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Christ through the centuries

Jesus is the Word of God incarnate.

The church is the gospel incarnate: for this reason she is the Bride of Christ.

Many religious orders have flourished through the centuries.

Every family or order is the “incarnation,” so to speak, of an expression of Jesus, of an attitude of his, of an event of his life, of a suffering of his, of a word of his.

There are Franciscans who continue to proclaim to the world through their very existence: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3).

There are the Dominicans who contemplate the Logos, the Word, under the aspect of Light and Truth, and make it their mission to explain and defend that Truth.

Monks have linked work to contemplation (Martha and Mary). The Carmelites adore God on Tabor, ready to come down to preach and face passion and death. Missionaries carry out the command: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19).

Orders, congregations and institutes of charity imitate the Good Samaritan.

Saint Thérèse and the followers of the “little way” take for their motto: “Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:3).

The sisters of Bethlehem, of Nazareth, of Bethany, etc., are concrete expressions of some point in the life of Jesus. St. Catherine of the Blood of Christ, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque of the Sacred Heart, the missionaries and adorers of the Precious Blood devote themselves to meditating on the price of our redemption.

To sum up, the church is Christ majestically unfolding through the centuries.

Just as water is transformed into snow crystals, so in Christ love has assumed its form par excellence, the beauty of beauties. Love has taken on various expressions, which are the religious orders and communities in the church.

In the splendid garden of the Church all the virtues have flowered and still flower. The founders of the religious orders each exemplify a particular virtue; they are all making their way to heaven, transfigured by great love and suffering like a “word of God.”

By fulfilling God’s plan for them they bear out the words: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Mt 24:35).

The saints were and still are like a word that God said to the world and, because they are identified with it, they will not pass away.

All these orders with their particular spiritualities for each time and place find their true meaning and source in Jesus who lives on in his Church throughout all time.

He unites with a single spirit. But it is up to the religious to allow it to be manifested, this harmony, this highest unity in all its fullness, so that the Spouse of Christ may shine in that unique beauty that is “hers” and, to the greatest extent possible, witness to the world her divinity.

So that religious orders may shine with the true spirituality for which they were born and have their reason for existence, their followers must see their founders as God sees them. God sees in St. Francis the idea of poverty, which in God is love; in St. Thérèse the idea of “the little way” which in God is love;

in St. Catherine the blood of Christ which in God is Love.

God loves every order insofar as it reflects his Son, the Idea of himself made human, Love “made flesh.”

The gospel proclaimed by Jesus was good news, Love made word.

For twenty centuries this Love has taken tangible form in his Church, which prolongs the incarnation in a certain sense. The Church has Christ for her head and repeats in a way the incarnation of Christ her spouse.

The best way to serve the Church is to proclaim that Love, especially by putting it into practice and making it circulate among the various religious orders. There will be an order based on meekness, just as there are the Jesuits who emphasize evangelical violence, “acting against.”

Since all the founders acted in various ways but were driven by a single love, in the fulfilment of this love we will rediscover their different supernatural faces and understand their words and their rules.

They are truly holy because their love is not restricted to one particular aspect of the Church; they see the Church and embrace it in its entirety. If they emphasized one aspect, it was because they saw in it an instrument of God for the benefit of the whole.

Just as a pedestrian cannot see a whole city, region or country all at once by walking through the streets and squares and climbing the stairs, but must fly in a plane and see it from above, so the Church and our religious founders cannot be understood and appreciated unless they are viewed from above from Jesus’ perspective or, to put it more concretely, from the viewpoint of our holy father, the vicar of Christ, who is right at the heart of the Bride of Christ, distant from everyone and thus closer to her than anyone else. The

Pope witnesses to the unity of the Church and in his own person reveals the presence of Jesus always in her through the centuries.

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