

The Order of the Sons of the Holy Cross



To give our Lord a perfect service Martha and Mary
must combine. Evelyn Underhill and Teresa

He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast

S.T. Coleridge

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

I said to my soul, be still. T.S. Eliot

Four Quartets

We live in an age and ethos dominated by busy and frantic life styles (at inner and outer levels). This means there is often a lack of depth, wisdom and insight on the faith journey. Jesus suggested that Mary had chosen the better part, but the modern world has elevated the role of Martha to a pre-eminent level. Needless to say, the contemplative Mary and the activist Martha are needful friends on the faith journey, but when Martha dominates, Mary often retreats to the margins (or disappears altogether). The vocational call of Mary to greater faith depths, silence and solitude is an invitation to a life in Christ (*unio mystica*) and the Church (*corpus Christi*)—such a life can restore, heal and awaken slumbering parts of our souls that are often ignored in the church and society. Such a charism calls for a slowing down of thought and life so our souls can be more properly aligned, attuned and alive to God in an ever deeper silence and listening posture. Our prayer life,

therefore, in Christ and the Church is essential to being who we are called to be as children of God.

The Order of the Sons of the Holy Cross is to witness to the importance of the contemplative prayer life as life together on the ship of faith as it sails across the oft volatile sea of time. The vision of the contemplative prayer order is to offer Mary a place on the ship of faith again. Mary knows how to wait, be attentive, still, listen and discerningly respond to the overtures and invocations of God. It is from such a posture that the church is often renewed. The contemplative journey threads together, in an intricate and evocative manner, the centrality of wisdom, friendship and justice-peacemaking within the life of the church and the world (*amor mundi*)—such will be the integrated and holistic vision of The Order of the Sons of the Holy Cross. John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, is, in many ways, the contemplative Mary of the Church, and John's gospel will be a model and mentor to the Sons of the Holy Cross.

The Order of the Sons of the Holy Cross will be the male equivalent of The Order of the Daughters of the Holy Cross. The Order will have a rule of life, be grounded in contemplation and friendship, committed to life in the parish and larger church and, by extension, in the world. Those in the Order will be, as much and as far as possible, in regular contact, meet annually for a weekend retreat and be committed to mentoring and discerning prayerful contemplative vocations and charisms in others. The Order will immerse itself in the richness of the historic Church Tradition (with its Creeds and Councils) and the classical texts of the church that embody the time tried contemplative way.

The core of such an order is, of course, as Coleridge so rightly noted, to see the intimate connection between prayer and love and the Divine love for man and bird and beast.

Rule of Life: Five Guiding Principles

- 1) Lectio Divina: personal and communal meditative readings of, primarily, the Bible, and secondarily, the classical texts of the Great Tradition.
- 2) Divine Offices: a commitment to morning, midday and evening prayers as both an external order to orient the inner life and an internalizing of such an external prayer life (ordering of our desires, passions and loves).
- 3) Friendships: a commitment to walk and meet with other men on their faith journey as a means of deepening our life in Christ and within the body of Christ and the world.
- 4) Life in the Church: a commitment to participate in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church as lived through in the seasonal cycle of church life.
- 5) Public Square: work, service, justice, peace and ecological concerns thoughtfully addressed and acted upon.

Needless to say, each person, given their charism, gifts, season of life and varied commitments will find their own level of living out the Rule of Life. The Rule of Life should be as elastic as possible to facilitate the transformative power of the Holy Spirit working in men's lives at a personal, communal and public level.

Founders

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