

# OUR CHRISTIAN CALLING

## by Catherine Doherty

Today the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of love are confronting each other visibly, palpably. It is truly a strange sight to behold. Perhaps it is precisely because the fire of love is among us in so visible a manner that the anger of the Prince of Darkness is drawn forth.

In every city, in every town and village of the world, these two mysteries confront each other, simultaneously revealing the poverty of some Christians and the wealth of others. Is it any wonder then that those who do not believe in God obtain more reasons for their unbelief than ever before? For nothing repels people from religion more than the hypocrisy of those who only give it lip service.

But the problem is deeper than this visible appearance. Exactly why are there Christians who refuse others the justice and love which God demands of those who would enter his kingdom of peace? Christian hearts which should be filled with love for everyone are often filled with hate. Christian hearts that should seek peace often talk and shout of war. Christian hearts which should be worshiping only one God create for themselves a thousand other gods and live by values that do not even remotely resemble the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What are the reasons for this tragic state of affairs? Is it ignorance? Has our Christian formation and train-

ing been so appalling that it hasn't taught the essence of our faith — which is the commandment of love?

Why is there so much rationalization, so much compromise?

Perhaps one answer is that God permits it to happen so that we reexamine our consciences about his commandment of love, and begin to realize that there is a mystery of iniquity at work, a Prince of Darkness. Realizing this, we will begin anew to fight him by facing squarely the great reality of Christ, by taking up the weapons of prayer and fasting with which to exorcise Satan from our personal and national lives.

We must forget our own needs and be concerned — consumed — by the needs of others. I cry

out to the Lord for all of us Church members, we who are so many and so powerful. I ask him to cleanse our hearts of any hatred for the "other," whoever that other may be. I ask him to cleanse us especially of any hatred or fear of our brothers and sisters in minority groups.

I cry to God for those who write and speak without any peace in their hearts, without any charity. I pray that their words become rooted in the word of God so that they may bring peace, friendship and tranquility to the hearts of others. I beg God that everyone, everywhere, may become instruments of his peace — not seeking to be consoled, loved and understood, but to love, to console and to understand.



Donna Suprenant

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Pass It On! #36

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The problem is that we Christians do not understand that the world is hungry for the reality that is Christ. A sense of deep sadness comes over me when I think of how Christians sit on the fence. Have we forgotten that we are followers of a crucified Christ? Have we forgotten that from the moment he began preaching he walked in the shadow of death? Have we forgotten that following him means taking great risk and living dangerously?

It seems that we have spent centuries trying to eliminate the risk and the danger of his call. It seems that we have cushioned the risk and practically eliminated any and all danger by drawing up a set of moral rules that give us security instead of holy insecurity; rules that lull our conscience to sleep instead of making it wide awake and ready to undertake the risks of living as a Christian.

I wonder how long we can sit on the fence of compromising the gospel. God is not mocked! We have to begin to love one another in the fullest sense of Christ's teaching. But to do so we must pray. It is only through prayer that one can follow Christ to Golgotha and up onto the other side of his cross, and become free through this ascension.

How simple and how timely the gospel is. In it lie the answers to our problems. The gospel is a light shining

in the darkness. Why is it then that we who are Christians refuse to even try the clear answers of the gospel? Why do we wish to constantly compromise, water down and eliminate from the gospel whatever is too hard for us? Why settle for such a pale reflection of his strong words and loving teachings?

We seem to have tried everything that our intelligence and genius can come up with. But so far, if we are to be judged by the fruits of the tree, we certainly have not succeeded. Nor are we leaving our children a better world to live in. On the contrary, we are leaving them a more chaotic world than even the one we inherited.

The immense problems of war, of social injustice, of the thousand and one ills that beset our world, these can be solved only if we begin to love one another. When we begin to see, love, respect and reverence Christ in the eyes of another, then he will change, and society will change also.

Why then do we not try the way of love, the way of the gospel? Why do we not apply the gospel without compromise to our personal, national and international life?

Adapted from *Gospel Without Compromise* by Catherine Doherty, available from Madonna House Publications.