

a higher character and value. Otherwise daily work will be purely natural and pagan; the real strength that is to be found in all work done by a man who is living with God will not be in it.

From Christ's redemptive work flows our whole knowledge of grace and of God's share in man's activity. It is necessary to keep it before the mind's eye in every sort of work, if that work is to acquire depth and to have a sure foundation. In every kind of work there must be a drawing on Christ: "In Him is life" (cf. John 1:4). To manifest Him can be both our natural and our supernatural work. Without either one or the other there is no really fruitful work.

From this follows the second law.

Works of the spirit must come before other works



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We have in mind the spirituality of our external work, the primacy of the spirit over action and over matter.

This is an extremely important command, especially today. Indeed, we talk a great deal about social-religious work and often forget that it is impossible to "help God" in the regeneration of the world without first calling on His help. For there is no shortage of people of good will, animated by the love of God and the Church and by concern for the kingdom of God on earth, who want to renew the world but are themselves old and dead in spirit.

There is no shortage of religious workers who feel Martha's anxiety about the fate of God in the world, but who forget about the fate of God in their own souls. We can at times be

struck down by this illness, this illusion, when we show great zeal over our everyday work, losing the consciousness that the "works of the spirit" ought to take precedence over the other means of action available to us.

For is it not a question of the whole spirituality of our exterior work, that it should not be understood in a wholly material sense? And especially that the work undertaken in the field of religion for the glory of God, should not be infected with the world? The danger of such infection threatens when we have used all the means available but have forgotten that we cannot help God without God's own help, that we cannot conduct any activity unless there is a link with Him Who is the source of all strength.

"It is the spirit that quickens, the body adds nothing" (John 6:64). Every work must have some element of the spirit in it. The body is dead matter if the spirit does not breathe power into human muscles. "Only those who welcomed Him, He empowered to become the children of God, all those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

And so in all our work, even our physical work, the Holy Spirit must reign. For it is He who will stimulate us to action and give to our work a new force and meaning. And only then shall we realize "that it was through Him that all things came into being, and without Him came nothing that has come to be" (John 1:3).

This is the "law of spirituality" of human work. The third law comes directly from it.

Work's external fruits depend on interior life

Here, of course, we have in mind work that is Christian in the full meaning of that word: work, namely, that achieves all the goals appointed to human work by God.

In order to achieve them, we must have interior life. Otherwise what we do – particularly in the social, religious, or apostolic field – will be a caricature of work, and will be as much a waste of God's energy as is the waste of badly used nourishment. For such work does not make use of all the values that God wants to get out