

10. PRESERVING ZEAL



If one has all this in mind, having the possibility of constant spiritual nourishment, then one must say that it is not true that the whole church situation is hopeless today and that one can do nothing. In fact, the possible activities for today are quite surprising and unexpected. What might come out, we don't know, but there are all kinds of possibilities. We should always learn to expect what is the unexpected, to be prepared for something that might not have been the same way just a little while ago, but that is still within the possibility of true Christianity. This is only done by looking up and not down. We have right in front of us an example of somebody who was like that constantly, and that's our Archbishop John. It is obvious that he was constantly in a different world. He himself, I recall once, gave a sermon on the spiritual life, the mystical life, in which he said: "We have no such thing as some of the later saints of the Latin Church who were sort of up in the clouds—some kind of a realm of sweetness and light and pink clouds—that's prelest. All of our sanctity is based upon having your feet straight on the ground, and, while being of the earth, constantly having the mind lifted upward." [Next...](#) It's obvious that Archbishop John was himself like that. He would come from time to time to our shop next to the Cathedral [in San Francisco], and would always have something new and inspiring to say. He would come with a little portfolio, and would open it up and say, "Look! Here is a picture of St. Alban and here is his Life." He had found it somewhere. He was collecting these things: the lives of Rumanian saints and all kinds of different things which were very inspiring and had nothing to do with everyday business or the administration of the diocese. In fact, some said he was a bad administrator, but I don't know.

I doubt it, because I know that whenever anyone wrote him a letter, that person always got a reply back in the language he wrote it in, within a very short time; therefore, when it came to things like that, he was very, very careful. But the first thing he was careful about was being constantly in the other world, constantly inspired and constantly living by that. The opposite of this is to make even the Church into some kind of business, to be looking at only the administrative side or the economic side or the lower, worldly side. If you do that long enough, you will lose the spark, you will lose the higher side. Archbishop John gave us the example of constantly looking up, constantly thinking of the higher things. In the end, the deeper you get into this, the more you see that there is nothing else possible. If you are an Orthodox Christian, you can do this and have people call you crazy or say that you are a little bit touched, or something like that; but still you have your own life—you lead it and you get to heaven. The alternative is to be bogged down in this boring world, which is totally overrun by machines and conveniences and opinions. You would be surprised at how these, opinions about what is right and what is wrong, what is the way to act and so forth, have no contact with reality. It even happens that there is a certain opinion in the air—I'd say it is universal among church people if they ever stopped to think about it—that of course, when you come to church you must be warm, because you cannot think about church services and prepare yourself for Communion when you have to think about cold feet. People tell us this. "It's a very great draw back," they say. "You cannot go and have cold feet and expect to have any spirituality come out." This happens to be an opinion, and it's totally off. The Holy Fathers have been living throughout the

10. In Step With Sts. Patrick and Gregory of Tours

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centuries in all kinds of conditions; and, though there is no deliberate plot of torturing oneself with cold feet—still, this is something which helps to make one a little more sober about the spiritual life, perhaps to help one to appreciate what one has, and not to just take for granted that one is going to be comfortable and cozy and that's it. In our time, if one undertakes anything in the Church, and does not have in mind to be looking constantly to the heavenly realm, one will lose the spark of zeal, the interest in doing spiritual things, and will become worldly. Worldly means dead, spiritually dead.