



The Rosicrucian Order

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THE CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion



¶ Thomas Aquinas, known as the Angelic Doctor and canonized as a saint, wrote some sixty books in his brief lifetime. His *Summa Theologia* written as a manual of Christian doctrine has been declared to be not only an exposition of Christian theology but also a summary of Christian philosophy. For that reason his words on the nature of prayer and the intercession of saints are worthy of our attention.



Prayer is offered to a person in two ways: one as though to be granted by himself, another as to be obtained through him. In the first way we pray to God alone, because all our prayers ought to be directed to obtaining grace and glory which God alone gives, according to those words of the Psalm (84:11): 'The Lord will give grace and glory.' But in the second way we pray to the holy angels and to men, not that God may learn our petition through them, but that by their prayers and merits our prayers may be efficacious: Wherefore it is said in the Apocalypse (8:4): 'And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel.'

—ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, 1226-1274

To the Members of the Esoteric Hierarchy, Greetings!

Last week in considering the upper and the under world, we discovered the basis for the Church's teaching both as to angels and devils: They were the inhabitants of the regions above and the regions below. The world of earth and man, therefore, was between.

The ancients believed that in our earthly experiences we live constantly between crosscurrents of impressions, urges, suggestions, and influences from both the heavenly world and the evil world. We are like little vessels floating on high seas, constantly being moved one way or the other by the crosscurrents and changing influences of winds and tides. Unless each little ship has some definite power of its own by which it can move against the wind, and a rudder by which it can steer itself independently of the winds and of the tides, it will always be at the mercy of the various influences that affect it. There is good reason for the poetic idea that we are like ships on the sea of life. It is true that from early morning until night, and even during sleep and dreams, we are constantly affected by various emotions and ideas created inside us or around us tempting us to various things.

Here, then, was the idea of temptation. Unfortunately for most modern religions, temptation is always associated with the devil or Satan, representing the evil world. During the past eight or nine centuries the idea has developed that temptation is always an evil influence and must come from an evil source. Everyone who has had any experience in life knows that there are good temptations as well as evil ones, and that all temptations can be classified as urges or impulses, appealing opportunities that are good, bad, or indifferent—the indifferent ones leading eventually to either a good or a bad result. However, in the theological system, as developed by the Church early in the Christian era, temptation was associated with evil. In order to make this idea of temptation and the tempter easy to comprehend, the same old method was resorted to of personalizing temptation; so a character was created known as Satan, supposed to be in charge of all of the under world and to direct all evil influence in the world toward mankind.

This Satan was supposed to have a score of agencies, or assistants—evil beings who walked the earth as invisible devils, constantly whispering in the ears of people or in their hearts, making alluring sets and scenery, creating alluring opportunities for evil, and constantly tempting them to things that were wrong. In order to explain the fact that even the strongest men and women and those with a large amount of good in their hearts often yielded to evil temptations, these devils and tempters were given marvelous attributes. They were credited with the ability to hide, to disguise themselves, and to possess silvery tongues, glib words, magnetic personalities and great wisdom. They were even



supposed to be able to put themselves into the heart of a beautiful woman and through her bring temptation to both men and women, or to put themselves into the heart of a great and noble character and use him as a means for allurements and temptations. So the world became spotted and filled with the agents of Satan, representing the evil currents and influences of this earth life.

To counteract all this, the idea developed that the spiritual kingdom also had its representatives. It was found that here on earth there were good and noble influences at work, and that temptations to do good and noble things also came into the hearts of men or were whispered in their ears through beautiful women and noble men, enticing situations and opportunities. So there were celestial groups of beings known as the angels, and others who came to earth at times and hovered over mankind or worked through the hearts of people, influencing them with good ideas and good impulses.

This gives an idea of the theological foundation for the present-day beliefs about heaven and hell, the angels, and Satanic agencies. We must admit that it leaves poor man standing in the middle of a terrible situation. He has nothing to go by but his own ability and will power and his divine right to choose one way or the other. Is it any wonder that men and women make mistakes in their decisions and often choose the wrong way? We know that evil influences can present themselves in just as attractive and alluring a way, and with all of the glib and logical argument that angels use. Sin can present itself with just as many fascinations and just as many pleasant rewards as the angels offer us, so far as our earthly life is concerned. The moment we try to think of the Hereafter, we are able to decide quickly between what is good and what is evil, for we know that certain temptations offered will lead to perpetual happiness in the spiritual kingdom while others will lead to a long period of suffering in the underworld.

So far as our earthly experiences are concerned and so far as our life right here on earth now is concerned, the rewards of evil are often just as pleasant as the rewards of goodness. For this reason man is perplexed, and without some special knowledge and instruction he is sure to make many mistakes in attempting to choose what he should and should not do. God has ordained it that man should be perplexed and that he should attempt to decide for himself and through his decision suffer the consequences. If he did not have the privilege of choosing and the responsibility of assuming the results of his choice, man would never learn the lessons of life. So you see life here on this earth is like a great school and a laboratory in which man constantly tests and tries not only the urges and temptations that come to him, but the results of his own decisions, and it is only the foolish person or the incompetent and imbecilic one who will continue to choose wrongly and continue to pay the price of suffering and unhappiness.



TWELFTH DEGREE

NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

PAGE THREE

In the scheme of things, everything must ultimately balance; for all the good we have, we must compensate in some way; and for all evil that we suffer, there must be some compensation in order that the ultimate result will be man's advancement and improvement. It would not do to leave man simply standing still for ages and ages and cycle after cycle, constantly battling between good and evil, constantly having some reward and some punishment, but never gaining any headway one way or the other. So it is divinely established that for every reward that man receives, for every blessing and happiness, he must pay some price, make some compensation, suffer some sacrifice, suffer some loss of some possession or thing that he values or wants in order to balance the scales. On the other hand, for every hour that he suffers he must also gain some advantage; otherwise there would be no purpose in the suffering. For each suffering, each punishment, each loss, he gains knowledge, wisdom, experience, and more power to overcome the evil tendencies and protect himself from future sufferings. This is not a theological scheme but a cosmological divine one, independent of any religion, church doctrine or creed. It is sacred wisdom, not doctrinal or creedal.

To this, we have to add the idea of intercession. God, as the ruler of the entire universe, is the court of last appeals, the final judge. He is in charge of everything that is in the universe—our earthly existence, the spiritual world, even what we consider evil influences and evil agencies. God could have left out of life the evil influences and never have permitted temptations. Man then would never have learned any lessons and he would never have had any occasion to choose between right and wrong or good and evil. He would never have developed the ability or faculty of thinking, analyzing, and using his will power to decide which way he should walk, either in evil or goodness. Because God is the ruler of all that is, and because He is the last and highest judge in the court of last appeals, we have the divine privilege of going to God for guidance and of asking for help and for special inspiration. In order that we may find a means and an understandable method of approaching God in our pleas, petitions, desires, and in order that we may understand the process by which we may be helped, there was created in the Cosmic consciousness this Celestial Hierarchy of beings to whom we appeal and ask for intercession.

Each of the foregoing paragraphs contains fundamental laws which you must individually visualize and understand in order to extend your realization. Each of them, if concentrated upon during your second reading, will unfold into beautiful Cosmic truths. Therefore, a second or even a third reading of this monograph with at least five minutes' concentration and visualization after each paragraph will help put you in the middle between two worlds, the upper and the under world, and will help you attune with the conditions that surround you in a Cosmic, divine sense so that you may register in your consciousness the thoughts necessary as a foundation for what is coming.



TWELFTH DEGREE

NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

PAGE FOUR

Because of a few letters which I feel typical of many that may come asking about the points we are covering, it is well that we consider these questions now so as not to miss any point that may be puzzling or of real interest.

Look back at your own life when you first joined our Order, and compare your understanding of things mystical and spiritual then with what you understand now. Think of the average member who comes into our organization earnestly and sincerely seeking for more light upon the mysteries of life. With all of their sincere desire, and with all of the reading and studying such members have done before becoming sufficiently interested to join our organization, they would not make any progress at all if we were to attempt to give them in the earlier work any of the profound esoteric principles and mysteries contained in the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Degrees. Even you would have thought many of the ideas which you have been studying recently too weird, too mystical, too ethereal, or too spiritual to be of any value and of any real interest. Some would have thought such ideas belonged only to theologians or to those making a deep study of theology and should be reserved only for the Cardinals of the Church, or for monks, or people of that kind. Therefore, such esoteric principles have been held for these last Degrees. First, this knowledge cannot be given to those who are unworthy or who have not proved their loyalty and sincerity by remaining with the organization long enough to prove the laws. Second, the student and adept must be given time to develop inwardly and become familiar with all the simpler thoughts before attempting more complex mystical principles.

Studying the teachings, absorbing them, and understanding them inwardly is one thing; but interpreting and explaining them to someone else, and making the revelations fit modern times and modern conceptions of mysticism, is quite another. It is difficult even now to take the mystery teachings of a few hundred years ago in their extended and amplified form, and interpret them today in the light of our modern consciousness. Each decade brings certain changes in the consciousness and in the mystical and spiritual unfoldment of individuals; therefore truths must be constantly presented in new words and phrases, and with new application so that they will be of practical value.

This was the difficulty faced by Dionysius the Areopagite; to restate the mystery school teachings in such a way as to make them understandable to those who were not initiates. Next week I want to tell you something more about him and his writings.

May Peace Profound abide with each of you.



Fraternally,

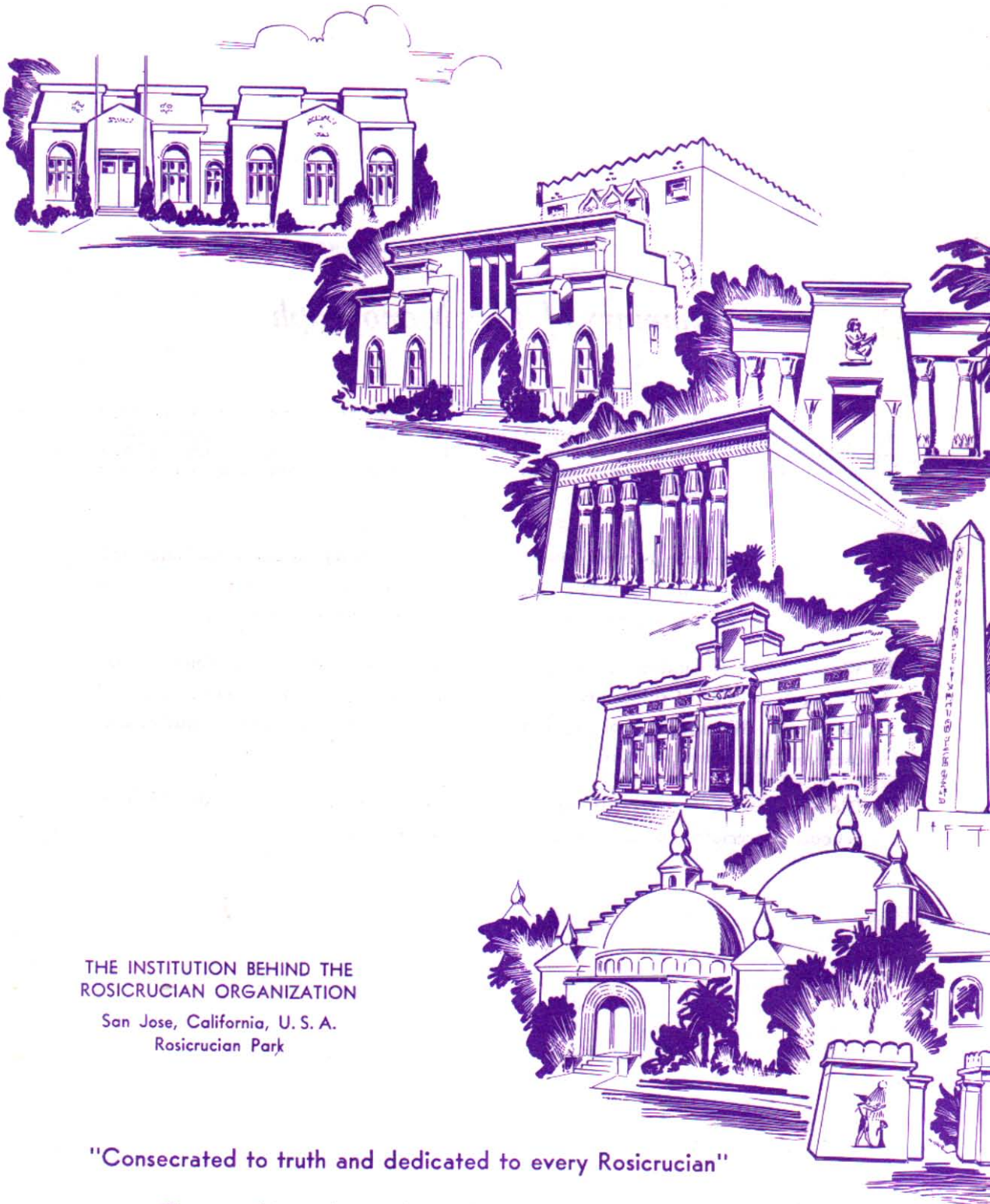
YOUR CLASS MASTER

Summary of This Monograph



Below is a summary of the important principles of this monograph. It contains the essential statements which you should not forget. After you have carefully read the complete monograph, try to recall as many as you can of the important points you read. Then read this summary and see if you have forgotten any. Also refer to this summary during the ensuing week to refresh your memory.

- ¶ There is a difference between studying and understanding mystical teachings and setting them forth understandably for the benefit of others. Each period of time brings its own form of consciousness; so truth must be constantly restated.
- ¶ We can perhaps understand Dionysius' difficulty more fully if we compare our present knowledge of things mystical with what we thought we knew when we joined the Order. We should probably have made little progress if our first studies had concerned the matters we are studying now.
- ¶ Dionysius faced the necessity and difficulty of making the ideas of the Mystery Schools appreciated in the consciousness of his own day.



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