

# Walking

Walking -- how many people know how to walk? It is not hurrying along at a kind of run, or shuffling along at a snail's pace, but a composed and firm forward movement. There is spring in the tread of a good walker. He lifts, not drags, his heels. He is straight, not stoop-shouldered, and his steps are sure and even.

There is something uncommonly fine in the right kind of walking. It is a combination of freedom and discipline. It is poised, as if the walker were carrying a weight, yet proceeds with unhampered energy. In a man's walk there is a suggestion of bearing arms or burdens; in a woman's an attractive grace that reflects an inner world of peace.

And when the occasion is religious, what a beautiful thing walking can be! It is a genuine act of divine worship. Merely to walk into a church in reverent awareness that we are entering the house of the Most High, and in a special manner into his presence, may be "to walk before the Lord." Walking in a religious procession ought not to be what so often it is, pushing along out of step and staring about. To escort the Blessed Sacrament through the city streets, or through the fields, "his own possession," the men marching like soldiers, the married women in the dignity of motherhood, the young girls in the innocent charm of youth, the young men in their restrained strength, all praying in their hearts, should be a sight of festive gladness.

A penitential procession should be supplication in visible form. It should embody our guilt, and our desperate need of help, but also the Christian assurance that overrules them,--that as in man there is a power that is superior to all his other powers, the power of his untroubled will, so, above and beyond human guilt and distress there is the might of the living God.

Walking is the outward mark of man's essential and peculiar nobility. It is the privilege of man alone to walk erect, his movement in his own power and choice. The upright carriage denotes the human being.

But we are more than human beings. We are, as the Bible calls us, the generation of God. We have been born of God into newness of life. Profoundly, through the Sacrament of the Altar, Christ lives in us; his body has passed into the substance of our bodies; his blood flows in our veins. For "he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him." These are his words. Christ grows in us, and we grow in him, until being thoroughly formed by him, we attain to the full stature of Jesus Christ, and everything we do or are, "whether we eat or sleep, or whatsoever we do," our work, our recreation, our pleasures and our pains, are all taken up into the Christ-life.

The consciousness of this mystery should pass in all its joyous strength and beauty into our very manner of walking. The command "to walk before the Lord and be perfect" is a profound figure of speech. We ought both to fulfil the command and illustrate the figure.

But in sober reality. Beauty of this order is not the product of mere wishing.