

Editorial

We have often been warned that the renewal of theology and liturgy that we are witnessing, splendid as it is, will be of little ultimate value if we do not succeed in showing people its relevance to their lives. The Holy Spirit has been sent into this world by our risen Lord in order to join us to him in the glory of heaven; but just what is that going to mean in the back-streets of our cities or the isolation of our suburban housing-estates? We love Christ our Lord in building-up the community of our fellow-men in love; all sin can be understood as disruption of the network of personal relationship; but can that be adequately put across to a class by a weary teacher anxious only to keep some discipline and survive the visit of the Inspectors? The problem is to create a context, or rather many contexts, for we live at once in many different cultural environments, which will immediately show itself as Christian. The liturgy is one such area, which is why its renewal as a living force is no mere option; the world of school could be another, where we need to question whether it is not possible to lay too much stress on the mere fact of Catholic education without regard to the quality of what is given; the world of work is yet another. Can Christians see their spiritual life, their risen life in God's kingdom, as made visible in the first place by their everyday job? If not, something seems to have gone gravely wrong with the priorities; we cannot be Christian just at the week-end.

In the article below, dealing with the job of the professional social worker in the modern welfare state, we can recognize, though no overt reference is made, an account of Christian spiritual life, Christian simply through faithfulness to professional standards. The application to our own work is surely possible to make. Another example is given in the book reviewed elsewhere in this issue, Fr Foster's *Requiem for a Parish*, where we can see how the parish priest finds his spiritual life precisely in work for the people whom God has put in his care. The main source of his own holiness will be the many activities, routine and dull as they often are, which his parish requires of him. In giving himself to the utmost, and what is perhaps more difficult, learning how much his people can in turn give him, a personal relationship will grow up between them through which each grows daily closer to our Lord, for 'as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me'.