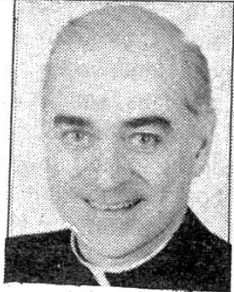


# Our Purpose in Life

Our essential purpose in life is to love God and to strive to do His will. This involves a kind of spiritual surrender to the Holy Spirit that is often painful. I didn't understand how painful until I was 25. I wanted my own way and, at the same time, I felt called to the priesthood. I learned gradually that only by surrendering could I begin to find my true purpose. I also came to see that without grace I was powerless to achieve the goals the Lord had in mind for me. I began to understand that to find your purpose in life you must first answer the question: what is a human being? You have to know who you are before you can discern what you're supposed to do.



A human being is the product of God's

creative genius. A human being is destined for eternal life. This world is not an end in itself, it is only the vestibule of a higher existence. Our purpose first and foremost is to grow in God's love and attain heaven. By opening ourselves to the subtle influence of the Holy Spirit, we begin to grow in God's light.

We are responsible for our own character, but only by surrendering to Divine love can we blossom into full spiritual maturity. Human life passes from an embryonic state to infancy and from childhood to adolescence to adulthood and old age. This is only one aspect of our personal evolution. The other dimension is in the realm of spiritual transformation. We move from spiritual blindness to a gradual awareness of the spirit world. In this process our understanding of God's presence deepens. Eventually we can say with St. Paul, "I live, no not I, but Christ lives in me."

Faith enables us to see Jesus Christ as

our unique channel of communication with God the Father. Jesus is the way, the truth and light. He teaches us about the cross. The basic principle of the spiritual life is that the Holy Spirit leads us along paths we would not have chosen for ourselves. The Spirit draws us to love, service and sacrifice. We learn that the cross is good.

The Lover speaks to us with a voice so subtle that at first it is difficult to detect. Some do not listen at all. Some spend their lives seeking wealth, power and fame becoming slaves of their own ambitions. Because they do not want to surrender to the Lord, they dry up spiritually and put themselves in bondage.

Those who accept the fact that life is a testing area learn to climb higher. Eventually they are rewarded with indescribable rewards of the spirit. God responds by making them more God-like and at the same time more fully human. One does not cancel the other.

What one does in life, in terms of a career, is important, but the crucial thing is understanding that self-perfection and the finding of one's purpose comes only through spiritual surrender.