

Basil Cardinal Hume, O.S.B., *In Praise of Benedict*

p. 63 [addressed to monks]

The more we try to see the world as God sees it, the clearer will be our understanding of it, and the ways in which we can contribute to resolving its problems will be shown to us. There will be some moments when important decisions must be taken, when we shall have to answer a particular call from the Church, prompted by the Holy Spirit at work in the community. There will be many other moments when we shall need faith to see and understand that the model or prototype of monastic living is not only the early Christian communities as described in the Acts of the Apostles, but also that hidden life of Jesus Christ at Nazareth. There was not much to show for those first thirty years, but were they not supremely precious in the eyes of the Father? Did they not, in ways we cannot measure, contribute to the welfare of a world which knew only contempt for the place chosen by the Lord for His home? The doing of ordinary things, day in and day out, out of love for God, is extraordinarily important. Our [religious'] understanding of that, and our doing of it, can be a great encouragement and example to those thousands of persons [laity] whose lives are ordinary in the eyes of men, but are so valuable in the sight of God. This is the value of daily work.

p. 74–75 [addressed to laity]

Let us think about work first. By work I mean the activities of each day, either carried on outside the home in our place of employment, or done at home. Even when, sadly, there is no work available for us—and what a tragedy that is—nevertheless there are still things that we do, either to improve the home, or just to keep ourselves busy. We need to understand that everything we do is precious in the eyes of God, that is everything except sin. All that Our Lord did at Nazareth, in what we call His hidden life, pleased and delighted His Father. Why? Because Our Lord loved His Father. It was not so much what He actually did, but the loving heart with which He did it that mattered. So it is with us: if we are trying to love God, then all that we do pleases our Father. Everything becomes an act of love.

How do we try to love God? Where do we start? This is the importance of prayer. [...]