech and character as three brothers can be. It was not often that we three met, but when we did, you can be sure that we made the most of it.

Father Eddie knew as much about Southern California as most Far Easterners do ... nothing; so it was more than 'next day,' as Father Jack had planned, before we got down to our discussion, and then, believe it or not, it was Father Eddie who introduced it.

"Have you a regular confessor, Joe?" he asked. And I had to say, "No."

"How about you, Jack?"

"How could I have a regular confessor when I am not at home two months out of the year?"

"Well, what do you think of getting one?"

"Ad quid?"

"As the only means of insuring your soul's sanctification. That was the plea of the master of a recent diocesan retreat, and I have been thinking of adopting it myself for the retreats I give this year. What do you think of it?"

"I'd be happy if all would go to regular confession, never mind having a regular confessor," said Jack; "but what is your precise point?"

"Jack, we can get absolution from any ordained priest who has jurisdiction, but we cannot get advice, counsel, direction from any and every priest and, let me tell you, that

what we priests need is direction! With a great many I find that the results of the retreat are short-lived. They mean well, they are really determined to do better, but the pressure and the distraction of their work soon disrupt all their good plans and their resolutions evaporate. I've been trying to devise some way to insure more permanence to the work of the retreat and I think that a regular confessor will do it, one who understands the spiritual life and knows the individual soul."

"Regular confession will do it."

"No, it won't, Jack, not even for the careless; but what of the vast majority of good and earnest priests? How many of them have a regular confessor? Why, even with some of you religious it is becoming more rare and with us seculars, it is the great exception."

"What is your line of argumentation, Ned?" I asked.

"Simply this.... We priests do not make the most of the Sacrament of Penance. We are wise in the matters of the body, but not so in those of the soul. We seek out a specialist for our bodily ailments and usually stay with one physician who knows our 'case history' from A to Z; but for the soul and her ills... anyone will do. Now that is a very imprudent way to act."

"Going to develop the idea of a confessor being a doctor for the soul, eh? That's a good idea, Ned," said Jack, "for we are all sick; most of us chronic individuals, and the sickest are those who think themselves well."

"That's about the main idea. I'm not going to 'blast' this year, I'm going to plead for prudence. Prudence in the care of the soul is my big plea and that demands a regular con-

fessor, one who will know my soul inside out.”

“But how about those who are so circumstanced that it is most inconvenient to get to a regular confessor?”

“For instance? . . .”

“The country pastor, the one away out in the ‘wide-open spaces’.”

“First of all there should never be a question of convenience or inconvenience when my immortal soul is at stake; but, granting them the inconvenience, did you ever see a country pastor who would not travel to the city to seek out his favorite ‘M.D.’ whenever he has an ache or a pain? If he has a chronic illness, the trip to the city is a weekly affair and no noise is made about the inconvenience. Why should it be any different when the soul is in question? What do you think of the idea, Joe?”

“I was thinking of what St. Bernard has said on the point. . . .”

“What did he say about it?”

“Talking about those who follow their own advice in things spiritual, he says that ‘they are following the advice of a fool’! You certainly could use that, Ned. Strange, isn’t it, that we who are always handing out advice, seldom seek any for ourselves.”

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## Can This Be the Trouble?

“You’ve got a good point there, Ned, a strong one and one that ought to go across with the fair-minded,” said Father Jack; “but what I am trying to get at is what is the big fault of the clergy; what is our main trouble. How do you diagnose it?”

“Effeminacy!”

“Whew! That’s dynamite!” I exclaimed.



"They won't take it," said Jack.

"I know it," laughed Father Ed, "they won't take it as a group. You can argue the point with individuals and they will admit it; but for the mass, you've got to sugar-coat the idea, which, after all, is but another proof of the truth of the 'blast.'"

"But you said that you were not going to 'blast' this year," I reminded him.

"No, I'm not. But I was asked to name the besetting sin of the clergy and that is my answer.... Effeminacy! Look at their dress. ... Decency we must always have, but just try to count for me the clerical 'fashion-plates'! And let me tell you, Jack, that this is more common among the younger religious than among the seculars. I hope you don't mind my saying it, but it seems to me that religious poverty is not being practiced as it should be. I saw a pair last winter that were a disgrace to the Roman Collar ... smart derbies, white scarfs, mocha gloves, and, believe it or not, canes! Now that is what I call Decency gone drunk!"

"Don't get fervid, Father Edward," I admonished, "we are in a very warm climate."

"Oh, I can become eloquent on the point. Why, I have seen some of them go about their morning shave and, believe me, if a woman takes as much time and pains with her 'make-up,' I'll sanction legal separation. Not so long ago, I looked at the week-end bag of a young religious and, take it from me, the women have it all over them with their 'compacts.' In this bag he had shaving cream, cleansing cream, massage cream, after-shave lotion, a skin-bracer and a skin balm! As for powder. ... Oh! Mennen's may be for men, but most assuredly not for he-men or for men of God! Why, that wasn't the overnight bag of a re-

ligious, that was a traveling barber-shop with a beauty parlor inside!"

"Those are only accidentals, and aren't you satirizing the exception?"

"Come on, Jack, you know better than that. You know that it is the rule among my generation and not the exception in yours!"

"By heavens, the boy is right, Jack. You can call it effeminacy and it is most manifest in the care of our bodies, our clothes, our food and even in our drink...."

"Yes," cut in Father Ed, "in everything material. Luxurious Twentieth Century America has made inroads into the daily life of the clergy, and, Jack, these externals argue to an emasculated interior."

"Prove that."

"They have an anemic way of thinking and of preaching. They seldom hit from the shoulder; they seldom demand anything; they very seldom flat-footedly lay down the law. They insist that we must merely insinuate. Can you imagine that? Hinting to our sophisticated, self-satisfied, sin-filled world! Why, some of those who make missions do not fully comprehend when you hit them over the head with a sledge-hammer, and yet, our modern apostles want to teach by indirection. I tell you it is effeminacy in its worst form!"

"You've put a new title to what Joe calls worldliness. You surprise me, Ned; not with your idea but with the force of your feeling on the matter."

"Oh, sometimes I get quite disgusted. It may be my youth and it may well be that I am focusing on the exception and talking about the extreme, but really, many are preaching and many more are living a Fifth Gospel. They actually have a New Asceticism, one in which mortification is 'taboo.'"

"That is a little more euphonic, Ned," I put in. "Call them unmortified and they will squirm, but tell them that they are effeminate and they will rebel."

"I know it, Joe, and as I said before, that is one of the surest proofs of their effeminacy. I can't call a spade 'a spade' with them; I have to call it 'a skillfully devised improvement to aid in excavating.' Bah! They defend themselves on the grounds of culture and refinement, but to me it is effeminacy and the accent is on the 'fem.'"

"But what is this New Asceticism you spoke of, Ned?" asked Jack.

"Briefly this. . . . That as long as I work, I do all. I need no bodily mortification — my work is my penance. I need no meditation — my work is my prayer. I need no self-disciplining — my work is my 'flagellum.' I need no aids to sanctification — my work is my sanctification. Work is my Purgative, Illuminative, and Unitive Way. Work is my Rule Book, my Cross and my stream-lined cabin-plane that is going to ride me right into heaven . . . and do you know, most of us haven't enough work to keep us out of trouble! A real day's work would kill half of us!"

"I see," said Father Jack. "So you think that lack of mortification is the cancer that is sapping the vitality of the clergy? Something in what you say. How are you going to fit that into your theory, Joe?"

"Easily. Why are we so unmortified? Because we do not meditate! Because we are not mindful of our rôle as doubles for Jesus Christ. If I took a good look at Jesus, who was God and yet had the Cross before Him from Bethlehem to Calvary . . . do you think I could be unmortified? If I really studied the virile, vigorous, divine 'He-Man' who was Je-

sus ... do you think I could be effeminate? No, indeed! Jack, I think I've got the cure — it is morning meditation."

"What's all this about?" asked Father Ed.

With his usual brevity and clarity Father Jack gave the substance of the talk that we had had the night that Jimmie, Hollywood's stunt-flyer, had opened my eyes. I was thrilled to see the way that the idea of double griped Father Ed; he was alive with enthusiasm for it, but when it came to morning meditation and evening examen as the means to keep this idea and ideal vital ... his face changed.

"Oh, that IS the solution. That is the only solution. But can you get it over? We in the priesthood have a very high sales-resistance to anything like formal mental prayer and, oh! the inconsistency of it all! Here we are preaching the absolute necessity of grace for every salutary work and we in the ministry have the most salutary of all salutary works, for we have to save not only our own souls, but the souls of others as well; we have to, as you say, double for Christ... What an ocean of grace is necessary for our work! We know that we can get that grace through prayer; we teach that it is infallibly certain — 'de congruo infallibile,' I admit, but nevertheless infallibly certain — that we can get that grace through prayer, and very stupidly ... we do not pray!"

"Distinguo," broke in Father Jack. "We do not pray formal meditation, concedo; but that is not the only form of prayer."

"Oh, I know it, Jack, but did you ever see any priest who could use vocal prayer effectively without also trying to be a master of mental prayer? Isn't it a very subtle distinction, when we come down to actualities? Can you say your Rosary well without em-

ploying mental prayer? Can you read your breviary as you ought without using mental prayer? Of course, if you are going to pin me down to the mechanics of mental prayer and claim that only that is meditation which starts with putting myself in the presence of God, making the humble gesture, having a composition of place, an opening prayer, three distinct points and a precise time for my colloquy, then I don't meditate and I don't know any priests who do. But, from what you outlined, Joe doesn't mean that. If I am allowed a distinction, I will say that we must have mental prayer but that it will only come from formal meditation. But call it anything you like as long as you think, think deeply, think long and lovingly over what He was and what He did, with an eye to being and doing just as He. That is what I mean by mental prayer and that is what Joe means, too, if your outline was correct."

"Right you are, Ned, and Jack knows it, too. He gave me the same objection and met with the same answer. I don't know just what he has in mind."

"I'll tell you what I have in mind. Both of you admit that the idea of formal meditation will not be welcome to the clergy. I know it perhaps better than the pair of you and that is why I have objected. I wanted to see if I could get you to phrase your idea some other way; to get you to present your sound idea with a new label. Sell them that idea; it is THE solution; but to sell it, you will have to wrap it up in different tissue. But here, we three are agreed as to what should be done. The positive side of our life is to be stressed more than the negative, we are to encourage for the future, rather than discourage for the

past. Suppose, then, that I ask you what is the ONE virtue we most need as a body."

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## Is This What We Need?

"Fear of God," snapped Father Ed and really startled both me and Father Jack, for Father Ed was a fun-loving, jovial priest. He always had a laugh and was always on the 'qui vive' to give others a laugh. Often had I heard him say that there was not enough laughter in life and yet, here he was calling for fear of God.

"If you ask me, we priests have become too familiar with God and the things of God. We forget our tremendous responsibilities. How many of us sit in the confessional with the realization that an eternity, an eternity for an immortal soul, is being decided every time we push back the slide? How often do we not act as mere 'absolving machines'? How often do we forget that we are supposed to be, not only judges, but also doctors, advisors, fathers to every soul that says 'Bless me, Father, for I have sinned'? Tell me, how often do we look at our Moral Theology books to be sure that we are forming judgments according to approved principles and not according to our own whims and fancies? Probabilism is a system based on sound principle; it is not a maze of personal opinions. What effrontery it is to go into the 'box' without a heart-sincere 'Veni, Creator Spiritus'! There is such a thing as the grace of state, I know, but I wonder if it does not bear some relation to the state of grace. 'Facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam,' but how many of us are in the 'facienti quod in se

est' class? I say that we need to be frightened into thinking of our responsibilities. That is what I mean by the fear of God. We are too familiar, too off-hand in doing His work."

"What you say about the confessional is true, Ned. We do not pray enough, nor study enough. We certainly burden the Holy Ghost."

"Ah, but, Jack, that is not the only place that we show our lack of fear. When we ascend the pulpit to preach, do we reflect that we are the mouthpieces of God Almighty? Do we strive to teach His doctrine in a clear, forceful, captivating way? Or is it just another sermon to be delivered, or worse still ... some twenty minutes to be put in 'talking'? What a tragedy! We, who have the only philosophy of life, the only key to happiness, the only solution to the many pressing problems of the day; we, who have the 'good-tidings,' the Word of God ... we 'talk.' With the world religion-hungry, with our own people starving for real meat, we allow a revivalist or a sentimental columnist to captivate them with pap! We seculars 'talk' for from seven to twenty minutes on a Sunday morning and are satisfied. You regulars get up one set of sermons, standardized, stereotyped, trite ... and are satisfied. Great heavens! As preachers of the Word of God, we are a disgrace! You just bet we need the fear of God!"

"Yes, Ned," said Father Jack, "with our people so sensitive to form and finish from the ceaseless radio, with the bulk of our audiences educated to the receptivity of only the truly interesting, appealingly put, we priests have got to work over our sermons. You're right, most of us are a disgrace as preachers of the word of God."

"And then our Mass.... If we stopped to

think of what we are going to do at the altar; if we realized that we were about to bring down the Great God into our tiny hands and that we were going to hold Him up to His Father as the Reason to yet spare this sinning and sin-filled world, don't you think that we'd say a 'Miserere' before we vested and ask Him to 'amplius lava me'? Then, do you think we'd be finished in fifteen or twenty minutes? Don't you see how much we need the fear of God?"

"Once again it comes down to being mindful of our dignity, doesn't it, Jack?"

"You are certainly strong for that point, Joe."

"I think he's right in being strong for it, Jack. If we were ever mindful of our dignity, as Joe says, don't you see the reverence, the respect, the holy awe, the filial fear of God that we would have? If we only realized that we were consecrated, set apart, made holy to do the work of God for God's people . . . what a change there would be in the health of the Mystical Body!"

"You're right, Ned, and some of us need to be frightened through and through. Hell, Death and Judgment are topics some of us should never set aside, and then perhaps we would have a salutary fear of God."

"Ah, if I could only frighten, really frighten, the 'Apostles of the Parlor' and strike real terror into them, the parasites of society!"

"Going in for titles now, are you, Ned? Who are the 'Apostles of the Parlor'?"

"The social lions of the clergy who spend almost all their time either in their own or some one else's front room . . . just entertaining. Their day is a success when some female gasps, 'Oh, I think Father is a peach of a fellow,' or some man says, 'Father is a reg-



ular scout. He knows the score.' These fops haven't got sense enough to realize that what they consider compliments are really condemnations. There is only one compliment that can be paid to us and that is, 'Father is a real priest' or 'He is a man of God.' Yes, I'd like to scare the very consciences of these social lights!"

"But that is a relatively small number, Ned," said Father Jack.

"Yes, but their number is growing. And again I have to say that the religious are more mesmerized by this sort of popularity than the seculars."

"Your fear seems to have varying degrees," I ventured.

"It has, Joe, some need to be thoroughly frightened, others merely aroused and for the most of us, what we need is reverence, awe, a holy respect. I much prefer to awaken this reverential fear by an appeal to appreciation than any other way. Taking your idea of a double, I think I can do it. If we can only be awakened to the wonder of what we are! If we would only think of what we mean to God and what we mean to man! If we would realize what we do!... Boy! We'd be frightened! We'd be reverential!"

"He seems to have been won to your idea, Joe."

"Yes, I'm won to his idea. I think that if we are mindful of our dignity and our duty, we'll have a salutary fear of God. You know, Jack, the way some of us act, you'd think that Ordination was a confirmation in grace. We are God's elect, it is true; but it is also true that we are still sons of Adam. The Bishop consecrated us, he did not kill concupiscence. Hence, I say that we need a holy fear of God, one that will make us use the necessary means

that will bring us to a proper doubling for the God-Man, and one of the means is mortification. So you see I'm back where I started, so let some one else do the talking. What do you say, Joe, what is the ONE virtue that we need?"

\* \* \*

## Or Is It This?

"I say Faith, Ned. That is the one thing we need more than anything else, and it will give the fear for which you are pleading. If we have a strong, virile, vibrant faith, your awe, reverence and holy fear will follow and there will be no need of fright. But without this faith, your fear will border on the servile rather than on the filial."

"You two are certainly getting down to fundamentals; but tell me, haven't you found the faith and the humility of the priesthood inspiring? On or off retreats, every time a priest kneels to me in confession, I find myself lost in admiration and awe at the humility and the manly faith of the individual. When men more learned, more experienced and much more holy than I, kneel and ask absolution from my hands . . . ah, then the heroics of the saints pale before the real humility of the priests. I have never given a priests' retreat in which I have not been humbled to the dust and inspired beyond speech by the faith and the humility of our own clergy."

"Right, Jack, and I can eulogize the faith of certain individuals and prove to Ned that they have not only fear of God but have actually attained to angelic awe. Why, some of them before the Blessed Sacrament are spell-binding. For them, the Real Presence is not a dogma . . . it is a living, palpitating reality

... they feel the very pulse-beats of the Sacred Heart. But don't be using red-herrings! We know that the mass of the clergy need something to shock them out of their self-complacency and to an extent, Ned is right. We need to be frightened out of our almost criminal carelessness and, at times, our absolute neglect of our duty as Christ's doubles. My only point is that deeper down than lack of fear is lack of faith!"

"Yes, and I can see that you are going to develop the idea of double all over again, saying that once we are saturated with the idea that we are doubling for the God-Man, once we have faith enough to believe that we are reproducing Jesus Christ every moment of our lives, then we will have a filial fear that will have us avoiding all the pitfalls of the clergy. Joe, there is one thing that we will have to admit, and that is that you have a passion for unity. Really it is a gift. No one is ever going to miss your main idea! I'll bet that you are going to say that this faith will be vitalized by morning meditation and kept at white heat by evening examen."

"Jack, you're a mind-reader!"

"You can't get away from the logic of it, Jack. But tell me, Joe, do you really think that we lack faith?"

"Yes, Ned, we lack the faith that energizes. Oh, we all have a strong belief; but what I am talking about is the faith that influences mind and will and judgment, the faith that has me looking at *everything* as part of God's plan, the faith that has me always looking *through* secondary causes and seeing only the *First Cause!* In short, a faith that is ever active."

"Just what do you mean by 'active'?"

"This.... It is one thing to say 'I believe in the Real Presence'; it is another and a far

better thing to have my attitude and all my actions around the sanctuary say it for me. It is one thing to say that Jesus lives and lives through His priesthood, but it is a far different and a far better thing to prove to the world that He lives by actually, at all times and in all places and with all people, doubling for Him. In short, Ned, it is one thing to say 'Credo' and another thing to live it! That is the faith that I want for myself and that is the faith that I want all others to have, a faith that will keep us constantly mindful of what we are, and a faith that will stimulate us to an effort ever more manly, to be what we should be!"

"That's good, Joe, but is it tangible enough? Is it forceful enough for priests?"

"The way he builds it up, it is," Father Jack answered for me. "It is full of force. Not directly frightening as much of your matter is, Ned, it won't startle the way yours will, but it is really awe-inspiring when pondered."

"Ah! A convert at last!"

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## We Certainly Need This!

"No, Joe, not at last; but from the first. The very night you broke the idea to me I was taken by it. To me, real priestliness is grounded on a passionate, personal love for Jesus Christ. Anything else is either sand or shale. For true priestliness, we need rock, solid rock, and the only solid rock there is, is love for Jesus Christ. Hence, whenever I think of the ONE thing we priests need, I do not think of fear, nor of faith, I think only of LOVE!"

"Yes, Jack, but I can't love what I don't know, and I will never know unless I study, and the only study for me is meditation."

"Right, Joe, but I will never really study what I don't in some way love."

"You mean I will never intently study what I am not intensely interested in; and I say that I won't be intensely interested until I firmly believe that Christ is God and that He has called me to be His living double. So I still say that the first and the vital need is faith!"

"And I can be stubborn enough to say that you won't rightly double for Christ unless you have a holy reverence, an awe, a real, salutary, filial fear of Him and the divine work to which He has called you. So I guess we are all right. Actually, we are all talking about the same thing; we are merely placing the stress differently. The idea is the thing! The idea of doubling for God! You might say it takes faith to believe it, but, once believed, it will generate a holy fear and will only be carried out through a great-hearted love. But you two have a head-start on me in this matter. Let me in on some of the practical applications of this double idea."

"They are obvious, Ned. We priests are called to a divine work, therefore, we must be divine, different from the world and all that is in the world."

"That is my first point, Ned; we must hold ourselves UNTOUCHABLE. We must make ourselves clean and keep ourselves CLEAN!"

"Yes, we must be untouchable by anything of the world and yet we must be tangent to all things in that world. We must be as paradoxical as was the Christ. That is another point that Joe brings out. He says that we must be human, yet divine; crucified to the

world, yet a very vital part of the world; we must be in perpetual motion, always working for others and yet we must be interior men, never forgetful of self and our soul's sanctification. I like to think that Lacordaire summed it up pretty well in his famous exclamation: "To live in the midst of the world without wishing its pleasures; to be a member of each family, yet belonging to none; to share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets; to heal all wounds; to go from men to God and offer Him their prayers; to return from God to man to bring pardon and hope; to have a heart of fire for Charity and a heart of bronze for Chastity; to teach and pardon, console and bless always. My God, what a life! And it is yours, O priest of Jesus Christ!" I especially like that closing line "MY GOD, WHAT A LIFE! AND IT IS YOURS, O PRIEST OF JESUS CHRIST!"

"How do you think he meant that last exclamation, Jack?"

"I don't know, Ned, but I take it as an exclamation of wonder that God should use men for things so divine; as an exclamation of awe at the greatness and the glory of the priesthood; and finally, I take it as an exclamation of despair; as if he would say: 'Who can lead such a life?'"

"And the answer to that, Jack, is: Only men of deep faith, reverential fear and ardent love; only a man who clings close to Christ. You're right, old boy, we certainly need a great-hearted, personal love for the God-Man to lead our life."

"Ah, but how acquire that?"

"By being mindful of our dignity, Ned."

"What is our dignity?"

"Exactly what he has been saying right along, Ned, that of a double for the God-Man."

“Let that get into my blood-stream, Ned, and the rest follows.”

“Yes, it is all true. We are doubles for the God-Man; but it is equally true that neither you, Ned, nor Joe, here, nor I myself, am a perfect double. So the work before us, and the work before every priest in America, is to see how he can perfectly double, to see how he can more exactly ‘walk like, talk like, look like, act like, be like, live like, love like Jesus’!”

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## Results

“How our attitudes towards all things will change if we do that! In our dealings with women, we will remember that there are Magdalenes to be changed to Marys by the sweet persuasiveness of His personality; that there are Marthas, who are troubled about many things, and need to learn that ‘only one thing is necessary.’ Let me but double rightly and I can raise many a daughter of Jairus and hand her back to her parents; I can come upon many a woman taken in adultery and say, ‘Neither do I condemn thee. Go, but sin no more.’ Ah, the whole world of women needs Christ and needs Him badly; BUT there is only one way to get Him, and that is through His doubles! How many a Samaritan is standing by the Well of Jacob asking for the ‘life-giving waters’! How many are making bold efforts to ‘touch but the hem of His garment’! Count the widows who are to be consoled for the loss of their only son. Yes, there is a whole world of women to be won to Christ and His doubles must do the winning! If they do . . . then Christ will have followers when all His disciples have fled; for the wom-

en are more courageous than the men. They will go up to Calvary, stand 'neath His cross, assist at His burial and with the rising sun of Easter, will be found hurrying to His tomb. That is what I can accomplish in the world of women IF . . . IF I am mindful of my dignity, IF I double for Jesus Christ."

"That's powerful! Nice work, Joe. How about it, Jack?"

"Yes, Ned, it's very good, and see how easy it is to apply it to the world of men. Think of the Matthews, the millions of Matthews, who are to be called from their money-tables and made followers of Christ. Think of the countless lawyers who are to be told the Law and the whole Law. Think of the Scribes and the Pharisees who are to be excoriated. Think of the hordes of the poor who are to be comforted and lifted out of their despair by the Beatitudes. Think of the thousands of moral lepers who are crying to the Son of David to be made clean . . . and the Son of David can do it and will do it . . . IF . . . IF we double for the God-Man."

"So you see, Ned, there is no difficulty about the application. There is no question of the practical results, if I do what I am supposed to do! The idea that I am doubling must absorb me and I must be mindful of my dignity and my duty at all times. I must socialize, but it must be only as Christ's double. We can dine in many a house like that of Simon the Pharisee and perhaps, if we really reproduce the God-Man, some Magdalene may weep and be 'forgiven much because she hath loved much.' There are plenty of Publicans, who, like Zacheus 'seek to see Jesus,' but cannot 'because they are of little stature.' Call these down from their sycamore trees and 'bring salvation to their houses.' Why, the world is



simply yearning for Christ, rich and poor, old and young, male and female, sinner and sinned against. But they will go on yearning unless we priests stop being satisfied with just 'doing our job' and start to live our vocation ... start being Jesus Christ four and twenty hours every day!"

"I see it all now. It goes into every aspect of our lives, into every sphere of the world's activities. I must be up in politics, but only as Christ was ... to insist that everyone 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's' and only those that are his! I must know something of the world of letters ... in short, I must be 'all to all,' as Paul was, but for the one and only purpose of 'winning all to Christ.'"

"Yes, Ned, but don't forget that the first thing to do is to BE Christ! In other words, I look upon Joe's light as a grace from God, and grace must be cooperated with! Hence, the very first thing to do is to change myself. I must saturate myself with the truth that I am His double. I must be merciless with myself until that idea becomes part of me, so much a part of me, that I will see all things as Christ saw them, will only what Christ wills and love just as He loves. This process of becoming a double begins interiorly. Hence, it seems as if we MUST get down to daily meditation and nightly examen. That is what I would call really cooperating with God's grace and in my mind, there is no doubt that this IS a grace!"

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## Quitting on God

We were just about to separate when Father Jack suddenly said: "Wait a minute, you two. Do you realize what we have been doing? We've been talking about the theological virtues and we've made a big omission."

"What is that?"

"Well, you say 'Faith,' I say 'Charity' and Ed's 'Fear' is a combination of both; but we have omitted HOPE and, by heavens, that is what we priests need as much as anything else."

"I don't follow," said Father Ed.

"Here, Ned," countered Father Jack, "there is not one of the 30,000 priests in America, but knows that we need sanctifying grace; that with the sanctifying grace come the virtues. There is not one who does not know that these give us the 'vis,' the 'posse agere'; but there is not one either, of all the 30,000, but will tell you that what he wants is not the 'posse' but the 'facile posse.'"

"Drop the terminology and tell us what you mean," said I.

"Joe, a lot of water goes over Niagara Falls every minute. It is potential electricity. But that water could keep on going over the Falls for years and years and never would a single, tiny bulb glow in Buffalo or Lackawanna, unless that water hits the turbines."

"That's right, Jack. Didn't we hear something, somewhere, about 'a posse ad esse' 'non valet-ing'? I think I see your application. We've got the potency, every one of us, of being a real double; but what we must do is reduce the potency to act!"

"Yes, but that is an obviosity. We've been talking about that all night without all the

learned terminology. But Jack said he had something new, something about Hope."

"Don't get excited, Joe; my point is this. . . . We've been talking about the theological virtues all night and it just struck me that we might have more profitably talked about the moral ones."

"Whew! Are you intimating that all we have said has been so much talk? I don't think our Father Joseph will admit that. Come, Jack, what have you got up your sleeve?"

"Oh, no, Ned, I don't mean to say anything like that. All that we have said tonight is true. We've got to be doubles. There is only one way of insuring the success of our doubling, and that is by daily meditation and examen. That is the ONLY antidote against worldliness. That is the only thing that will shoot us through and through with the supernatural. That is the only way to keep 'our hearts right, as His Heart is with ours.' All that we have touched on will follow from a daily fusing of our life with His. Our Faith will be more virile, vibrant, really active; our Awe and Reverence truly filial; our Love more dynamic. And yet I say that what we need is what we haven't named."

"I'm still sticking to 'Mindful of my dignity of a double,' obtained through a morning look at the Model and a nightly look at the man who is trying to reproduce the Model."

"Yes, Joe, and so am I. But do you know what we need for that?..."

"A will of steel," put in Father Ed.

"Right," snapped Father Jack. "But if you want to label it rightly, we need the continuous exercise of the moral virtue of FORTITUDE! Courage is what we priests need! We know what's what. We see the road. We know it leads to our goal . . . BUT...."

“But what?”

“But, Joe, we haven’t got the intestinal fortitude to stick to the road! We think that we can find short-cuts. We fool ourselves into the absurdity that we can fittingly double for Christ, that we can be supernaturally robust on the ‘ex opere operato’ of the sacraments; forgetting most often and most frequently the plus, and the mighty big plus, of the ‘ex opere operantis’; forgetting that we must have the daily welding of our wills to His, the daily ‘skull-practice’ with Christ by virile, persistent and consistent prayer and examen.”

“Well, at last the boy has come to.”

“No, Ned, I have been here all the time, but the thought of the Moral Virtues just struck me. We need them badly! For some of us the best exercise of Temperance will be total abstinence; of Prudence, to keep ourselves untouchable; of Justice, to be mindful of our dignity; but to do all these, or any of them, persistently — we need Fortitude, the courage, the unbending backbone to get down on our knees morning and night to look at Him, to study Him and then with real, virile love go out and reproduce Him. Joe, you have got THE solution. There is no doubt about that; but to put that solution into practice calls for ‘grit.’ If you ask me now what is the ONE thing we American priests need, I say COURAGE! Fortitude is the virtue we lack!”

“And what about your love?”

“That will come. That is there. All that we have said about it is true. ‘Love IS the fulfilling of the law.’ ‘If you love Me, keep My Commandments.’ ‘If I have not charity [that is — love] I am a tinkling cymbal.’ But it is not the mottoes that we hang on the

wall that count; it is the mottoes we live! Love's best tribute is imitation! You don't really love unless you carry through; you can't carry through unless you love. Love, then, comes to demand the courage and the fortitude to LIVE Christ!"

"Right, Jack! Now you are really talking; but you won't live Christ, because you can't live Christ, unless you know both yourself and Him!"

"Exactly my point, Joe. And you won't know either Him or yourself without meditation and examen."

"Then you are back to Joe's original plan."

"With this new slant, Ned, to take Joe's way, which is the RIGHT way, demands what most of us haven't got, or at least, haven't shown as yet, it takes COURAGE!"

"Where are we going to get it?"

"God's grace! God's grace won through prayer. Odd, isn't it, that we get the ability to pray by praying? Joe, we have the water; we have the turbines; we'll generate the electricity when we make the water hit the turbines. It's up to us. Let's give Christ and ourselves a chance. Let's start with fifteen or twenty minutes of meditation and five minutes of examen today! And let's KEEP AT IT!"

"That's putting it up to us. You are saying that WE have got to work."

"Precisely! God does His part every time. We are the quitters! Wasn't it you who said something tonight about 'Facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam'? Well, in plain English all that means is that if the priesthood of America wants to be a priesthood and not a motley mass of mediocrity, if we want to be priests and not parasites, if we want to be what we should be ... doubles for the God-Man ... we've got to get down

on our knees! And there is where the courage, the fortitude, the continual exercise of that manly virtue is needed!"

"Why do you say that, Jack?"

"Ned, most of us make a start. We make meditation and examen for a week or so, but then along comes a little dryness or a little extra work and we quit. Oh! what a crowd of quitters we are! Strong men, fighters though we be in almost every other line, we are quitters on God. When it comes to the spiritual life, the life of prayer, the real fundamentals of the soul's life, we show the white flag every time. There is not one in the 30,000 who cannot say, 'Video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor.' Why? — Because we are quitters on God!"

"Right you are, Jack, we get discouraged mighty easily; on the heels of discouragement comes a distaste for what is hard in the spiritual life; then disgust and finally, as you say, we quit. By heavens, you've hit it, we are quitters on God. What a condemnation!"

"No, Joe, what an elevation! To have made the discovery and the admission is a grace. Let's cooperate with it! Let's get in there daily and FIGHT!"

"I'm for it, Joe. As Jack says, we've got to cooperate with grace, so for me it's a man's resolve to get down on my knees every morning for a real heart-study of the Man of all men, my Model, Jesus, for whom I must double. All I can say now is, 'Thanks, Joe,' and 'Thanks, Jack,' and above all, 'Thanks, God!'"

"And to think it all came out of an atheist's description of what a double is and what a double does. Strange indeed are the ways of

God. So it is settled, then, that we all make a new start?"

"'Nunc coepi!' is the cry, Joe. Now at long last let us really start to **DOUBLE FOR THE GOD-MAN!**"

\* \* \*

## Semina Aeternitatis

My Father, you have read this far; may I not be bold enough to say that it is an external grace? Clear water *can* run through rusty pipes, you know. Hence, may I not dare to say with St. Paul, 'I have planted, **YOU** do the watering and **GOD** will give the increase'?

That metaphor of Paul's reminds me of one of St. Bernard's. He calls our actions 'semina aeternitatis'... seeds of and for eternity. Beautiful thought, isn't it? And one that frightens, too! Father, you and I are going to meet this little booklet again. You and I are going to meet this call to "look like, walk like, talk like, think like, act like, **BE** like Jesus" again. You and I are going to meet this grace of God, this spur to live up to our dignity and our duty. You and I are going to meet this plea for a manly getting down on our knees daily ... for fifteen or twenty minutes in the morning to look at the Original, for five or ten at night to look at the double. You and I are going to meet it ... in eternity! This **IS** a "semen aeternitatis." May it then have flowered, and beautifully flowered, into the "facie ad faciem" vision of the Original and all because you and I have doubled perfectly for Jesus Christ!

Father, there is only one way to heaven, and He is Jesus Christ. There is only one way for you and me to heaven, and that is to be the *God-Man's Double!*

The seed is sown! YOU do the watering!  
... only thirty or forty minutes a day ...  
GOD will do the rest!

We are getting nearer the grave; are we  
getting more like God? We are sowing our  
"semina aeternitatis"!

I close as I opened. Father, you are HON-  
EST. Tell me honestly ...

Am I not right?





UT NOMEN CONGRUAT ACTIONI  
ACTIO CORRESPONDEAT NOMINI;  
NE NOMEN INANE ET CRIMEN IMMANE;  
NE SIT HONOR SUBLIMIS  
ET VITA DEFORMIS  
NE SIT DEIFICA PROFESSIO  
ET ILLICITA ACTIO!

(St. Ambrose)

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