

Life is Adaptation

from: *Where Silence is Praise*, by Dom Augustin Guillerand, O. Cart.

Life is adaptation: That is, finding joy in everything, passing above everything, trusting wholly in God. *I can do all things in Him*. Nothing can resist that. Take a lesson from the plants, which never cease to develop, bending themselves to the inclemency of the weather, growing continuously, profiting from all the varying circumstances of weather and soil. To arrive at our goal, we would like to have a straight line marked out for us, all plain sailing, as though life were a map. But life is not like that. It is a divine plan, which has to carve a way for itself through all sorts of undergrowth — by hills and valleys, following the difficulties of the way, tunnels, hills and detours — that is life; all so long as we do not stop. Therefore, look things in the face, and adapt yourself to them day by

day. The changes of season, the succession of heat and cold, sun and rain, day and night: all these things contribute, do they not, to the ripening of the fruit? So it is with the soul.

There is order in reason, and another order in life. Reason divides, classifies, coordinates, mechanically. Life on the other hand is a synthesis, and cannot be explained by reason. For instance, we take a rose to pieces to see what it is, and what there is in it. With what result? We have all the parts that compose the rose, but we no longer have a living rose.

We may — and should — use our imagination and reason to form in us an intuitive intellect. They are good and necessary, as in theology for instance, in order that we may understand and contemplate truth under all its aspects. But we still

have to make our own synthesis, at once vital and living. Take for example the attributes of God. It is not enough to consider them in theory, as speculatively; they must be made to enter into our lives, into our very being. By our reason we obtain fresh light on our concepts, but it is by faith that we respond to life, because it is the life of faith which puts us in touch with God, as He is in Himself, not as He exists in our abstract knowledge of Him. Faith enables us to grasp life as whole, moment by moment; by faith we rise above all that we see or understand or feel, and touch directly the living God, who cannot be attained by reason. There you have the difference between the erudition of a learned man and the life of a saint...

The only way to deal with our natural inclinations is to go to the root of the matter: that is, transform them by contrary acts. We must do bravely what we do not like doing; keep a tight rein on the things that give us pleasure. The simple, indeed the indispensable and infallible means, to take them in hand is to recall the words of the Gospel: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself...*

Grace perfects nature, and where nature is deficient, grace makes up for what is wanting. But, if we are to attain to perfection, it must do more than that: it must go against our natural tendencies and transform

them. That is why, in tending to perfection, men must exercise and cultivate the feminine virtues of kindness, devotedness, patience and gentleness, since these are the difficult ones for them to acquire. Women, on the other hand need the male virtues of courage, energy and justice. Then, after a number of years, as we begin to grow old, the final perfection in both cases will consist in a spiritual childhood, in which we must react against the defects of nature which by that time has been formed and wants to assert itself: for example, by imposing one's personality, by pride and the desire to command...

As grace is grafted on to nature, and does not supplant it, one of the best ways, together with prayer, of drawing down grace is to endeavor to dispose our nature to receive grace, to render it capable of receiving it to advantage. For grace respects God's order and will only act on a nature already well disposed. We "dispose" it by forming habits, and this we do by repeated acts. The soil is then ready to receive the action of grace with profit. Grace of itself will always do its work; it is we who have the power to spoil its action, just as a badly tuned instrument, played by however so fine an artist, cannot render harmoniously a melody.

Difficulties, upsets, struggle and the like are our greatest

† MASS INTENTIONS †

FOR THIS WEEK

Monday, November 17 ~ St. Gregory the Wonderworker

8 a.m. — Private Intention

Tuesday, November 18 ~ Dedication of the Basilicas of Sts. Peter and Paul

8 a.m. — + Lamar Cole, by Walsh Family

Wednesday, November 19 ~ St. Elizabeth of Hungary

8 a.m. — + Iryna Zarutska

Thursday, November 20 ~ St. Felix of Valois

6 p.m. — Private Intention

Friday, November 21 ~ Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

8 a.m. — + Burton Glaser, by Jensen Family

Saturday, November 22 ~ St. Cecilia

8 a.m. — Madrigal Family, by Sylvia Ambuul

Sunday, November 23 ~ 24th and Last Sunday after Pentecost

7 a.m. — Private Intention

9 a.m. — Private Intention

11 a.m. — Pro Populo

Our priests are unable to accept Mass intentions at this time.

Upcoming Parish Events

November 17 ~ Adult Catechism

Fr. James Gordon to continue his series of lectures on Spiritual Theology, 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

November 28-29 ~ All-Night Adoration

Sign up in the vestibule to spend an hour in meditation, prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament; times available from 7 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Saturday.

blessings here and now, and we should thank God specially for them, for it is above all by them that He forms us, indeed transforms us. These trials are a necessary part of our training in this life, if we are to achieve our end in the life to come.

This transformation in God must extend to all our faculties. These, directed by the will,

must take the same direction — towards the Father, each sustain the other, and tending with all their combined strength towards God: in the case of the mind by nourishing it with concepts of faith; in the case of the will by making it follow these concepts in order to dominate our lower nature.

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