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Active Life and Contemplative Life: A Study Of The Concepts From Plato To The Present

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Edited and Foreword by George E. Ganse, S.J.

# Editor’s Foreword

This study is being published as one intended frankly and precisely to serve as a basis for further discussion and research. It is **a** monograph which presents a problem and its tentative solution. In its original form it was submitted by Sister Mary Elizabeth Mason, O. S. B. , as the last requirement for her degree of Master of Arts in Latin, with the title: Vita Activa and Vita Contemplativa: their Meaning in the Works of Pope Saint Gregory the Great. However, investigation of this subject soon necessitated a study of the constantly changing concepts evoked by these two terms in writers earlier than Gregory from Plato onward, and in authors after Gregory to our own day. Hence, the present title is more truly descriptive of the contents.

The central problem of the study, briefly stated, is this. Even in scholarly modern reference books authors reveal widespread discrepancy and even confusion in the use of the terms "active life" and "contemplative life." This confusion among the scholars naturally reappears in the opinions of many educated Catholics. They tend almost to equate active life with religious life in an apostolic order, and contemplative life with religious life in a cloistered order; and thus they seem to im ­ply that neither active nor contemplative life pertains to the laity. Often they think that their opinion is based upon St. Thomas' treatment of the two lives in the Summa Theologiae (II -II, 179 -182), because they have heard or read his statement that "the contemplative life is simply more excellent than the active" (Ibid., 182, 1). This study, however, presents indications (gained from exchange of correspondence) that they are inadvertently reading the confused modern meanings back into the terms of St. Thomas and his sources, especially his immediate source, Pope St. Gregory the Great. Sister Elizabeth comes to grips with this problem by making a historical study of the evolution of the concepts which the ancient Christian writers expressed by the terms vita activa and vita contemplativa. Thus it is **a** step toward understanding how the modern discrepancy of terminology arose, and toward finding an antidote for the confusion which it engenders. The slowly changing meaning of the two terms is traced in Plato, Aristotle, Philo, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine, and Gregory. Then follows a study of the use which St. Thomas made of Gregory's concepts and terminology, with some passing treatment of the gradual departure from both Gregory and Thomas in subsequent centuries.

The study presents the following documented but tentative solution of its problem. In Gregory, the terms "active life" and "contem­plative life" do not refer primarily to exterior or observable manners of living, such as those of apostolic religious in contrast to the clois­tered, or of public officials in comparison with scholars. Rather, in their basic and original Christian meanings they designate successive but interacting stages of growth in the interior life of an individual Christian. The active life is the early stage when, in his struggle against vices, the individual is exercising chiefly the moral virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance), and performing the exterior works which spring from them. It comprises the stages which in later centuries were named the "purgative way of the beginners" and "the illuminative way of the advancing." The contemplative life is the higher stage when the seeker of perfection is exercising principally the theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity), especially char­ity, and practicing the works which spring from them. Thus the contemplative- life is what was later named "the unitive way of the perfect" or highly developed Christians. This basic meaning of the two lives in Christian tradition has been overlooked by modern authors of great importance.

In general, the farther removed in time writers were from the intellectual atmosphere of Alexandria and Neo-Platonism, the less were they aware of the original basic meaning of the two lives as successive but interacting stages of growth in the interior life of an individual. Rather, from the time of Augustine until the present, writers and readers alike shifted their attention more and more away from the two lives as states or orientations of soul and toward the exterior or observable manners of living into which the states of soul naturally issue: engagement in affairs, or retirement for contemplation, or some mixture of both. In St. Thomas Aquinas the basis of dividing an individual's interior life into active and contemplative shifted from that bequeathed by the Alexandrians (stages of growth) to an Aristo­telian one (the respective ends of the practical and speculative intellects) and the dominant inclination (studium) of an individual toward either of these ends.

Sister Elizabeth's study has clearly set up the problem and taken substantial steps toward its solution. However, it also reveals the desirability of much further work, including ramifications into many areas of ascetical and mystical theology. This work of perfecting can be accomplished better and faster through discussion by many persons than by one working alone. It will be a benefit for scholarship if the present study stimulates someone to work through the entire Gregor­ian corpus to establish fully and systematically all the shades of meaning which St. Gregory expressed by the still oscillating terms vita activa and vita contemplativa. A systematic study of the further changes from his time to the present would be a further help.

To facilitate such cooperative discussion is the reason why the present writer, after counsel from others who kindly read Sister Eliz­abeth's study in its original form, has urged her to publish it in its present form: that of a monograph which will attract attention to the problem and facilitate discussion and research about it. Although a Doctor's dissertation is expected actually to make a contribution to knowledge, it is sufficient for a Master's thesis to show possession of the skills required to make such a contribution. Even if Sister Eliza­beth's study does not yet have the final perfection which would be ex­pected in a doctoral dissertation, it has gone beyond most Masters' theses. Her desire would be to have abundant leisure in a well -stocked library in order to pursue her topic further. But she is now the busy principal of a high school. If and when she has an opportunity for re­search at some future date, she will be able to accomplish more if others have meanwhile proffered their comments and discoveries.

Both she and the present writer feel profound gratitude to the following persons who kindly read the work and encouraged us to make it available for the discussion of others: the Rev. Bernard J. Cooke, S .J., and the Rev. Robert G. Gassert, S .J., of the Department of The­ology, Marquette University; the Rev. Roland F. Behrendt, O.S.B., of the Department of Modern Languages, St. John's University, College­ville, Minnesota, and Chairman (1957-1959) of the Section of Language and Literature of the American Benedictine Academy; the Rev. Paulin Sleeker, 0 .S .B., also of St. John's University; the Rev. Gerard L. Ellspermann, 0 . S . B. , of the Department of Latin, St. Meinrad' s Seminary, St. Meinrad, Indiana; the Rev. Michael J. Marx, 0. S . B. , of the Department of Dogmatic Theology, St. John's University; and the Rev. Leo A. Arnoult, 0. P., Professor of Moral Theology in the School of Sacred Theology, St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, who made penetrating and helpful comments on the chapter about St. Thomas.

All these gave much constructive criticism. In the work of revising the mansucript for the press, which circumstances brought to me as the director of the thesis, I have gratefully incorporated into the text as many as possible of their suggestions. Leads which they furnished also brought some further thoughts of my own which I in-· eluded. Examples are these: in Chapter Ill, some remarks about Ori­gen, and in Chapter V, pp. 60-62, the distinction (implicit in Augus­tine's treatment) between the moral or theological virtues and the ex - terior or observable actions which respectively spring from them; also, the application of that distinction in Chapters V and VI, and to the norms and counsels for choosing a vocation which are given in the concluding Chapter VII; and extensive revisions of Chapter VI on St. Thomas. All these changes were submitted to Sister Elizabeth who revised them, approved them, and made them her own. Her thesis in its original form is available in the Library of Marquette University. It seems wise to mention several avenues which promise much fruit in further investigations. The Rev. Roland F. Behrendt, O.S.B., has called attention to a probable relationship between (a) vita activa and vita contemplativa as these terms were understood in St. Greg­ory's day and (b) the conversatio morum as one of the three Benedic­tine vows according to Chapter lviii of the Holy Rule of St. Benedict. By the time of Paul the Deacon in the late eighth century this term had become, through the evolution of Latin or possibly an error of copy­ists, conversio morum, which has often been translated "conversion of life." This, if accepted, would be a new and quite different meaning, and one for which no certain passages can be found in monastic writ­ings of the ·earlier patristic era. Conversatio means, as in various chapters of the Holy Rule (for example Chapter lxxiii), the entire "mo­nastic manner of living" which leads ad celsitudinem perfectionis. This would seem to entail the novice's firm proposal to try to progress through both the stages of spiritual growth which St. Gregory called active and contemplative life. Abbot Ildefons Herwegen has already pointed out (1) stages which St. Benedict's Holy. Rule indicates for such a progression.

The Rev. Michael J. Marx, O.S.B., has rightly pointed out that the basic meanings of "active" and "contemplative life" treated in Sister Elizabeth's study have important and encouraging implica­tions which will be helpful in developing the theology of the spiritual life for the laity, for the diocesan clergy, and for religious in the apostolic orders which are so common in the modern Church. Lastly the present writer sees a possible implication of importance for Jesu­it spirituality. Today, many Jesuit writers are rightly bestowing much study upon the phrase by which Father Jerome Nadal, S.J., describ-ed his esteemed companion, St. Ignatius of Loyola: contemplativus in actione. This inspiring phrase can become still more significant if we learn with greater precision what Father Nadal meant by his two terms, contemplativus and actio.

George E. Ganss, S.J.

Chairman, Department of Classics Marquette University

February 2, 1960

# Author’s Preface

The writer is most grateful to her Prioress and the other Bene­dictine Sisters of Annunciation Priory, Bismarck, North Dakota, for the opportunity of graduate study at Marquette University. She also wishes to thank the Rev. George E. Ganss, S .J., her thesis director, for suggesting the topic, helping her in its development, and finally, editing it for publication. She is grateful, too, to the other members of the thesis committee, the Rev. Richard E. Arnold, S. J., and the Rev. Claude H. Heithaus, S.J.

She deeply appreciates the kindness of the Benedictines of St. Meinrad 's Archabbey and of Assumption Abbey, and of the Dominicans of River Forest, Ill., who graciously lent materials from their librar­ies. A number of friends and acquaintances were of help because of their interest in the topic and their willingness to express themselves on it.

For every one of these, her prayer is: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the imparting of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen." (2 Cor. 13, 13.)

Sister Mary Elizabeth Mason, O.S.B. Annunciation Priory

Bismarck, North Dakota

December 25, 1958

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## A Statement of the Problem

For centuries men in their love for classifying have divided their fellows according as these lived an active life or a contempla­tive one. In our modern times, when the average educated Catholic hears the term "active life" (vita activa), he thinks, as some exper­ience has shown, of the social or observable manner of living by religious men or women such as Maryknoll Sisters, devoting much of their day to apostolic activity in teaching, nursing, and social work. When he hears the term "contemplative life" (vita contempla­􀀙), he thinks of the social manner of living of cloistered religious such as Carmelites and Trappistines, wherein the whole day is given as far as possible to prayer or spiritual reading.

This use of the ancient terms to classify religious orders or institutes according to the chief occupations of their members did not exist irfthe time of Pope St. Gregory the Great (540-604); and it was only beginning to appear in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

It is well known that there has been evolution in the exterior or observable forms of religious life -- for ex.ample, from the consecra­ted virgins living within their families, to the hermits, to the ceno­bites, to those in apostolic orders. In this evolution the law of strict enclosure for religious women dates only from the Constitution "Peri­culoso" of Boniface VIII in 1298. Hence, if Catholics having such com - paratively modern concepts read the works of Gregory, who uses the classlc terms in a different sense, there is a danger. Without any suspicion of error the modern readers may read their meanings into St. Gregory's terms, and consequently fail to grasp his meaning ac­curately. They may easily do the same when they read the treatises (1)De Vita Contemplativa and De Vita Activa of St. Thomas Aquinas,

"Active order," then, is merely a theoretical term and not a reality, according to Van Acken. But we find a conflicting opinion elsewhere. The 1955 National Catholic Almanac, for instance, states:

The various religious groups or families have particular aims of their own which divide them into contemplative, active, and mixed societies. The contemplative are those which devote themselves to union with God by prayer and penance in a life of solitude and retirement; the active, those which expend their energy in serving mankind according to the corporal works of mercy. If their service is mainly in accordance with the spiritual works of mercy, requiring contemplation for its attainment, they are called mixed. (6)

As to the relationship existing among the three --if there are three rather than two --we may next turn to The Catholic Concise Encylopedia, which is quite definite about one form of life, although it has no entry for either of the others.

Contemplative life, an austere religious life adapted to foster contemplation as in a contemplative order. In the religious life it is the highest form, for not only does it encourage the members to seek union with God through love, but by seclusion and freedom from the worldly spirit, the objective worship of God is perfected. (7)

In this treatment, contemplative life and life in a contemplative order seem to be identified.

In at least partial agreement with the above explanation is another from an earlier and more authoritative work, published under the aegis of The Catholic Encyclopedia as The New Catholic Dictionary. (8) The following description of what it terms "contemplative life" seems to suggest that it is the only opposite of active life, disregarding the mixed altogether; yet its definition of the contemplative's "twofold ministry" might well fit the Almanac's definition of "mixed society." Explaining that the contemplative is "a way of living especially adapted to induce and facilitate contemplation" by union with God in loving worship and love of neighbor shown chiefly "by means of prayer for suffering humanity and by penance as an atonement for sinners, " the Dictionary article continues:

Those who practise this twofold ministry have greater merit, theoretically, than those in active orders, but the individual vocation in all cases must be considered. Undoubtedly the contemplative life presupposes a remarkable vocation. (9)

If it becomes increasingly difficult to decide what authorities mean as to the nature and the number of kinds of religious life, the task is even more complex when we come to another reference work, this one from Britain. Donald Attwater, editor of ACatholic Dictionary, names three sorts of life, but cites different characteristics from those found in the American Franciscans' Almanac. Moreover, he is unlike the two last-quoted sources as to the relative excellence of these ways of life.

Active Orders. These religious orders and congregations of men and women whose daily labours are the works of active charity, whether spiritual (preaching, hearing confessions, giving retreats, the cure of souls generally) or temporal (the care of the sick, schooling children, bringing up orphans ... ). (10)

Contemplative Order. A religious order whose members are engaged in the objective worship of God to such a degree as to exclude the external works of the active life ... and all else that could be a hindrance to divine contemplation .... What exactly constitutes the contemplative life is a matter of some dispute, but even in the above strict sense certain monasteries of Benedictine monks and most of Benedictine nuns, must be called contemplative .... (11)

Mixed Life. The highest form of the Spiritual life in which the active life is superadded to the contemplative.(12)

Among them, these definitions do not merely treat of active, contemplative, and mixed religious institutes; they employ virtually as synonyms, the terms "active," "contemplative," and "mixed" life.

As a consequence, the above definitions and distinctions may bewilder the reader more than ever. For they clearly reveal the existence of inconsistent and confusing terminology in this field. Furthermore, Attwater states a point which has been merely suggested thus far: "The phrase 'active life' is generally used in antithesis to 'contemplative life.'" (13) At this, one may have reason to wonder how the pair together constitute the mixed life --how, of two things held "generally in antithesis," one can be "superadded" to the other.

A French authority, A. Bride, writing on "Divisions of Religious" in Le Dictionnaire de theologie catholiq~, (14) accepts the threefold classification of religious institutes as existent. He ob:. serves that among recently founded orders, the mixed are most numerous; moreover, he states that some which were once contemplative have become mixed, as their members, who were at first laymonks, came to be ordained and to take up the care of souls. His article takes cognizance of military orders now obsolete, yet, oddly enough, omits any classification of women religious. Bride emphatically disapproves of attempts to oppose active and contemplative life:

... This division into contemplative and active orders must not lead to the belief that there is watertight separation between these two types of life; as St. Thomas notes, contemplative life must lead to action directly or indirectly; and action, if it wants to avoid sterility, must depend upon contempla­tion. (15)

Additional emphasis on this point of reconciling the apparent opposites is given elsewhere in the same work: "It is not rare to meet in certain books of spirituality a parallel established between contemplation and action, and certain rules concerning the proportions in which there must be union of these two seemingly opposite things." (16)

Another and more recent French reference work, Catholicisme, briefly treats the history of the terms "active" and "contemplative" life in Christian usage, and indicates that the writings of Gregory the Great are of value, in that his exposition of the nature and relationship of the two lives was profoundly influential in the Western Church for centuries. (17) St. Gregory, to be sure, was not herein an originator. His position is well explained by Abbot Cuthbert Butler, whose Western Mysticism has sometimes been called a classic dealing with "The Teaching of Saints Augustine, Gregory and Bernard on Contem -plation and the Contemplative Life" (the book's subtitle).

Of St. Gregory, Abbot Butler writes:

... Along with St. Augustine and pseudo-Dionysius, he was St. Thomas' principal authority over the range of subjects comprised under contemplation and contemplative life ....

It will be found that in his teaching ... St. Gregory stands where we should expect the Roman to stand, midway between St. Augustine and St. Bernard --less intellectual than St. Augustine, less emotional than St. Bernard. But if he falls short of the elevation of the former and of the unction of the latter, he has a value all his own for his Roman actuality and practicality. (18)

Later, in regard to the Saint's presentation of the two lives, Abbot Butler states: " His indebtedness to St. Augustine ls much more apparent here; ... but his teaching ... is characterized by a practicality and good sense ... that makes it a truly valuable guide for the shaping of life." (19) Moreover, Gregory could draw not only upon his own understanding of the spiritual life, of which he had been a zealous practitioner for years, but also on his grace of state as teacher of monks, and later, of the Church Universal. In one of his Homilies on Ezechiel (20) we find the first formal definition of the two lives, active and contemplative. This has ever since been accepted as a standard one. (21) Since it is rather lengthy, it is not given here, but will be found below on page 59.

Investigation of the sources reveals that Pope Gregory I not only crystallized Christian thought regarding active and contemplative life for his own and succeeding ages, but also profoundly influenced what the Angelic Doctor wrote on this matter. Hence it is apparent that Gregory the Great is one key figure in any study of the two lives and their relationship. He rightly merits a place of special honor in this study.

## A Note on the Senses of "Contemplative"

"Contemplative, " as was stated on page 1, is today often applied to the social or observable way of living characteristic of certain cloistered religious. Besides being used thus to describe a form or state of life based on evangelical counsels in an institute secluded from the world's activity, the word "contemplative" is employed to designate a person in that state. It may also be used of an attitude of mind (22) and a form of prayer.(23)

Now, while recognizing that the person, the social or observable manner of life, the attitude of mind, and the prayer are not stringently isolated --since union with God is their unique end --this work will try especially to find the ancient meaning of the term vita contemplativa, which it possessed in St. Gregory's day. At that time there did not exist such sharply distinct forms of religious living (social modes of life) as the apostolic and the cloistered institutes known today, nor even as the monastic and mendicant orders known to St. Thomas six centuries after St. Gregory.

Consequently, while the Angelic Doctor might find it expedient to distinguish groups of religious according to their social manner of life and their secondary ends, (24) this is not true of Gregory. He was not concerned with any special divisions of social forms of the religious state labeled "contemplative," such as today's cloistered communities. (25)

While prescinding, therefore, from extensive research into comparatively recent concepts concerning the contemplative state and the nature of contemplative prayer, we are here examining that life known as contemplative in its constituent elements and its relationship to the active life, as St. Gregory the Great understood these terms. We begin with the etymology of both, to be followed by study of the connotations they acquired in writings prior to those of the saintly Pope.

# Chapter 2: The Terms in Pre-Christian Times

## Etymology and Evolving Definitions of the Adjectives Contemplativus and Activus

The Greek adjective *θεωρητικός* which came to be contemplativus or peculativus in Latin, derives from the Greek *θεωρία,* a beholding. An idea of vision, seeing, is suggested in both languages, and most scholars agree that the Greek is a composite of two roots, θέαand ϝορ*(όράω*), which imply not only sight but also observing and surveying. (1)

The idea of connecting the word with *θεός* (god), was advanced by the Peripatetics, but this cannot be defended on etymological grounds because of the dialectal variations in which the word is found; nevertheless, we have evidence that θεωρός (one who views) and its composites early acquired such religious connotations. (2) This is the easier to understand because we know that sages like Anaxagoras, who devoted himself to scientific observation and philosophical contemplation, might be regarded as considering *θεῑα* (divine and celestial things), since material concepts of the divine were common. (3) Moreover, θεωρός in the sense of one who went to observe a religious rite, came to be considered as approaching divinity and rejoicing with a god. (4)

It is surely no coincidence that just as philosophers were originally interested in physics, and only later in metaphysics, when their quest for ultimate causes had led them to study concepts rather than matter, so too θεωρία underwent a similar metamorphosis. "Thus, in the beginning θεωρία. designates a model of sociability; in the end. a sort of recluse. "(5) This last meaning the word was to acquire thanks to Plato, of whom Festugiere says, "It is certain that our idea of contemplative life dates only from the Dialo􀄦, which are conse -quently a starting point." (6) Yet Plato's work was in another sense a culmination, for by his time θεωρία. had evolved from meaning the sage's view of the wonders of nature and of man's city; it had become the seer's loving vision of Divine, Invisible Beauty. (7)

The Greek equivalent for activus is πρακτικόςwhich means "fit for doing, concerned with action, practical." In the writings of Aristotle there is occasional use of this term in contrast to

θεωρητικός (8) earlier writers, including Plato, of course, were familiar with both terms. It would be a mistake, however, to hold that the two ideas were really opposed. Knowledge, learning, and every sort of skill were generally for the sake of action; in the writings of Homer, Pindar, and Euripides we see heroes courageous in act, not dreamy theorists.

Among the Greeks there was prevalent the idea that in the meas­ure men used their intellectual gifts for proper conduct, they were truly wise and could profit others by good counsel (such as Nestor gave) or by cunning stratagems (such as Ulysses devised). Moreover, the vulgar Greek attitude toward a mere thinker was one of suspicious contempt, as anyone who has read Aristophanes' Clouds is well aware. Scholars may not agree as to which learned man is there satirized, but none doubts that the comedy reveals how the majority of the Greek people saw ln the σοφός a figure of mockery as well as a traitor to his country's gods.

## The Contributions of Plato and Aristotle

It was, as we have seen above, Plato (d. 347 B.C.) who gave to βίος θεωρητικός. its place of honor, showing how it could be united to the life of the good citizen which was the ideal of all Greeks. For them the truly best life was not termed πρακτικός but πολιτικός, for the most admirable men were those bringing glory to their city by athletic prowess, military victory, and skillful administration. One can best judge how much Plato's emphasis on the value of a life de­voted to contemplation went counter to his contemporaries' thought by seeing the vehemence with which he upholds it in The Republic. It would seem natural to find him anticipating numerous objections to his suggestions regarding women soldiers, communal wives, and state nurseries; but instead, he expected the greatest wave of disap­proval to be launched against the Philosopher King. (9)

Gifted thinker that he was, Plato saw more clearly than his pre­decessors and most other men since, that contemplation is knowledge of the Good Itself, the Supreme Being, rather than of anything less; and he understood that this Object of knowledge must be grasped by some sort of spiritual contact immediately uniting the knower and the Known. The means of achieving this must be a habitual mode of existence, a life properly so called, which alone could lead to such θεωρία. The encounters of human intellect and Pure Being would be by dint of long ascesis and mental discipline. Only in seclusion and at the mature age of fifty or fifty-five, could such concentration occur and be perfected in loving union with the Supreme Good; but Plato was too much a Greek to end here. (10)

The central problem of The Re2ublic is to fit the philosopher into the city. The reason is that in Plato's time a truly 'just' life still cannot be lived apart from the city. Individual and social justice are closely connected. Pure contemplation is not currently acceptable. The contemplative returns to the cave for the salvation of his brothers. And the purpose of the Aca -demy is precisely to form such contemplatives as are capable of serving, and preserving, the city. Perhaps it was not without some regret that, having tasted its joys, Plato renounced pure θεωίρα… [Neverthless) for Plato the contemplative life, properly understood, remains always that life most useful to the city. (11)

It will be needful to return to Plato in order to summarize his legacy to that greatest of Christian Platonists, or at least Neo-Platonists, St. Augustine; but another matter that merits mention concerns his classification of men according to their way of life. It is the opinion of Burnet (12) that two related doctrines commonly attributed to Plato are really of much earlier origin. One of these is the doctrine of the tripartite soul; (13) the other is the classic division of three lives-Theoretic (truth-seekers who merely observe), Practical (action-seekers who compete for honors), and Apolaustic (pleasure-seekets who trade for gain). (14)

# Notes

## Foreward

(1) In some lecture notes written by one of·his students which were kindly shown to me. They were based, it seems, on his Alte Quellen Neuer Kraft. Further leads on this problem will be found (by means of the index s. v. conversatio) in The Rule of Saint Benedict in Latin and English, ed. and trans. by Abbot Justin Mccann (Westminster: Newman, 1952), and in the same author's Saint Benedict, the Story of the Man and His Work (Garden City: Doubleday Image Books, 1958). Also, see the footnotes in the edition of 1937 (Sheed and Ward) of Chapter xi, "The Life of the Rule."

## Chapter 1

(1)Summa Theolog!ae,IIa-IIae, q. 179-182.

(6) Felician A. Foy, O.F.M., (ed.), The 1955 National Catholic Almanac (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony's Guild, 1955), p. 303. It should be noted, however, that in the 195 7 edition there was a significant change in the definition of active and mixed communities: both were said to be "devoted to works among men, although elements of the contemplative life are also found among them," p. 432.

A sister who read the 1955 volume asked: "Does this mean that the members of our institute who nurse are in the active life, but the teachers are in the mixed life? And where are those who teach in schools of nursing?"

(7) Robert C. Broderick, (ed.), The Catholic Concise Encyclopedia (St. Paul: Catechetical Guild Educational Society, 1957), p. llO. (Emphasis supplied.)

(8) Conde B. PallenandJohnJ. Wynne, S.J., (eds.), The New Catholic Dictionary (New York: Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1929).

(9) Ibid., pp. 252-53. (Emphasis supplied.)

(10) Donald Attwater, (ed.), A Catholic Dictionary (The Catho~Y.clopediae Dictionary), (2d ed. rev; New York: Macmillan, 1949).

(11) Ibid., p. 120.

(12) Ibid., p. 327 (Emphasis supplied.)

(13) Ibid., p. 7.

(14) "Religieux et religieuses: Divisions des religieux, 11 Dictionnaire de theologie catholique, XIII, Part II (1937), 2169.

(15) " ... Cette division en ordres contemplatifs et actifs ne doit pas faire croire qu'il ya entre ces deux genres de vie une cloison etanche; ainsi que le remarque saint Thomas, la vie contemplative doit directement ou indirectment conduire a I 'action et l 'action, si elle veut n'etre point sterile, doit s'appuyer sur la contemplation," ibid., loc. cit. (Cf. Sum. Theol. Ila-Hae, q. 180; 181; 182, I; q. 188, 6.) It is noteworthy that Bride here uses the terms "ordres contem -platifs et actifs" and "ces deux genres de vie" as synonyms.

(16) "11 n'est pas rare de rencontrer dans livres de spiritualite un par allele etabli entre la contemplation et l 'action, et certaines regles concernant les proportions dans lesquelles doit s'operer l 'allia:nce de ces deux choses en apparence si opposees," P. Lejeune, "Contemplation," Dictionnaire de theologie catholig~. II, Part II (1923), 1616.

(17) Roger Gazeau, 0 .S. B., "Contemplatifs," Catholicisme hier, fil!jourd'hui, demain, III (1953), 134.

(18) Western Mysticism (2d. ed.; London: Constable, 1926), pp. 65-66.

(19)Ibid., p.171.

(20) Hom. on Ezech., II, ii, in Migne, Patrologia Latina (henceforth abbreviated PL) 76, 953. This homily is referred to as Hom. in Ezech., xiv in many editions of the Summa Theolog!ae.

(21) Butler, loc. cit., calls it "the classical and standard definition" (emphasis supplied); this will strike many as too strong, in view of the present divergency of opinion.

(22) F. Cayre observes that for ancient writers it is particularly true that the formulas "active life" and "contemplative life" really "designated not states of life characterized by differences chiefly exterior, but states of soul characterized by the predominance of some particular moral or spiritual interest (studium). -Chez les anciens, en effet, ces formules ne designaient pas des etats de vie caracterises par des differences surtout exterieures, mais plutot des etats d'ime caracterises par la predominance de telle OU telle preoccupation (studium) morale ou spirituelle," La Contemplation augystinienne; Principes de la spiritualite de saint Augustin; Essai d'analyse et de s~these (Paris: Andre Blot, 1927), pp. 320-21. This matter, treated by Cayre in his analysis of Saint Thomas, will receive more attention below in Chapter VI, pp. 78-108, which discusses St. Thomas' exposition of the two lives.

(23) Moreover, the prayer itself may be of various sorts, ranging all the way from discursive meditation to the highest earthly counterpart of the Beatific Vision. There is at present much debate among theologians as to the nature of infused contemplation, and whether all baptized persons are remotely called to it; but this does not concern us here.

(24) Sum. Theol. lla-Uae, q. 188.

(25) It seems entirely possible that much of the current uncertainty regarding the word "contemplative" grows out of a tendency to make it synonymous with "cloistered." In the words of a gifted con -vert of our era, Dr. John C. H. Wu: " ... We must not confuse the contemplative state with the contemplative life. Those who are living in the cloister are in the contemplative state --this is, in the environment most conducive to the contemplative life. In fact, the active life of the cloistered can be just as intense as that of anyone outside." The Interior Carmel: The Threefold Way\_ of Love (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1953), p. 100. The clarity of the distinctions made here seems the more remarkable in view of others' vagueness.

## Chapter 2

## Chapter 3

## Chapter 4

## Chapter 5

## Chapter 6

## Chapter 7