

Producing the Fruits of Love



If you were to buy a new car, could you tell how good it is by the color? There's an old saying: "You can't judge a book by its cover. That holds true when it comes to judging people also. You can't tell what a person is like just by looking at him or her. Some people betray their lack of character by their body language—ones who refuse to look you in the eye, mumble in their beard, or have a scared look about them are people to watch out for. The opposite does not hold true. You can't be sure of a person's character just because he looks you right in the eye or speaks in a loud voice or wears a supremely confident face. Con-men and con-women are masters at putting on a phony face when they are setting someone up for a raw deal. That's why they are called *confidence* men and women.

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But there is a way to spot a phony, whether that phony comes talking religion, selling aluminum siding, or wants to be your friend. Jesus tells us how to spot them: Don't look at their clothes or listen to their words but watch what they **do!** You will know phonies by their **deeds.** Usually, they are too good to be true and conceal their hidden agenda. Watch what people *do.* That's how you tell what kind of person they are. You know the saying: If it walks like a duck, looks like a duck and sounds like a duck—most likely it *is* a duck. Same is true for phonies. Watch them closely enough and they will talk like a phony and act like a phony.

Something similar could be said about spotting a *saint.* You would think that people who pray would

get to Heaven easily. That those who preach the Gospel or those who have exorcised demons would get to Heaven with no problem or those who perform miracles would be able to get into Heaven quickly. Yet doing any of these things is NO guarantee that a person will get into Heaven. The price of admission is greater than all of these combined. Jesus said the only people who are going to Heaven are people who do the *Will of God*; which means the only way to get to Heaven is by our love of God. Without love, we can't get *anywhere!* We're not talking about *society's* definition of love but *God's* definition.

One may wonder why this is so? In an article entitled "What is the least I can do?" by Matthew Kelly, he says that the greatest character disease eating away at society and the Heart of the Church is "Minimalism." People who always ask, "What's the least I can do?" For instance, what's the least I can do to keep my job? To get by? To be a good spouse/monk/nun? To get reasonable grades in school this year? To keep my spouse from nagging? To stay physically fit? The minimalist wants the fruit of a certain labor, but doesn't want to work for it. Ultimately, the minimalist finds himself or herself asking the question: "What is the least I can do and still get to Heaven?" Minimalism eats away at our character and, ultimately, society. He or she has a low self-esteem due to the consequence of not even trying. These persons are just survivors; they forget that it takes just as much energy to *avoid* excellence as it does to *achieve* excellence.

To a larger or lesser degree, we are all minimalists in some area of our lives. It's good that we can recognize

it because, like a cancer, it spreads. Look at families on Social Assistance who teach their children to do the same as they do. Could you imagine Mother Teresa asked herself every morning, "What's the *least* I can do today?" Was it the question on the minds of St. Francis, St. Clare, St. John-Paul II, Bl. Steven Rother, the Martyr, Maximillian Kolbe or, for that matter, Jesus? They were passionate about what they did and they were committed to excellence; had great courage

and were bold and brilliant in their own way. The difference between them and us is that they had better habits than we do at times. They always asked, "What is the **most** I can do?"

May we strive to rid ourselves of just getting by in life. May we have

an inner dialogue between God and ourselves. After a hard day's work let us realize that all we've done is what has been asked of us—there is much more we can and should do for Him who gave His whole life for us. All it takes, at times, is to motivate ourselves out of being a "couch potato:" Help your neighbor; be a good listening ear for someone in crisis; listen to your children's needs and problems and do what you can to help them through them.

Yes, it's time consuming, it's difficult, it's frustrating at times, but love is all of these things!

If Jesus had not loved us as He did, He would not have gone to the Cross and died for us, but He did, and by it we were redeemed. May we bear good fruit by doing the Will of God in our respective vocations and not count the cost: the pain, the aggravation, and the suffering it may require. If we join it to God's love we will succeed and bear much fruit. ✠

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Monastery NewsNotes

It has been an exciting month for us! From September 24th to the 28th, we held our General Assembly. The General Assembly takes place once every six years and is intended to, “guard our monastic ideal and foster renewal in our communities according to this ideal.” The Assembly begins



Above: The community officially greets Bishop Gregory Mansour at the start of the Divine Liturgy.
Below: Abbot William gives a blessing to newly-elected Abbot Patrick, shortly after his election.



Above: Bishop Gregory Mansour and Msgr. John Faris with the community of Most Holy Trinity Monastery.

with a vote on whether to elect a new abbot.

After prayer and deliberation, the Assembly determined that the time had come for someone to succeed Abbot William and benefit from his wisdom and guidance. Fr. Patrick Kokorian was chosen to succeed our founder and Abbot Emeritus, William Driscoll.

Abbot Patrick Kokorian, aged 44, has been a monk at Most Holy Trinity monastery for 16 years. He entered the monastery in 2003, after a brief career in the aerospace industry, and was ordained a priest in October of 2013. Being the youngest of the perpetually professed members of the community, he is blessed to have the help and wisdom of his brother monks and, especially, that of his founder and predecessor, Abbot William. Please keep our new abbot in your prayers!

Below: Abbot Patrick Kokorian with Bishop Gregory and Abbot Emeritus William Driscoll.

