

The monastic life will, in any case, take seriously its own basic contemplative character, and not overtax that tired cliché, 'My work is my prayer'.

What are the monasteries doing to contribute to the work of their own renewal? In the spirit of the Council, monks are discussing more or less freely and more or less fully, their needs and their obligations, while putting into effect the new liturgical constitution, which will by itself undoubtedly have a considerable effect on monastic renewal. In some monastic communities, such as St John's, Minnesota, all the members are articulately involved in the discussion and planning. In others, the discussion is carried on among the officers. In one South American abbey, when the novice master went to the abbot with a few discrete suggestions about monastic renewal, he was told to mind his own business. The idea that renewal comes only from the top down is not exactly dead!

Since, in America, we are eminently practical, the nature of the discussions is practical before all else, and much time has been spent on the question of recruiting, screening and training candidates. This is certainly useful, but one feels that there are other more basic considerations, and these have been perhaps left aside for the moment precisely because, being more basic, they are also more difficult.

The root difficulty however remains this: that renewal of the monastic life demands a knowledge and understanding of little known primitive sources as well as an ingenious and creative awareness of the Church's new needs. The danger is that since monastic tradition has been so often identified with *medieval* monastic tradition, and since even this tradition is poorly understood at least in America, the work of renewal might remain sadly superficial. Here above all, then, we must clearly realize the necessity of patient inquiry, tactful and charitable progress, sound theology, and above all, a sense of history.

CORRECTION

The editor apologizes for the description of Thomas Merton's *The Night Spirit and the Dawn Air* as being 'Extracts from an unpublished Journal'. The editor greatly regrets that he imposed so misleading a description on these extracts from a forthcoming book, which Thomas Merton has generously allowed NEW BLACKFRIARS to publish.