

not in the author's purview'. His initial error has prevented Father Branney from following any of my argument. . . .

A lot is made of my remark that the *Life* gives 'quite a fantastic picture of the saint', but supposing Father Branney were to write my life and chronicle all my virtues and penances, the details might well be correct, but the final picture would be fantastic if it did not mention that there were a few other priests in England today with a virtue or two and a little penance in their lives. That is what I meant of this *Life*. Was Ars the moral cess-pool of France, leaving the 'boîtes de nuit' in Paris rather tame by comparison: were there any other priests in France who inveighed against dancing or was the Curé the only one: did other priests refuse dancers absolution, and if so why was it extraordinary that the Curé did; and if not, was he right: was the Curé the only good priest in France or only the best among many good priests? 'Research students' might not lose their sense of proportion but the ordinary reader probably would and receive a 'quite fantastic impression' without any of the details given by the author being wrong.

Then the big thing. Father Branney asserts that among us, pastoral clergy, 'the desire' of imitating the Curé d'Ars 'and not the capability is usually lacking'. That is a harsh thing to say of a fine body of men, and because I mildly said that we all had the desire but that if our ideal were painted in too glowing terms we might doubt our capability, you are accused of doing a disservice to the spiritual life in this country by publishing my review. But Pius XI exhorts us to imitate the Curé only 'as much as possible'. Do you think Father Branney ought to teach a Pope, as he would teach me, the doctrine of grace? Surely a Pope ought to know that with grace we can do all things and that therefore no matter how high we set our ideal we can attain it, and that therefore we can all imitate the Curé completely and not merely 'as much as possible', or do you think His Holiness had in mind, as I certainly had, that we might not co-operate with the grace that is given us?

And that bewildering peroration: did not I, too, say that the purpose of the Curé's canonisation was 'to stimulate every priest engaged on the pastoral ministry': did the Pope include 'The Life of the Curé d'Ars by Francis Trochu' in the Bull of canonisation of Jean Marie Vianney: and what have the feelings of the French clergy towards the Curé to do with my opinion of Trochu's book? —I remain, etc.,

TERENCE TANNER.

To the Editor, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

Sir, — I have followed with increasing interest the articles and correspondence which have appeared from time to time in LIFE OF THE SPIRIT regarding the solitary and contemplative vocation for those living in 'the world'.

Some two years ago I received a reply from your contributor 'Medicus' regarding his article in which he discussed the problems of vocation in general, with some valuable observations regarding the solitary vocation.

He seemed interested in the idea that a modernised form of the *Béguinage* might enable the fulfilment of the vocation to which an increasing number of souls appear to be called, in varying degrees.

He agreed that it might be possible to start something of the sort if a few people really of like mind, and with the right characters and capacities, set themselves to bring it about.

Many years ago I paid a visit to the mediaeval *Béguinage* at Bruges, still pursuing its peaceful ordered life, and the memories of it have remained with me, having the inspiration of an ideal yet to be realised in this country.

I have long endeavoured to live in 'the world' a contemplative life in the true spirit of solitude, but am often acutely aware of the need for an environment that would enable a greater degree of abstraction.

It seems to me that a modern *Béguinage* with its spiritual freedom, might afford the opportunity sought both by those who desire and are at liberty to pursue such a way of life as a settled state, and also for those who are obliged to live and work in the normal life of the world, but would value periods of withdrawal to the *Béguinage* for the training and deepening of their interior vocation.

Nevertheless in these days there may well be serious practical difficulties in the way of realising such a project.

One can only suggest that in the meantime an Association might be formed along very simple lines, comprising all who seek to live a fully Christian and contemplative life, in a spirit of solitude, adoration and charity, in obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in each individual life, for all the details of the way.

It would be desirable that one or two Annual Retreats should be arranged, given by an experienced Priest of like vocation, who would be the Spiritual Director of the Association.

Any 'Order' more fully articulated and organised could not, so it seems to me, meet the infinitely various circumstances of those who nevertheless share a similar vocation and ideal.—Yours, etc.,

K. M. BROOME.