

Chapter 1 : What Is The Best HIIT Workout?

The priest in the pulpit: a manual of homiletics and catechetics Item Preview remove-circle Share or Embed This Item.
Means of Ascetical Training,

The word asceticism comes from the Greek askesis which means practice, bodily exercise, and more especially, athletic training. The early Christians adopted it to signify the practice of the spiritual things, or spiritual exercises performed for the purpose of acquiring the habits of virtue. At present it is not infrequently employed in an opprobrious sense, to designate the religious practices of oriental fanatics as well as those of the Christian saint, both of whom are by some placed in the same category. It is not uncommonly confounded with austerity, even by Catholics, but incorrectly. External penances even in the saints, are regarded with suspicion. Jerome, whose proneness to austerity makes him an especially valuable authority on this point, thus writes to Celantia: Be on your guard when you begin to mortify your body by abstinence and fasting, lest you imagine yourself to be perfect and a saint; for perfection does not consist in this virtue. It is only a help; a disposition; a means though a fitting one, for the attainment of true perfection. Thus asceticism according to the definition of St. Jerome, is an effort to attain true perfection, penance being only an auxiliary virtue thereto. It should be noted also that the expression "fasting and abstinence" is commonly used in Scripture and by ascetic writers as a generic term for all sorts of penance. Neither should asceticism be identified with mysticism. For although genuine mysticism can not exist without asceticism, the reverse is not true. One can be an ascetic without being a mystic. Asceticism is ethical; mysticism, largely intellectual. Asceticism has to do with the moral virtues; mysticism is a state of unusual prayer or contemplation. They are distinct from each other, though mutually co-operative. Moreover although asceticism is generally associated with the objectionable features of religion, and is regarded by some as one of them, it may be and is practised by those who affect to be swayed by no religious motives whatever. Natural asceticism If for personal satisfaction, or self interest, or any other merely human reason, a man aims at the acquisition of the natural virtues, for instance, temperance, patience, chastity, meekness, etc. For he has entered upon a struggle with his animal nature; and if he is to achieve any measure of success, his efforts must be continuous and protracted. Nor can he exclude the practice of penance. Indeed he will frequently inflict upon himself both bodily and mental pain. He will not even remain within the bounds of strict necessity. He will punish himself severely, either to atone for failures, or to harden his powers of endurance, or to strengthen himself against future failures. He will be commonly described as an ascetic, as in fact he is. For he is endeavouring to subject the material part of his nature to the spiritual, or in other words, he is striving for natural perfection. The defect of this kind of asceticism is that, besides being prone to error in the acts it performs and the means it adopts, its motive is imperfect, or bad. It may be prompted by selfish reasons of utility, pleasure, aestheticism, ostentation, or pride. It is not to be relied upon for serious efforts and may easily give way under the strain of weariness or temptation. Finally, it fails to recognize that perfection consists in the acquisition of something more than natural virtue. Christian asceticism It is prompted by the desire to do the will of God, any personal element of self-satisfaction which enters the motive vitiating it more or less. Its object is the subordination of the lower appetites to the dictates of right reason and the law of God, with the continued and necessary cultivation of the virtues which the Creator intended man to possess. Absolutely speaking, the will of God in this matter is discoverable by human reason, but it is explicitly laid down for us in the Ten Commandments, or Decalogue, which furnishes a complete code of ethical conduct. Some of these commandments are positive; others, negative. The negative precepts, "thou shalt not kill", "thou shalt not commit adultery", etc. They develop meekness, gentleness, self-control, patience, continence, chastity, justice, honesty, brotherly love, which are positive in their character, magnanimity, liberality, etc. Finally the fourth insists on obedience, respect for authority, observance of law, filial piety, and the like. Such were the virtues practised by the mass of the people of God under the Old Law, and this may be considered as the first step in true asceticism. For apart from the many instances of exalted holiness among the ancient Hebrews, the lives of the faithful followers of the Law, that is the main body of the ordinary people must have been such as the Law enjoined and although

their moral elevation might not be designated as asceticism in the present restricted and distorted meaning of the term, yet it probably appeared to the pagan world of those times very much as exalted virtue does to the world today. Even the works of penance to which they were subjected in the many fasts and abstinences, as well as the requirements of their ceremonial observances were much more severe than those imposed upon the Christians who succeeded them. In the New Dispensation the binding force of the Commandments continued, but the practice of virtue took on another aspect, in as much as the dominant motive presented to man for the service of God was not fear, but love, though fear was by no means eliminated. God was to be the Lord indeed, but He was at the same time the Father and men were His children. The "neighbour" of the Jew was one of the chosen people, and even of him rigorous justice was to be exacted; it was an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. In the Christian dispensation the neighbour is not only one of the true faith, but the schismatic, the outcast, and the pagan. This supernatural love for even the vilest and most repellent representatives of humanity constitutes one of the distinctive marks of Christian asceticism. Moreover, the more extended and luminous revelation of Divine things, coupled with the greater abundance of spiritual assistance conferred chiefly through the instrumentality of the sacraments, make practice of virtue easier and more attractive at the same time more elevated, generous, intense and enduring, while the universality of Christianity lifts the practice of asceticism out of the narrow limitations of being the exclusive privilege of a single race into a common possession of all nations of the earth. The Acts of the Apostles show the transformation immediately effected among devout Jews who formed the first communities of Christians. That new and elevated form of virtue has remained in the Church ever since. Wherever the Church has been allowed to exert her influence we find virtue of the highest order among her people. Even among those whom the world regards as simple and ignorant there are most amazing perceptions of spiritual truths, intense love of God and of all that relates to Him, sometimes remarkable habits of prayer, purity of life both in individuals and in families, heroic patience in submitting to poverty, bodily suffering, and persecution, magnanimity in forgiving injury, tender solicitude for the poor and afflicted, though they themselves may be almost in the same condition; and what most characteristic of all, a complete absence of envy of the rich and powerful and a generally undisturbed contentment and happiness in their own lot; while similar results are achieved among the wealthy and great, though not to the same extent. In a word, there is developed an attitude of soul so much at variance with the principles and methods generally obtaining in the pagan world that, from the beginning, and indeed throughout, under the Old Law, it was commonly described and denounced as folly. It might be classified as very lofty asceticism if its practice were not so common, and if the conditions of poverty and suffering in which these virtues are most frequently practised were not the result of physical or social necessity. But even if these conditions are not voluntary, the patient and uncomplaining acceptance of them constitutes a very noble kind of spirituality which easily develops into one of a higher kind and may be designated its third New Law we have not merely the reaffirmation of the precepts of the Old, but also the teachings and example of Christ Who, besides requiring obedience to the Commandments, continually appeals to His followers for proofs of personal affection and a closer imitation of His life than is possible by the mere fulfilment of the Law. The motives and the manner of this imitation are laid down in the Gospel, which as the basis taken by ascetical writers for their instructions. This imitation of Christ generally proceeds along three main lines, viz.: It is here especially that asceticism comes in for censure on the part of its opponents. Mortification, unworldliness, and detachment are particularly obnoxious to them. But in answer to their objection it will be sufficient to note that condemnations of such practices or aspirations must fall on Holy Scripture also, for it gives a distinct warrant for all three. Thus we have, as regards mortification, the words of St. Paul, who says: Commending unworldliness, we have: It is scarcely necessary to note however, that the word "hate" is not to be taken in its strict sense, but only as indicating a greater love for God than for all things together. Such is the general scheme of this higher order of asceticism. The character of this asceticism is determined by its motive. In the first place a man may serve God in such a way that he is willing to make any sacrifice rather than commit a grievous sin. This disposition of soul, which is the lowest in the spiritual life, is necessary for salvation. Again, he may be willing to make such sacrifices rather than offend God by venial sin. Lastly he may, when this no question of sin at all, be eager to do whatever will make his life harmonize with

that of Christ. It is this last motive which the highest kind of asceticism adopts. These three stages are called by St. Ignatius "the three degrees of humility", for the reason that they are the three steps in the elimination of self, and consequently three great advances towards union with God, who enters the soul in proportion as self is expelled. It is the spiritual state of St. Paul speaks when he says: Other ascetic writers describe them as states or conditions of the beginners the proficient and the perfect. They are not, however, to be considered chronologically distinct; as if the perfect man had nothing to do with the methods of the beginner, or vice versa. The roof is stretched while the foundations are being laid. Ignatius expresses it, if ever the love of God grows cold, the fear of Hell may rekindle it again. On the other hand, the beginner who has broken with mortal sin has already started in his growth to perfect charity. These states are also described as the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways. It is evident that the practice of unworldliness, of detachment from family and other ties, must be or the greatest number not the actual performance of those things, but only the serious disposition or readiness to make such sacrifices, in case God should require them, which, as a matter of fact in their case, He does not. They are merely affective, and not effective, but none the less they constitute a very sublime kind of spirituality. Sublime as it is, there are many examples of it in the Church, nor is it the exclusive possession of those who have abandoned the world or are about to do so, but it is the possession also of many whom necessity compels to live in the world, married as well as single, of those who are in the enjoyment of honour and wealth and of responsibility as well as of those who are in opposite conditions. They cannot effectively realize their desires or aspirations but their affections take that direction. Thus there are multitudes of men and women who though living in the world are not of it, who have no liking or taste for worldly display, though often compelled by their position, social or otherwise, to assume it, who avoid worldly advancement or honour not out of pusillanimity, but out of unconcern, or contempt, or knowledge of its danger; who, with opportunities for pleasure, practise penance, sometimes of the most rigorous character who would willingly, if it were possible, give up their lives to works of charity or devotion, who love the poor and dispense alms to the extent of, and even beyond, their means, who have strong attraction for prayer, and who withdraw from the world when it is possible for the meditation of divine things; who frequent the sacraments assiduously; who are the soul of every undertaking for the good of their fellow-men and the glory of God; and whose dominant preoccupation in the advancement of the interest of God and the Church. Bishops and priests especially enter into this category. Even the poor and humble, who, having nothing to give, yet would give if they had any possessions, may be classed among such servants of Christ. That this asceticism is not only attainable but attained by laymen serves to bring out the truth which is sometimes lost sight of, viz. In fact, though one may live in the state of perfection, that is, be a member of a religious order, he may be surpassed in perfection by a layman in the world. But to reduce these sublime dispositions to actual practice, to make them not only affective but effective to realize what Christ meant when, after having told the multitude on the Mount of the blessedness of poverty of spirit, He said to the Apostles, "Blessed are you who are poor", and to reproduce also the other virtues of Christ and the Apostles, the Church has established a life of actual poverty, chastity, and obedience. For that purpose, it has founded religious orders, thus enabling those who are desirous and able to practise this higher order of asceticism, to do so with greater facility and in greater security. Monastic or religious asceticism The establishment of religious orders was not the result of any sudden or mandatory legislation by the Church. On the contrary, the germs of religious life were implanted in it by Christ Himself from the very beginning. For in the Gospel we have repeated invitations to follow the evangelical counsels. Hence in the first days of the Church, we find that particular kind of asceticism widely practised which later developed into the form adopted by the Religious Orders. In the "History of the Roman Breviary" by Batiffol tr. Bayley, 15, we read: These consisted of men and women, alike, living in the world without severing themselves from the ties and obligations of ordinary life, yet binding themselves by private vow or public profession to live in chastity all their life, to fast all the week, to spend their days in prayer. They were called in Syria Monazonites and Parthenae, ascetics and virgins. They formed, as it were, a third order, a confraternity.

Chapter 2 : Ascetical theology - Wikipedia

Ascetical theology is the organized study or presentation of spiritual teachings found in Christian Scripture and the Church Fathers that help the faithful to more perfectly follow Christ and attain to Christian perfection.

Asceticism askesis, askein , taken in its literal signification, means a polishing, a smoothing or refining. The Greeks used the word to designate the exercises of the athletes, whereby the powers dormant in the body were developed and the body itself was trained to its full natural beauty. The end for which these gymnastic exercises were undertaken was the laurel-wreath bestowed on the victor in the public games. Now the life of the Christian is, as Christ assures us, a struggle for the kingdom of heaven Matthew To give his readers an object-lesson of this spiritual battle and moral endeavour, St. Paul, who had been trained in the Greek fashion, uses the picture of the Greek pentathlon 1 Corinthians 9: The moral struggle then consists first of all in attacking and removing the obstacles, that is the evil concupiscences concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life , which effects of original sin serve to try and test man Trid. V, De peccato originali. This first duty is called by the Apostle Paul the putting off of "the old man" Ephesians 4: The second duty, in the words of the same Apostle, is to "put on the new man " according to the image of God Ephesians 4: The new man is Christ. It is our duty then to strive to become like unto Christ, seeing that He is "the way, and the truth, and the life" John Its foundation is laid in baptism, whereby we are adopted as sons of God through the imparting of sanctifying grace. Thenceforth, it must be perfected by the supernatural virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and actual grace. Since, then, ascetics is the systematic treatise of the striving after Christian perfection , it may be defined as the scientific guide to the acquisition of Christian perfection, which consists in expressing within ourselves, with the help of Divine grace, the image of Christ, by practising the Christian virtues, and applying the means given for overcoming the obstacles. Let us subject the various elements of this definition to a closer examination. Nature of Christian Perfection 1 To begin with, we must reject the false conception of the Protestants who fancy that Christian perfection, as understood by Catholics, is essentially negative asceticism cf. Theologie", III, , and that the correct notion of asceticism was discovered by the Reformers. There can be no doubt as to the Catholic position, if we but hearken to the clear voices of St. For these masters of Catholic theology who never tired of repeating that the ideal of asceticism upheld by them was the ideal of the Catholic past, of the Fathers, of Christ Himself, emphatically state that bodily asceticism has not an absolute, but only a relative, value. Thomas calls it a "means to an end", to be used with discretion. He also points to Christ, the ideal of Christian perfection, who was less austere in fasting than John the Baptist, and to the founders of religious orders, who prescribed fewer ascetic exercises for their communities than they themselves practised cf. Zahn, "Vollkommenheitsideal" in "Moralprobleme", Freiburg, , p. On the other hand, Catholics do not deny the importance of ascetic practices for acquiring Christian perfection. A like value is put upon those exercises which restrain and guide the powers of the soul. Consequently, Catholics actually fulfil and always have fulfilled what Harnack sets down as a demand of the Gospel and what he pretends to have looked for in vain among Catholics ; for they do "wage battle against mammon, care, and selfishness, and practise that charity which loves to serve and to sacrifice itself" Harnack, "Essence of Christianity". The Catholic ideal, then, is by no means confined to the negative element of asceticism, but is of a positive nature. Now, the end of man is God, and what unites him, even on earth, most closely with God is love 1 Corinthians 6: Love lives in all things and all things live in love and through love. Love imparts to all things the right measure and directs them all to the last end. There are many provinces, but they constitute one realm. The organs are many, but the organism is one" Zahn, l. Love has, therefore, rightly been called "the bond of perfection" Colossians 3: That Christian perfection consists in love has ever been the teaching of Catholic ascetical writers. A few testimonies may suffice. Writing to the Corinthians, Clement of Rome says 1 Corinthians The "Epistle of Barnabas" insists that the way of light is "the love of him who created us" agapeseis ton se poiesanta ; Funk, l. Ignatius never wearies in his letters of proposing faith as the light and love as the way, love being the end and aim of faith "Ad Ephes. The "Pastor" of Hermas acknowledges the same ideal when he sets down "a life for God " zoe to theo as the sum-total of human

existence. To these Apostolic Fathers may be added St. Augustine, who regards perfect justice as tantamount to perfect love. Bonaventure speak the same language, and their authority is so overpowering that the ascetical writers of all subsequent centuries have faithfully followed in their footsteps cf. *Lehre von den evang.* However, though perfection is essentially love, it is not true that any degree of love is sufficient to constitute moral perfection. The ethical perfection of the Christian consists in the perfection of love, which requires such a disposition "that we can act with speed and ease even though many obstacles obstruct our path" Mutz, "Christl. But this disposition of the soul supposes that the passions have been subdued; for if is the result of a laborious struggle, in which the moral virtues, steeled by love, force back and quell the evil inclinations and habits, supplanting them by good inclinations and habits. Owing to the weakness of human nature and the presence of the evil concupiscence fomes peccati: Likewise, perfection, on this side of the grave, will never reach such a degree that further growth is impossible, as is clear from the mind of the Church and the nature of our present existence status vior; in other words, our perfection will always be relative. Since perfection consists in love, it is not the privilege of one particular state, but may be, and has as a fact been, attained in every state of life cf. Consequently it would be wrong to identify perfection with the so-called state of perfection and the observance of the evangelical counsels. Thomas rightly observes, there are perfect men outside the religious orders and imperfect men within them *Summa theol.* True it is that the conditions for realizing the ideal of a Christian life are, generally speaking, more favourable in the religious state than in the secular avocations. But not all are called to the religious life, nor would all find in it their contentment cf. To sum up, the end is the same, the means are different. His justice should be our justice. Our whole life should be so penetrated by Christ that we become Christians in the full sense of the word "until Christ be formed in you"; Galatians 4: That Christ is the supreme model and pattern of the Christian life is proved from Scripture, as e. Of the numerous testimonies of the Fathers we only quote that of St. In Christ there is no shadow, nothing one-sided. His Divinity guarantees the purity of the model; His humanity, by which He became similar to us, makes the model attractive. But this picture of Christ, unmarred by addition or omission, is to be found only in the Catholic Church and, owing to her indefectibility, will always continue there in its ideal state. For the same reason, the Church alone can give us the guarantee that the ideal of the Christian life will always remain pure and unadulterated, and will not be identified with one particular state or with a subordinate virtue cf. The individual features and the fresh colours for outlining the living picture of Christ are derived from the sources of Revelation and the doctrinal decisions of the Church. These tell us about the internal sanctity of Christ John 1: His life overflowing with grace, of whose fulness we have all received John 1:

Dangers of the Ascetical Life The second task of ascetical theology is to point out the dangers which may frustrate the attainment of Christian perfection and to indicate the means by which they can be avoided successfully. The first danger to be noticed is evil concupiscence. Thirdly, ascetics acquaints us not only with the malice of the devil, lest we should fall a prey to his cunning wiles, but also with his weakness, lest we should lose heart. Finally, not satisfied with indicating the general means to be used for waging a victorious combat, ascetics offers us particular remedies for special temptations cf. Mutz, "Ascetik", 2nd ed. Means for Realizing the Christian Ideal 1 Prayer, above all, in its stricter meaning, is a means of attaining perfection; special devotions approved by the Church and the sacramental means of sanctification have a special reference to the striving after perfection frequent confession and communion. Ascetics proves the necessity of prayer 2 Corinthians 3: Peter of Alcantara, of St. Ignatius, and other saints, especially the "tres modi orandi" of St. An important place is assigned to the examination of conscience, and justly so, because ascetical life wanes or waxes with its neglect or careful performance. Without this regular practice, a thorough purification of the soul and progress in spiritual life are out of the question. It centres the searchlight of the interior vision on every single action: Ascetics distinguishes a twofold examination of conscience: In the general examination we recall all the faults of one day; in the particular, on the contrary, we focus our attention on one single defect and mark its frequency, or on one virtue to augment the number of its acts. Ascetics encourages visits to the Blessed Sacrament *visitatio sanctissimi*, a practice meant especially to nourish and strengthen the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity. It also inculcates the veneration of the saints, whose virtuous lives should spur us on to imitation. It is plain that imitation cannot mean an exact copying. What ascetics proposes as the

most natural method of imitation is the removal or at least the lessening of the contrast existing between our own lives and the lives of the saints, the perfecting, as far as is possible, of our virtues, with due regard to our personal disposition and the surrounding circumstances of time and place. On the other hand, the observation that some saints are more to be admired than imitated must not lead us into the mistake of letting our works be weighted with the ballast of human comfort and ease, so that we at last look with suspicion on every heroic act, as though it were something that transcended our own energy and could not be reconciled with the present circumstances. Such a suspicion would be justified only if the heroic act could not at all be made to harmonize with the preceding development of our interior life. Christian ascetics must not overlook the Blessed Mother of God ; for she is, after Christ, our most sublime ideal. No one has received grace in such fulness, no one has co-operated with grace so faithfully as she. It is for this reason that the Church praises her as the Mirror of Justice *speculum justitiae*. The mere thought of her transcendent purity suffices to repel the alluring charms of sin and to inspire pleasure in the wonderful lustre of virtue. Without it the combat between spirit and flesh, which are contrary to each other *Romans 7*: How far self-denial should extend is clear from the actual condition of human nature after the fall of Adam. The inclination to sin dominates both the will and the lower appetites ; not only the intellect, but also the outer and the inner senses are made subservient to this evil propensity. Hence, self-denial and self-control must extend to all these faculties. Ascetics reduces self-denial to exterior and interior mortification: However, the term " mortification " must not be taken to mean the stunting of the "strong, full, healthy" Schell life; what it aims at is that the sensual passions do not gain the upper hand over the will. It is precisely through taming the passions by means of mortification and self-denial that life and energy are strengthened and freed from cumbersome shackles. But while the masters of asceticism recognize the necessity of mortification and self-denial and are far from deeming it "criminal to assume voluntary sufferings" Seeberg , they are just as far from advocating the so-called "non-sensual" tendency, which, looking upon the body and its life as a necessary evil, proposes to avert its noxious effects by wilful weakening or even mutilation cf. On the other hand, Catholics will never befriend the gospel of "healthy sensuality", which is only a pretty-sounding title, invented to cloak unrestricted concupiscence. Special attention is devoted to the mastering of the passions, because it is with them above all else that the moral combat must be waged most relentlessly.

Chapter 3 : Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

Asceticism (/ ˈɛsɪtɪk ˈɛzɪsɪz ˈɛtɪzɪm /; from the Greek: ἀσκήσις, ἄσκησις, ἄσκησις, "exercise, training") is a lifestyle characterized by abstinence from sensual pleasures, often for the purpose of pursuing spiritual goals.

We are eager to witness and share the word of life about the reign of God faithfully, so that each new generation can hear this word in its own accents and discover Christ as its Savior. To do their part, adult Catholics must be mature in faith and well equipped to share the Gospel, promoting it in every family circle, in every church gathering, in every place of work, and in every public forum. They must be women and men of prayer whose faith is alive and vital, grounded in a deep commitment to the person and message of Jesus. One way it does this is by nourishing and strengthening lay men and women in their calling and identity as people of faith, as contributors to the life and work of the Church, and as disciples whose mission is to the world. To grow in discipleship throughout life, all believers need and are called to build vibrant parish and diocesan communities of faith and service. By "complete and systematic" we mean a catechesis that nurtures a profound, lifelong conversion of the whole person and sets forth a comprehensive, contemporary synthesis of the faith, 1 as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This catechesis will help adults to experience the transforming power of grace and to grasp the integrity and beauty of the truths of faith in their harmonious unity and interconnectionâ€”a true symphony of faith. We pledge to support adult faith formation without weakening our commitment to our other essential educational ministries. This pastoral plan guides the implementation of this pledge and commitment. In the familiar story of Emmaus Lk We will ask them questions and listen attentively as they speak of their joys, hopes, griefs, and anxieties. We will trust the capacity of prayer and sacrament to open their eyes to the presence and love of Christ. We will invite them to live and share this Good News in the world. They were burning because in Jesus the disciples caught a glimpse into the heart of God and found their world made new. What a profound learning experience that must have been! For in it we see two adult disciples who, encountering the risen Lord, grow stronger in love, knowledge, commitment, and zeal. As then, today, "Those who are already disciples of Jesus Christ. All the other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented to it. In refocusing our catechetical priorities, we will all need to discover new ways of thinking and acting that will vigorously renew the faith and strengthen the missionary dynamism of the Church. Although the task may seem daunting, we need look back no further than the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults twenty years ago to find a model for success. Today, most parishes participate in the catechumenal process, which has brought the Church in the United States great benefit. We seek similar fruits from adult faith formation. We write now to offer encouragement and to guide the reorientation of ministerial priorities and practices that we know this plan entails. At the same time, we rely upon your pastoral creativity and dedication to implement the plan effectively. The catechumenate is a blessing for those becoming Catholic and for the entire faith community. Renewal programs touch the lives of millions of adult Catholics. Countless Scripture study groups meet regularly to share the word of God and apply it to their lives. Faith-sharing communities are taking root and flourishing around the country. Catholic universities and colleges welcome adults into a variety of programs designed to foster their personal growth and to help them develop ministerial skills. Catholic schools and parish religious education programs have enriched the faith of adults who are parents and catechists. Parents in sacrament preparation programs grow in their appreciation of the sacraments and learn to share their faith with their children. Catholic media outlets and publishing companies provide a consistent stream of resources that promote spiritual growth. We offer heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed so generously to these and similar efforts of evangelization and catechesis. We seek to form parishes that are vitally alive in faith. These communities will provide a parish climate and an array of activities and resources designed to help adults more fully understand and live their faith. We seek to form adults who actively cultivate a lively baptismal and eucharistic spirituality with a powerful sense of mission and apostolate. Nourished by word, sacrament, and communal life, they will witness and share the Gospel in their homes, neighborhoods, places of work, and centers of culture. Some other statements clearly related to this present plan include our national plan for

evangelization, Go and Make Disciples; our reflections on the social mission of the parish, Communities of Salt and Light; our statement on the laity, Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium; our synthesis of social doctrine in Sharing Catholic Social Teaching; and our letter In Support of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools. Taken together, these documents offer a body of teaching and a wide-ranging and mutually reinforcing agenda for mission and renewal in the Church in our country. We are convinced that effective adult faith formation will make our efforts in all these initiatives more fruitful. Fidelity to the Gospel means engagement with the world, and so we begin in Part I with a look at some of the concrete challenges and opportunities that we face. In Part II we describe key elements of mature faith. In Part III we identify three key goals to seek, a number of reliable principles to employ, six content areas to address, and several approaches to follow in providing sound and diversified adult faith formation. In Part IV we focus on the parish as the locus of adult faith formation ministry and identify critical roles of parish leadership and diocesan support. Pastors who bear primary responsibility for catechetical formation in their parishes 8 Parish adult faith formation leaders, both professional staff and active parishioners Directors of liturgy and music Other members of parish staffsâ€”clergy, religious, and laityâ€”who share directly or indirectly in responsibility for formation All parish faith formation ministers who serve in any role or setting e. Ourselves as bishops, teachers of the faith who bear chief responsibility for "the overall direction of catechesis" in our dioceses 9 Our diocesan staffs charged specifically to care for adult faith formation and all their colleagues in diocesan ministry whose work also nurtures adult faith at different stages in the process 10 Other diocesan staff members who work with adults in their ministry e. If you work with adults, you have the opportunity to help them grow in faith. We offer the vision and principles of this plan to guide and encourage you in this essential ministry. Through fervent prayer and pastoral workâ€”and relying on the grace of the Holy Spiritâ€”our efforts together will help the whole Catholic people advance in authentic discipleship and fulfill their baptismal call and mission to grow to the full maturity of Christ cf. Today is no exception. We offer below a brief overview of some of the opportunities and challenges we see today. This is the context in which adult faith formation must become our chief catechetical priority. We see in this society a widespread spiritual hungerâ€”a quest for meaning and for a deeply personal experience of God and of community. This hunger helps explain the widespread interest today in new religious movements and in New Age spirituality. In this we see opportunity, for "God is opening before the Church the horizons of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel. They seek out these opportunities wherever they can find them, whether in their own parishes, in ecclesial movements or associations, in small communities of faith, or with people of other Christian traditions. Not only are computers transforming the way we live and work, they enable many adults to pursue lifelong learning to keep pace with the rapidly changing workplace. Communication technology has also made the world smaller through e-mail, global networks, and increased contacts with other cultures. This globalization of society increases our awareness of and interdependence with other peoples and societies. Adults are responding to these changes by self-directed learning, on-the-job training, and enrolling in continuing education courses in large numbers. Today that Spirit is awakening a new evangelization and a new apologetics. This dynamic movement needs our fullest possible collaboration, so that the Good News of the kingdom of God and the person of Jesus may touch the hearts and minds of all who search for fullness of life. For adults to fulfill their roles in this new era of the Church, their faith formation must be lifelong, just as they must continue to learn to keep up in the changing world. It should be in regular use: Secularism, materialism, atheism, ethical relativism, religious indifference, and tensions rooted in religious or cultural pluralism are prevalent in society. Many of our contemporaries question the validity of objective moral norms and deny the connection of freedom and truth. Parents look to the Church for guidance and help to grow closer as couples, stronger as families, and better able to prepare their children morally and spiritually for life in this complex and challenging society. Others may know about the gospel message but have not personally experienced the risen Christ. They may seek out or be recruited into non-denominational, evangelical, or fundamentalist churches, or into New Age or other religious movements. Far too often they simply abandon the Christian faith altogether. It is time to identify and address these shortcomings and build on our strengths so as to forge a more balanced and mature catechetical ministry. Two contemporary resources to help us in this task are the

General Directory for Catechesis with its pastoral principles and the doctrinal synthesis of the Catechism. We must faithfully and creatively adapt both resources to meet both the challenges and the opportunities we face in the United States today. Disciples young and old are called by name to go into the vineyard. In responding to this call, adults "have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. Effective adult formation is necessary to "equip the holy ones for the work of ministry" Eph 4: Every Church ministry will be energized through a dynamic ministry of adult catechesis. An adult community whose faith is well-formed and lively will more effectively pass that faith on to the next generation. Moreover, the witness of adults actively continuing their own formation shows children and youth that growth in faith is lifelong and does not end upon reaching adulthood. It ought to be "the organizing principle, which gives coherence to the various catechetical programs offered by a particular Church. Thus, all catechesis is geared to a lifelong deepening of faith in Christ. How necessary, then, that the catechetical ministry with adults set an example of the highest quality and vitality. While most Catholic parishes place a high priority on the faith formation of children and youth, far fewer treat adult faith formation as a priority. This choice is made in parish staffing decisions, job descriptions, budgets, and parishioner expectations. This task is a sacred trust and a serious responsibility that we must always fulfill with utmost care and dedication. We do not wish to weaken our commitment to this essential ministry in any way. But to teach as Jesus did means calling and equipping all Christians of every age and stage of life to fulfill their baptismal call to holiness in family, Church, and societyâ€”their mission to evangelize and transform the world into a more caring and just society. Accordingly, we strongly reaffirm that, "without neglecting its commitment to children, catechesis needs to give more attention to adults than it has been accustomed to do. Qualities of Mature Adult Faith and Discipleship "By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. It is a personal adherence to God and assent to his truth. As disciples, through the power of the Holy Spirit, our lives become increasingly centered on Jesus and the kingdom he proclaims. By opening ourselves to him we find community with all his faith-filled disciples and by their example come to know Jesus more intimately. By following the example of his self-giving love we learn to be Christian disciples in our own time, place, and circumstances. The calls to holiness, to community, and to service of God and neighbor are "facets of Christian life that come to full expression only by means of development and growth toward Christian maturity. We see it in adults and marvel especially at the beauty of faith in those who have persevered in following the Lord over the full course of a lifetime: The General Directory for Catechesis says that it is "a living, explicit, and fruitful confession of faith. A full and rich development of these three characteristics is what we aim for in adult catechesis and Christian living. As such, faith is living and active, sharing many of the qualities of living things: A searching faith leads to deepening conversion.

Chapter 4 : Area 51 - Wikipedia

Thornton acknowledged the term's wider connotation meant an "ascetical person" such as the "Desert Ascetics." The original Greek noun, askesis, meaning "exercise, training," derives from the verb, askein, meaning "to exercise." Martin Thornton, The Heart of the Parish (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley,),

Individuals applying for the Emergency Medical Technician national certification must meet the following requirements: Candidates must have completed the course within the past two years and the course Program Director must verify successful course completion on the National Registry website. Successful completion of the National Registry cognitive knowledge and a state approved psychomotor skills exams. Passed portions of each exam cognitive and psychomotor remain valid for twelve 12 months. Notes If the initial Emergency Medical Technician EMT educational program was completed more than two years ago, and the candidate is currently state licensed at the EMT level, the candidate must document successful completion of a state-approved EMT refresher course or 24 hours of equivalent continuing education topic hours within the past two years. If the candidate is not currently state licensed as an EMT and it has been more than two years from the completion of an approved EMT course, the candidate must complete a new state-approved EMT course prior to applying for National Certification. Submit a National Registry application and answer all questions truthfully. The National Registry may deny certification or take other appropriate actions in regards to applicants for certification or recertification when a criminal conviction has occurred. The application fee is non-transferable and non-refundable. This fee is charged for each attempt of the cognitive examination. The electronic ATT contains scheduling instructions and important details concerning proper identification required at testing centers. The National Registry considers the individual to be solely responsible for their certification. Disciplinary Policy and Rights of Appeal The National Registry has disciplinary procedures, rights of appeal and due process within its policies. The number of items a candidate can expect on the EMT exam will range from 70 to The exam will also have 10 pilot questions that do not affect the final score. The maximum amount of time given to complete the exam is 2 hours. The exam will cover the entire spectrum of EMS care including: In order to pass the exam, candidates must meet a standard level of competency. The passing standard is defined by the ability to provide safe and effective entry level emergency medical care. We strongly encourage candidates to review the following information: The table below indicates what percent of the test will focus on each topic area.

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Let us, on behalf of the rewards which are to come, take up the combat for the glory of God and of His Christ and of the adorable Holy Spirit. Let us not remain in our present state of negligence and passivity and, by ever postponing to the morrow and the future the beginning of the work, fritter away the time at hand by our continued sloth. Then, being taken unprepared, with our hands empty of good works, by Him who demands our souls from us, we shall not be admitted to the joy of the nuptial chamber and we shall then bewail and lament the time of our life wasted in evil doing, when penance is no longer possible. Now is the time to endure; then will be the day of consolation. Now, God is the Helper of such as turn aside from the evil way; then, He will be the dread and unerring Inquisitor of the thoughts and words and deeds of men. Now, we enjoy His longanimity; then, we shall know His just judgment, when we have risen, some unto never-ending punishment, others unto life everlasting, and everyone shall receive according to his works. Shall we not rouse ourselves unto sobriety? Why will we not recall ourselves from our accustomed way of life to the strict observance of the Gospel? Why will we not place before our eyes that fearsome and manifest day of the Lord, when the kingdom of heaven will receive those who, because of their works, take their place on the right hand of the Lord, but the gehenna of fire and eternal darkness will envelop those who, because of their lack of good works, have been rejected and placed at the left hand. What man who sits at home or slumbers during the sowing ever filled the fold of his garment with sheaves at the harvest? Who has gathered grapes from a vine which he has not planted and tended? They who labor possess the fruits. Rewards and crowns belong to the victors. Who would ever crown one who did not even strip himself for the combat with his adversary? According to the Apostle, indeed, it is necessary not only to conquer but to strive lawfully; 2 Tim. The man who withholds one or two, perhaps, of the ten talents entrusted to him, but restores the rest, is not looked upon as generous for paying back the major part of the sum ; by his withholding the lesser part he is shown to be unjust and avaricious. Withholding, do I say? When he who was entrusted with one talent subsequently gave back this same talent whole and entire as he had received it, he was condemned for not having added to what had been given him. Well, then, someone will say, will the large number of Christians who do not keep all the commandments practice the observance of some of them in vain? In this connection, it is well to recall blessed Peter, who, after he had performed so many good actions and had been the recipient of such great blessings, was told, upon his being guilty of one lapse only: But, someone might say, it is written: But let the objector hear also the words of the Apostle: Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. Nor will he who observes the commandments in fear and who is ever wary of incurring the penalty for sloth, keep some of the commandments laid upon him and neglect others, but he will regard the punishment of every act of disobedience as equally to be dreaded. For this reason he who is in all things fearful out of pious timidity is called blessed, Prov. Yet, neither does the hireling will to disobey orders; how would he receive the pay for his tending of the vine if he did not do all that had been agreed? If by failing to provide one necessary attention he renders the vine profitless to the owner, who would pay a reward, so long as the damage remains, to him who wrought the mischief? The third form of service is that prompted by love. And this filial devotion he will render even more earnestly when he recalls the words of the Apostle: And if I be a master, where is my fear? Such expectations are truly the fantasies of a foolish mind. How shall I be worthy of the company of Job I who do not accept even an ordinary mishap with thanksgiving? How shall I who am lacking in magnanimity toward my enemy stand in the presence of David? Or of Daniel, if I do not seek for God in continual continency and earnest supplication? Or of any of the saints, if I have not walked in their footsteps? What judge of a contest is so uninformed as to think that the victor and he who has not taken part in the contest should receive crowns of equal merit? What general ever summoned to an equal share in the spoils with the conquerors those who were not even present at the battle? God is good, but He is also just, and it is the nature of the just to reward in proportion to merit, as it is written: But such as turn aside into bonds, the Lord shall lead out with the workers of iniquity. He who causes the sun to rise Matt. For the one let us love Him, for the

other let us fear, that it may not be said also to us: Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath. If the man of God must be perfect as it is written 2 Tim. Whatever each one regards as wanting in himself, therefore, he should refer to the common consideration. That which is obscure can be more easily discerned by the earnest scrutiny of several persons, since, to be sure, God grants issue to the quest under the guidance and counsel of the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord says, therefore: The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. Knowing as we do that at the tribunal of Christ the words of the Holy Scripture will confront us for He says: Since the Scripture 1 has given us leave to propound questions, we require, first of all, to be informed as to whether the commandments of God have a certain order or sequence, as it were, so that one comes first, another, second, and so on; or whether all are interdependent and equal so far as precedence is concerned, so that one may begin at will wherever he likes, as with a circle. Your question is an old one, proposed long ago in the Gospel when the lawyer came to the Lord and said: This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. With the aid of these and similar utterances which are handed down to us in the Holy Scripture, we can discover order and sequence in the whole series of the commandments. Speak to us first, therefore, of the love of God ; for we have heard that we must love Him, but we would learn how this may be rightly accomplished. The love of God is not something that is taught, for we do not learn from another to rejoice in the light or to desire life, nor has anyone taught us to love our parents or nurses. In the same way and even to a far greater degree is it true that instruction in divine law is not from without, but, simultaneously with the formation of the creature man, I mean a kind of rational force was implanted in us like a seed, which, by an inherent tendency, impels us toward love. Wherefore, we, also, approving your zeal as essential for reaching the goal, shall endeavor with the help of God and the support of your prayers, and as power is given us by the Spirit, to enkindle the spark of divine love latent within you. Now, it is necessary to know that, although this is only one virtue, yet, by its efficacy, it comprises and fulfills every commandment. First, however, we shall establish the fact that we have already received from God the power to fulfill all the commandments given us by Him, so that we may not take our obligation in bad part, as though something quite strange and unexpected were being asked of us, and that we may not become filled with conceit, as if we were paying back something more than had been given us. By means of this power, rightly and properly used, we pass our entire lives holy and virtuously, but through a perverted use of it we gradually fall prey to vice. Now, this is the definition of vice: Similarly, the definition of the virtue which God requires of us is: This being the case, we shall apply the same principle also to charity. Having received, therefore, a command to love God, we have possessed the innate power of loving from the first moment of our creation. Of this, no external proof is required, since anyone can discover it of himself and within himself. We are by nature desirous of the beautiful, even though individual conceptions of the beautiful differ widely. Furthermore, we possess without being taught a love for those who are near and dear to us, and we spontaneously render to our benefactors a full measure of good will. Now, what is more admirable than Divine Beauty? What reflection is sweeter than the thought of the magnificence of God? Words do not adequately convey nor is the ear capable of receiving [knowledge of them]. The rays of the morning star, or the brightness of the moon, or the light of the sun all are more unworthy to be mentioned in comparison with that splendor and these heavenly bodies are more inferior to the true light than is the deep darkness of night, gloomy and moonless, to brightest noonday. This Beauty, invisible to the eyes of the flesh, is apprehended by the mind and soul alone. Whenever it cast its light upon any of the saints, it left them with an intolerable pain of longing, and they would say, weary of life on earth: Indeed, by reason of their insatiable eagerness to enjoy the vision of Divine Beauty, they prayed that contemplation of the joy of the Lord would last as long as the whole of eternal life. Men are by nature, then, desirous of the beautiful. But, that which is truly beautiful and desirable is the good. Now, the good is God, and, since all creatures desire good, therefore, all creatures desire God. So then, whatever is rightly done of free choice is also in us naturally, at least, in the case of those who have not perverted their rational faculty by iniquity. The love of God is, therefore, demanded of us as a strict obligation, and for a soul to fail in this is the most unendurable of all evils. Separation and estrangement from God are

more unbearable than the punishment reserved for hell and more oppressive to the sufferer than the being deprived of light is to the eye, even if there be no pain in addition, or than the loss of its life is to an animal. If, moreover, the love of children for their parents is a natural endowment and if this love is noticeable in the behavior even of brute beasts, as well as in the affection of human beings in early infancy for their mothers, let us not appear to be less rational than infants or more savage than wild beasts by alienating ourselves from Him who made us and by being unloving toward Him. Even if we did not know what He is from His goodness, yet, from the very fact that we are made by Him, we ought to feel an extraordinary affection for Him and cling to a constant remembrance of Him, as infants do to their mothers. Furthermore, he who is our benefactor is foremost among those whom we naturally love. This gratitude is characteristic not of men only, but it is also felt by almost all animals, so that they attach themselves to those who have conferred some good upon them. Now, if we bear a natural love and good will toward our benefactors and undergo any kind of hardship to make a return for what was first rendered to us, what words can fitly treat of the gifts of God? So many are they in number as even to defy enumeration; so great and marvelous are they that a single one of them claims for the Giver all our gratitude. Some, therefore, I shall pass over, although these in themselves show forth transcendent greatness and glory, yet, being surpassed by greater ones as are the stars by the rays of the sun, they appear to be of a less striking worth. I have not the leisure, in fact, to leave the surpassing benefits and measure from His lesser gifts the goodness of our Benefactor. Let us, then, say nothing about the rising of the sun, the phases of the moon, climates, the alternation of the seasons, the water dropping from the clouds, other moisture rising from the earth, the sea itself, the whole earth and its produce, the creatures that live in the waters, those which inhabit the air, the countless varieties of animals all beings destined to minister to our well-being. But what we may not pass over, even if we wished, that which it is quite impossible for one of sound mind and reason to be silent about yet to speak of it adequately is more impossible is the fact that God made man according to His image and likeness, that He deemed him worthy of the knowledge of Himself, that in preference to all the animals He adorned him with rationality, bestowed upon him the opportunity of taking his delight in the unbelievable beauties of paradise, and made him the chief of all the creatures on earth. Then, even after he was seduced by the serpent and fell into sin, and by sin into death and its attendant evils, God did not forsake him. First, He gave to him the Law as an aid, appointed angels to watch over and care for him, sent prophets to refute evil and teach virtue, checked his impulses toward vice by threats, aroused his eagerness for the good by promises, revealed again and again the fate of each of the two classes [the good and the wicked], by making a pre judgment in the case of divers persons so as to warn the rest. In addition to all these and other favors equally great, He did not turn away from man when he persisted in disobedience. Even the manner in which this favor was granted calls for the greatest wonder: Nor was He content with merely bringing back to life those who were dead, but He conferred upon them the dignity of divinity and prepared everlasting rest transcending every human concept in the magnitude of its joy. He who neither created us nor died for us will count us, nevertheless, among his followers in disobedience and neglect of the commandments of God. This reproach to the Lord and this triumph of our Enemy appear to me more dreadful than the punishments of hell, because we provide the Enemy of Christ with matter for boasting and with cause for exulting over Him who died for us and rose again.

Underlying ascetical practices is the belief that there exists a relationship between such practices and moral development, that is, between the body and the soul or mind. This training or control of the body is seen as the deepest sign of moral transformation.

It refers to the rigorous and systematic techniques used to alter patterns of life – especially concerning eating, sexual behaviour, and sleep – in order to achieve religious ends. Underlying ascetical practices is the belief that there exists a relationship between such practices and moral development, that is, between the body and the soul or mind. This training or control of the body is seen as the deepest sign of moral transformation. For example, in the early Church it was thought that one could smell sanctity: To discipline and train the body is to discipline and train the soul, and thus to purify the soul from its passions in order to love God more perfectly. It has been found amongst certain groups of philosophers, such as the Stoics and Cynics, to indicate practices designed to overcome the vices and develop the virtues. Asceticism in Christian history Asceticism developed within early Christianity in the context of eschatological beliefs. Living with these eschatological hopes, some began to think that through human control and renunciation of the body – their own ascetical behaviour – they might hasten this second coming of Christ and thus the full redemption of the world. There had been some precedent for this is the community of the Essenes, for example – the community of male Jews living near the Dead Sea in the first century, who had sought to bring Israel back to God by their own disciplined way of life. Perhaps the first organized Christian ascetics were those who came to be known as Encratites in the second century, some of whom were linked to Gnosticism, or to Ebionite or Docetic groups. They believed that the church should be made up of women and men who were sexually continent and who also abstained from wine and meat. These activities were to be avoided because they linked humans to animals. To engage in a society which relied upon marriage arrangements was to enter into the animal-like cycle of coupling, reproduction, and death. Some of these Encratite communities produced the apocryphal Gospels and Acts, such as the group in Syria which produced the Acts of Thomas and the Gospel of Thomas. These texts strongly urge abstention from the world: All Encratites lived as groups of celibate male and female Christians, not as individual recluses, and they survived and grew by attracting converts. Historians have often explained this by suggesting that Christians were seeking a form of purity which had been lost with the Christianization of the Empire. Christians ceased to be persecuted and therefore the possibility of the ultimate act of ascetical Christianity – martyrdom – was removed. There is much truth in this explanation – although before the fourth century there were others, as well as the Encratites, who engaged in asceticism. Some went into the desert, especially the Egyptian desert, to battle their demons – most famously, perhaps, St Antony at the end of the third century. There was a long tradition of people doing this, including Jesus himself: Both women and men went into the desert and the sayings of the Desert Mothers and Fathers were collected, as people visited them to seek their wisdom. Their circumstances varied enormously. Some had their libraries with them, while others found a cave or created a cell on the ridge of a mountain where they hoped to survive against the heat, the scarcity of food, and the wild animals. All kept an ascetic regime of vigil and prayer, eating and fasting, and some manual labour. Sexual continence was important but probably not an overriding concern for many, as they struggled to survive both physically and psychically within the vastness of the desert and within the ascetic regime. The greater concern was that the ascetic might lose his or her humanity what we might call sanity – break out of the strict regime and approach or even reach mental breakdown. The body was central in all of this activity: Some lived alone while others gathered into groups and in this way, initially in Egypt, monasticism evolved – that is, the organization of monks and nuns into formalized communities. The Egyptian monks, in particular, cultivated a singleness of heart: There were those who wished to lead the ascetic life but could not leave their city. These included women and clergy. Girls and women who dedicated themselves to God in this way rejected the calls of society. They tended to be women from the upper orders of society where the primary purpose was to circulate wealth through their marriages and the bearing of male heirs. Ambrose, in his treatise *De Virginibus*, gave encouragement to those young

women who wished to dedicate themselves as Holy Virgins but encountered opposition from their parents. Indeed, Ambrose grew up in such a holy household, for his elder sister, Marcellina, was a consecrated virgin and lived with their widowed mother and companions in their wealthy Italian home. In the Middle Ages, a growing emphasis on the humanity and passion of Christ led to ascetical practices based on an imitation of the physical sufferings of Christ, in particular amongst the mendicant orders. Sixteenth-century Reformation theologies of salvation, which emphasized the depravity of humankind and the worthlessness of any human activities, necessarily undermined the whole rationale for, and practice of, asceticism. Heirs of the Protestant reformation, such as Puritans, well-known for abstaining from the pleasures of the body, cannot be said to have been truly ascetics, for their practices of denial were cast merely in negative terms; asceticism proper is for the body and not against it, a view which has continued into the modern period within the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Asceticism and Buddhism Buddhist ascetical practices are about releasing a person from desire, suffering, and rebirth as represented by the body, sex, and death. That is, achieving Nirvana, and freeing a person from addictive attachments. But over and against what can often seem a dualistic attitude to mind and body within Buddhism, many Buddhist texts see extreme physical ascetical practices as fruitless. In the early stages of his quest for Enlightenment, he embarked on a very extreme form of self-mortification, and he became very thin: A sculpture of the Buddha, now in the Lahore Museum, represents him in this state. He found that neither these ascetical practices nor his earlier life of comfort as a prince brought him to any understanding of the questions he had about life, suffering, and death. His emphasis was on moderation, for he believed both indulgence and denial to be confusing to the mind. In several discourses he was critical of those monks who practised extreme asceticism: The Buddha allowed 12 optional ascetic practices, all of which emphasized moderation; he resisted attempts to make five of these compulsory for monks. There is perhaps a tension within Buddhist attitudes about asceticism and the body, as reflected in a set of 13 ascetical practices named the *dhutanga*s. This list is generally not found in canonical texts, and several of the practices have been seen as marginal, and continue to be regarded as marginal today. Indeed contemporary Buddhist monks and nuns, for example in Thailand, have found that physical decorum is important, alongside any of these ascetical practices, in the presentation of their bodies socially. The proper external conduct of the body – such as the wearing of the robe neatly, good deportment, downcast eyes, and observation of good behaviour – is frequently seen as evidence for a state of virtue. This social reality, coupled with an emphasis on moderation in asceticism, contrasts with Buddhist meditations on the body which would seem to present – and sometimes cultivates – a very dualistic notion of mind and body. Asceticism and other major religions Sikhs regard asceticism with some caution, for austere practices and penances are seen as irrelevant and unhelpful to spiritual development, though an appropriate self-discipline may involve abstention from alcohol and advocacy of a vegetarian diet. There is an exception in an ascetic order, the Udasis. Islam likewise regards asceticism with suspicion, although fasting during the month of Ramadhan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, derived from the Koran. Judaism has generally given little place to asceticism, except in early ascetic groups such as the Essenes, and amongst the Nazirites; Jewish ascetics who vow to abstain from grape products, from cutting hair, and from touching a corpse. Rather, in Judaism, the emphasis is always on thanksgiving for daily blessings. For example, fasting in itself is usually seen as displeasing to God and is important only for specific reasons on specific designated occasions, such as Yom Kippur. Nevertheless, a wide variety of views on asceticism are found in the Talmud. In the Jerusalem Talmud it is said, against asceticism, that a person will be obliged to give an account before God for every legitimate pleasure he has denied himself. Medieval Jewish thinkers were often influenced by Greek philosophy, sometimes taking a dualistic attitude to body, with the view that the destruction of the soul occurs in direct proportion to the building up of the body. Jane Shaw Bibliography Brown, P. *The body and society. Men, women and sexual renunciation in early Christianity.* Columbia University Press, New York. *Religion and the body.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Chapter 7 : EMT Certification

homily 15 On guarding and keeping oneself from lax and negligent men, and on how, by drawing near to them, heedlessness and laxity rule over a man and he is filled with every passion.

The English term asceticism means "the practice of self-discipline". It relates to ascetical theology by answering the question, what are we following? What do we know about God, our nature, and our redemption? Ascetical theology depends upon dogmatic theology for a foundation. Moral theology addresses how we must behave. It is the behavioral dimension, expounded. Here are developed the implications of the Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, and other precepts of the faith. These are especially important for guiding the faithful through the first phases of prayer life, and for being certain one is on the right path: Moral theology, then, guides the ascetic who strives to live these moral truths that are informed by the dogmas of the religion, and who also seeks also to go beyond moral requirements. Mystical theology In the various theologies pertaining to following Christ, it is common to refer to the soul, which Christian theology affirms to be eternal. It is the soul that makes progress toward God, it is the soul that is called by God. In the earlier stages of prayer life, aridities are experienced, which are moments during which the zeal for prayer seems lessened. In later stages, passive trials such as the dark night of the soul St. John of the Cross are experienced. In these phenomena, God is said to be purifying the soul, making her the soul is feminine in Catholic theology continue on the basis of sheer faith rather than any palpable feeling derived from prayer. These and other experiences are studied in mystical theology. Christian dogma does not teach that mystical phenomena are necessary to be granted a place in Heaven. Perfection is a Christian duty To be granted a place in heaven, it is necessary to be "in a state of grace" at the moment of death. A state of grace means that a person is genuinely sorry for sins committed "preferably sorry because they offend God and not simply on account of a fear of Hell" and to have not committed grave sin since the last apology or confession. It is plausible that without such an effort, one will encounter the moment of death without appropriate sorrow and love, simply by being out of the habit. It is in this sense that perfection is said to be a duty of Christians. The Scriptures encourage perfection, [3] and the value of charity or love would militate against a minimalist understanding of the Christian life, as does the testimony of the Church Fathers. Key spiritual enemies world, flesh, devil The world is not evil in itself, according to the religion, as nothing created by God is evil. The problem is that in our fallen nature, we do not perceive things correctly, and our desires are out of alignment with the truth. Our flesh likewise is not evil, but without being fully united with God "which, after the fall, we are not" we do not understand the gifts of the flesh and are distracted by them; the religion teaches that we tend to make idols out of our sensations and desires. The devil is evil, but was not created so; he is a creature as we are and cannot control our will but is very intelligent and crafty. He is said to hate physical creation and to desire its destruction. Christianity does not give a complete accounting of the devil, known as Satan, but recognizes that he attempts to lure us from our goal of union with God. Faith may be analogized to the roots of a plant, love to the stem, and the fruit is the good work that naturally flows therefrom. An act is good in this sense if it is carried out while in the state of grace, i. The ordinary actions of daily life are sanctifying if done in this context. Role of sacraments The Sacraments Catholic Church, according to dogmatic theology, both symbolize and confer grace. The two sacraments that are routinely encountered by the faithful are Eucharist and confession. Grace is a rather complicated subject; see References below. The Eucharist affords a real and transforming union with God; see for example Jn. For a discussion of the spiritual implications of Eucharist, see historical roots of Catholic Eucharistic theology. Confession is purifying if the penitent is well-disposed, i. It is considered essential to undertake this purifying act before receiving the Eucharist. As one progresses toward union with God, more and more problems within the soul become apparent. Once confessed, new problems emerge. In this way the penitent embarks on a program of purgation, developing greater sensitivity as to what is most conducive to Christian love. Catholicism[edit] Asceticism, as a branch of theology, may be briefly defined as the scientific exposition of Christian asceticism. Asceticism askesis, askein, taken in its literal signification, means a polishing, a smoothing or refining. The Greeks used the word to designate the exercises of the athletes,

developing the powers dormant in the body and training it to its full natural beauty. The end for which these gymnastic exercises were undertaken was the laurel-wreath bestowed on the victor in the public games. The life of the Christian is, as Christ assures, a struggle for the kingdom of heaven Matthew To give his readers an object-lesson of this spiritual battle and moral endeavour, St. Paul, who had been trained in the Greek fashion, used the picture of the Greek pentathlon 1 Corinthians 9: The moral struggle then consists first of all in attacking and removing the obstacles, that is the evil concupiscences concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes and pride of life , which effects of original sin serve to try and test man Trid. V, De peccato originali. This first duty is called by the Apostle Paul the putting off of "the old man" Ephesians 4: The second duty, in his words, is to "put on the new man" according to the image of God Ephesians 4: The new man is Christ. Its foundation is laid in baptism, which adopts Christians as children of God through the imparting of sanctifying grace. Thenceforth, it must be perfected by the supernatural virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost and actual grace. Since, then, ascetics is the systematic treatise of the striving after Christian perfection, it may be defined as the scientific guide to the acquisition of Christian perfection, which consists in expressing within ourselves, with the help of Divine grace, the image of Christ, by practising the Christian virtues, and applying the means given for overcoming the obstacles. Let us subject the various elements of this definition to a closer examination. Nature of Christian perfection[edit] Catholics must reject the conception of the Protestants who fancy that Christian perfection, as understood by Catholics, is essentially negative asceticism cfr. Theologie", III, , and that the correct notion of asceticism was discovered by the Reformers. There can be no doubt as to the Catholic position, clearly voiced by St. Bonaventure who never tired of repeating that the ideal of asceticism upheld by them was the ideal of the Catholic past, of the Fathers, of Christ Himself, emphatically stating that bodily asceticism has not an absolute, but only a relative, value. Thomas calls it a "means to an end", to be used with discretion. Bonaventure says that bodily austerities "prepare, foster and preserve perfection" "Apolog. He also points to Christ, the ideal of Christian perfection, who was less austere in fasting than John the Baptist , and to the founders of religious orders, who prescribed fewer ascetic exercises for their communities than they themselves practised cf. Zahn, "Vollkommenheitsideal" in "Moralprobleme", Freiburg, , p. On the other hand, Catholics do not deny the importance of ascetic practices for acquiring Christian perfection. A like value is put upon those exercises which restrain and guide the powers of the soul. Consequently, Catholics actually fulfil and always have fulfilled what Harnack sets down as a demand of the Gospel and what he pretends to have looked for in vain among Catholics; for they do "wage battle against mammon, care, and selfishness, and practise that charity which loves to serve and to sacrifice itself" Harnack, "Essence of Christianity". The Catholic ideal, then, is by no means confined to the negative element of asceticism, but is of a positive nature. The essence of Christian perfection is love. As the end of man is God, what unites him, even on earth, most closely with God is love 1 Corinthians 6: Love lives in all things and all things live in and through love. Love imparts to all things the right measure and directs them all to the last end. There are many provinces, but they constitute one realm. The organs are many, but the organism is one" Zahn, l. Love is therefore rightly called "the bond of perfection" Colossians 3: That Christian perfection consists in love has ever been the teaching of Catholic ascetical writers. A few testimonies may suffice. Writing to the Corinthians, Clement of Rome says 1 Corinthians The Epistle of Barnabas insists that the way of light is "the love of him who created us" agapesis ton se poiesanta; Funk, l. Ignatius never wearies in his letters of proposing faith as the light and love as the way, love being the end and aim of faith "Ad Ephes. The "Pastor" of Hermas acknowledges the same ideal when he sets down "a life for God" zoe to theo as the sum-total of human existence. To these Apostolic Fathers may be added St. Augustine, who regards perfect justice as tantamount to perfect love. Bonaventure speak the same language, and the ascetical writers of all subsequent centuries have faithfully followed in their authoritative footsteps cf. Lehre von den evang. However, though perfection is essentially love, not any degree of love is sufficient to constitute moral perfection. The ethical perfection of the Christian consists in the perfection of love, which requires such a disposition "that we can act with speed and ease even though many obstacles obstruct our path" Mutz, "Christl. But this disposition of the soul supposes that the passions have been subdued; for it is the result of a laborious struggle, in which the moral virtues, steeled by love, force back

and quell the evil inclinations and habits, supplanting them by good inclinations and habits. Owing to the weakness of human nature and the presence of the evil concupiscence fomes peccati: Likewise, perfection on this side of the grave will never reach such a degree that further growth is impossible, as is clear from the mind of the Church and the nature of our present existence status vioe ; in other words, our perfection will always be relative. Since perfection consists in love, it is not the privilege of one particular state, but may be, and has as a fact been, attained in every state of life cf. Christian and Religious Perfection. Consequently, it would be wrong to identify perfection with the so-called state of perfection and the observance of the evangelical counsels. Thomas rightly observes, there are perfect men outside the religious orders and imperfect men within them Summa theol. True it is that the conditions for realizing the ideal of a Christian life are, generally speaking, more favourable in the religious state than in the secular avocations. But not all are called to the religious life, nor would all find in it their contentment. To sum up, the end is the same, the means are different. The ideal, to which the Christian should conform and towards which he should strive with all his powers both natural and supernatural, is Jesus Christ.

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HOMILY 15 On guarding and keeping oneself from lax and negligent men, and on how, by drawing near to them, heedlessness and laxity rule over a man and he is filled with every passion. And on guarding oneself from proximity to youths, lest the mind be defiled by licentious thoughts.

FREE Catholic Classes The word asceticism comes from the Greek askesis which means practice, bodily exercise, and more especially, athletic training. The early Christians adopted it to signify the practice of the spiritual things, or spiritual exercises performed for the purpose of acquiring the habits of virtue. At present it is not infrequently employed in an opprobrious sense, to designate the religious practices of oriental fanatics as well as those of the Christian saint, both of whom are by some placed same category. It is not uncommonly confounded with austerity, even by Catholics, but incorrectly. External penances even in the saints, are regarded with suspicion. Jerome, whose proneness to austerity makes him an especially valuable authority on this point, thus writes to Celantia: Be on your guard when you begin to mortify your body by abstinence and fasting, lest you imagine yourself to be perfect and a saint; for perfection does not consist in this virtue. It is only a help; a disposition; a means though a fitting one, for the attainment of true perfection. Thus asceticism according to the definition of St. Jerome, is an effort to attain true perfection, penance being only an auxiliary virtue thereto. It should be noted also that the expression "fasting and abstinence" is commonly used in Scripture and by ascetic writers as a generic term for all sorts of penance. Neither should asceticism be identified with mysticism. For although genuine mysticism can not exist without asceticism, the reverse is not true. One can be an ascetic without being a mystic. Asceticism is ethical; mysticism, largely intellectual. Asceticism has to do with the moral virtues; mysticism is a state of unusual prayer or contemplation. They are distinct from each other, though mutually co-operative. Moreover although asceticism is generally associated with the objectionable features of religion, and is regarded by some as one of them, it may be and is practised by those who affect to be swayed by no religious motives whatever. **Natural Asceticism** If for personal satisfaction, or self interest, or any other merely human reason, a man aims at the acquisition of the natural virtues, for instance, temperance, patience, chastity, meekness, etc. For he has entered upon a struggle with his animal nature; and if he is to achieve any measure of success, his efforts must be continuous and protracted. Nor can he exclude the practice of penance. Indeed he will frequently inflict upon himself both bodily and mental pain. He will not even remain within the bounds of strict necessity. He will punish himself severely, either to atone for failures, or to harden his powers of endurance, or to strengthen himself against future failures. He will be commonly described as an ascetic, as in fact he is. For he is endeavouring to subject the material part of his nature to the spiritual, or in other words, he is striving for natural perfection. The defect of this kind of asceticism is that, besides being prone to error in the acts it performs and the means it adopts, its motive is imperfect, or bad. It may be prompted by selfish reasons of utility, pleasure, aetheticism, ostentation, or pride. It is not to be relied upon for serious efforts and may easily give way under the strain of weariness or temptation. Finally, it fails to recognize that perfection consists in the acquisition of something more than natural virtue. **Christian Asceticism** It is prompted by the desire to do the will of God, any personal element of self-satisfaction which enters the motive vitiating it more or less. Its object is the subordination of the lower appetites to the dictates of right reason and the law of God, with the continued and necessary cultivation of the virtues which the Creator intended man to possess. Absolutely speaking, the will of God in this matter is discoverable by human reason, but it is explicitly laid down for us in the Ten Commandments, or Decalogue, which furnishes a complete code of ethical conduct. Some of these commandments are positive; others, negative. The negative precepts, "thou shalt not kill", "thou shalt not commit adultery", etc. They develop meekness, gentleness, self-control, patience, continence, chastity, justice, honesty, brotherly love, which are positive in their character, magnanimity, liberality, etc. Finally the fourth insists on obedience, respect for authority, observance of law, filial piety, and the like. Such were the virtues practised by the mass of the people of God under the Old Law, and this may be considered as the first step in true asceticism. For apart from the many instances of exalted holiness among the ancient Hebrews, the lives of the faithful followers of

the Law, that is the main body of the ordinary people must have been such as the Law enjoined and although their moral elevation might not be designated as asceticism in the present restricted and distorted meaning of the term, yet it probably appeared to the pagan world of those times very much as exalted virtue does to the world today. Even the works of penance to which they were subjected in the many fasts and abstinences, as well as the requirements of their ceremonial observances were much more severe than those imposed upon the Christians who succeeded them. In the New Dispensation the binding force of the Commandments continued, but the practice of virtue took on another aspect, in as much as the dominant motive presented to man for the service of God was not fear, but love, though fear was not means eliminated. God was to be the Lord indeed, but He was at the same time the Father and men were His children. The "neighbour" of the Jew was one of the chosen people, and even of him rigorous justice was to be exacted; it was an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. In the Christian dispensation the neighbour is not only one of the true faith, but the schismatic, the outcast, and the pagan. This supernatural love for even the vilest and most repellent representatives of humanity constitutes one of the distinctive marks of Christian asceticism. Moreover, the more extended and luminous revelation of Divine things, coupled with the greater abundance of spiritual assistance conferred chiefly through the instrumentality of the sacraments, make practice of virtue easier and more attractive at the same time more elevated, generous, intense and enduring, while the universality of Christianity lifts the practice of asceticism out of the narrow limitations of being the exclusive privilege of a single race into a common possession of all nations of the earth. The Acts of the Apostles show the transformation immediately effected among devout Jews who formed the first communities of Christians. That new and elevated form of virtue has remained in the Church ever since. Wherever the Church has been allowed to exert her influence we find virtue of the highest order among her people. Even among those whom the world regards as simple and ignorant there are most amazing perceptions of spiritual truths, intense love of God and of all that relates to Him, sometimes remarkable habits of prayer, purity of life both in individuals and in families, heroic patience in submitting to poverty, bodily suffering, and persecution, magnanimity in forgiving injury, tender solicitude for the poor and afflicted, though they themselves may be almost in the same condition ; and what most characteristic of all, a complete absence of envy of the rich and powerful and a generally undisturbed contentment and happiness in their own lot; while similar results are achieved among the wealthy and great, though not to the same extent. In a word, there is developed an attitude of soul so much at variance with the principles and methods generally obtaining in the pagan world that, from the beginning, and indeed throughout, under the Old Law , it was commonly described and denounced as folly. It might be classified as very lofty asceticism if its practice were not so common, and if the conditions of poverty and suffering in which these virtues are most frequently practised were not the result of physical or social necessity. But even if these conditions are not voluntary, the patient and uncomplaining acceptance of them constitutes a very noble kind of spirituality which easily develops into one of a higher kind and may be designated its third New Law we have not merely the reaffirmation of the precepts of the Old, but also the teachings and example of Christ Who, besides requiring obedience to the Commandments, continually appeals to His followers for proofs of personal affection and a closer imitation of His life than is possible by the mere fulfilment of the Law. The motives and the manner of this imitation are laid down in the Gospel, which as the basis taken by ascetical writers for their instructions. This imitation of Christ generally proceeds along three main lines, viz.: It is here especially that asceticism comes in for censure on the part of its opponents. Mortification, unworldliness, and detachment are particularly obnoxious to them. But in answer to their objection it will be sufficient to note that condemnations of such practices or aspirations must fall on Holy Scripture also, for it gives a distinct warrant for all three. Thus we have, as regards mortification, the words of St. Commending unworldliness, we have: It is scarcely necessary to note however, that the word "hate" is not to be taken in its strict sense, but only as indicating a greater love for God than for all things together. Such is the general scheme of this higher order of asceticism. The character of this asceticism is determined by its motive. In the first place a man may serve God in such a way that he is willing to make any sacrifice rather than commit a grievous sin. This disposition of soul, which is the lowest in the spiritual life, is necessary for salvation. Again, he may be willing to make such sacrifices rather than offend God by venial sin. Lastly he may, when this no

question of sin at all, be eager to do whatever will make his life harmonize with that of Christ. It is this last motive which the highest kind of asceticism adopts. These three stages are called by St. Ignatius "the three degrees of humility ", for the reason that they are the three steps in the elimination of self, and consequently three great advances towards union with God, who enters the soul in proportion as self is expelled. It is the spiritual state of St. Paul speaks when he says: Other ascetic writers describe them as states or conditions of the beginners the proficient and the perfect. They are not, however, to be considered chronologically distinct; as if the perfect man had nothing to do with the methods of the beginner, or vice versa. The roof is stretched while the foundations are being laid. Ignatius expresses it, if ever the love of God grows cold, the fear of Hell may rekindle it again. On the other hand, the beginner who has broken with mortal sin has already started in his growth to perfect charity. These states are also described as the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways. It is evident that the practice of unworldliness, of detachment from family and other ties, must be or the greatest number not the actual performance of those things, but only the serious disposition or readiness to make such sacrifices, in case God should require them, which, as a matter of fact in their case, He does not. They are merely affective, and not effective, but none the less they constitute a very sublime kind of spirituality. Sublime as it is, there are many examples of it in the Church, nor is it the exclusive possession of those who have abandoned the world or are about to do so, but it is the possession also of many whom necessity compels to live in the world, married as well as single, of those who are in the enjoyment of honour and wealth and of responsibility as well as of those who are in opposite conditions. They cannot effectively realize their desires or aspirations but their affections take that direction. Thus there are multitudes of men and women who though living in the world are not of it, who have no liking or taste for worldly display, though often compelled by their position, social or otherwise, to assume it, who avoid worldly advancement or honour not out of pusillanimity, but out of unconcern, or contempt, or knowledge of its danger; who, with opportunities for pleasure, practise penance, sometimes of the most rigorous character who would willingly, if it were possible, give up their lives to works of charity or devotion, who love the poor and dispense alms to the extent of, and even beyond, their means, who have strong attraction for prayer, and who withdraw from the world when it is possible for the meditation of divine things; who frequent the sacraments assiduously; who are the soul of every undertaking for the good of their fellow -men and the glory of God ; and whose dominant preoccupation in the advancement of the interest of God and the Church. Bishops and priests especially enter into this category. Even the poor and humble, who, having nothing to give, yet would give if they had any possessions, may be classed among such servants of Christ. That this asceticism is not only attainable but attained by laymen serves to bring out the truth which is sometimes lost sight of, viz. In fact, though one may live in the state of perfection, that is, be a member of a religious order, he may be surpassed in perfection by a layman in the world. But to reduce these sublime dispositions to actual practice, to make them not only affective but effective to realize what Christ meant when, after having told the multitude on the Mount of the blessedness of poverty of spirit, He said to the Apostles, "Blessed are you who are poor ", and to reproduce also the other virtues of Christ and the Apostles, the Church has established a life of actual poverty, chastity, and obedience. For that purpose, it has founded religious orders, thus enabling those who are desirous and able to practise this higher order of asceticism, to do so with greater facility and in greater security. Monastic or Religious Asceticism The establishment of religious orders was not the result of any sudden or mandatory legislation by the Church. On the contrary, the germs of religious life were implanted in it by Christ Himself from the very beginning. For in the Gospel we have repeated invitations to follow the evangelical counsels. Hence in the first days of the Church, we find that particular kind of asceticism widely practised which later developed into the form adopted by the Religious Orders. In the "History of the Roman Breviary " by Batiffol tr. Bayley , 15, we read: These consisted of men and women, alike, living in the world without severing themselves from the ties and obligations of ordinary life, yet binding themselves by private vow or public profession to live in chastity all their life, to fast all the week, to spend their days in prayer. They were called in Syria Monazonites and Parthenae , ascetics and virgins. They formed, as it were, a third order, a confraternity. In the first half of the fourth century, we find these associations of ascetics and virgins established in all the great Churches of the East, at Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa.

Chapter 9 : 15 Laws Of Leg Training

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I am of the view that this may in fact be Providential. We often need some distance to appreciate brilliance. His purpose was simple: His value to us today is that he wrote in prophetic anticipation of the then-nascent reconfiguration of Christian life post-Christendom. For Thornton, the recovery of Anglican strength and genius lies not in recreating past glory but rather renaissance: The second derives from the first; the subject grows out of the process. The possible implications of the absence or presence of a hyphen may seem, it is true, like an odd topic to consider. To be sure, Thornton would hardly reject these definitions. Both were important to his re-reading of formative influences for their profound bearing on Anglican prayer life renaissance. After all, spirituality is the stuff of ascetical theology no matter how it is conceived. Yet what, then, is a key to reviving ascetical theology along Thorntonian lines? Father Thornton made a distinction between 1. The second "ascetical-theology" refers to the wide variety of practices of personal devotion, such as particular set-prayers and devotions, biblical or theological meditations, rosary, fasting practices, mortifications and other acts. Commonly, such ascetical-theological practices are suggested by a spiritual director or guide, whether parish priest or other trusted adviser. Thornton in no way would diminish its importance. Asceticism, or ascetical-theology, is a primary subject of his still-popular *Christian Proficiency*, and the subject figures prominently in several other books. He drank deeply from early 20th-century Anglican ascetical writing from the likes of Underhill, Harton, Hardman, and Frost, as well as from Roman Catholic ascetical writing from the likes of Scaramelli, Baker, Ignatius, Guibert, Tanqueray, Goodier, and others. In so doing, Thornton grappled with the deeper question. What, he asked, might undergird such ascetical-theology practices? Ever the farmer and gardener, Thornton sensed that there must be a wider theological environment within which ascetical-theology is embedded, the existence of which gives ascetical practices their ground, meaning and final purpose. If so, how would we describe such an environment? The answer lay in the question, what is ascetical theology in fact a theology of? The answer was this: After all, consider the various departments of theology. Dogmatic theology is the theology of Christian dogma; moral theology is the theology of morality choice and ethics ; liturgical theology is the theology of liturgy; mariology is the theology of Mary, and so on. As a matter of course, ascetical theology would in some sense have to be the theology of ascetic. Fr Thornton spent significant time clarifying his use of ascetic. We find it as early as his second book *Pastoral Theology*; later reissued as *The Heart of the Parish* , and it was firmly in place by the writing of *English Spirituality*, his seventh. What he meant by ascetic is an overall corporate model of total spirituality and growth obedience and practical discipline. In other words, ascetic commences with the initial stirrings of the redeemed sense life and consummates in the eventual union with the triune God. Ascetic, then, is an integral model of the contours of corporate obedience both actual and potential. Ascetic attempts to grasp the spiritual terrain of the threefold Church whereby the People of God follow Jesus along the penitential journey from sinfulness to perfection. Jesus disclosed this terrain himself through the Cross and Resurrection along with his promised Second Coming. The Church safeguards the boundaries through the doctrines of the Incarnation and Theosis. Yet this is a terrain of prayer, the obedient discipline of corporate Christian life. Simply put, ascetical theology, as distinguished from asceticism or ascetical practices, is the describing, seeking, framing, and pastoral shaping of ascetic for use in community life, which today most commonly means the parish. Ascetical theology is the theology of ascetic. The articulating of ascetic, always within actual, given contexts and fluctuating situations, is ascetical theology. An ever-constant eye towards ascetic drives his preaching, liturgical celebration, liturgical decision-making, pastoral care, catechesis, spiritual direction, and all the rest. The priest is the shepherd within the obedience-discipline environment of the parish. So how can this renew Anglican theological thinking? Renewal, which is always rediscovery, comes because ascetical theology in the Thorntonian sense is deeply committed to the Incarnation of Christ in the widest sense inclusive of the entire life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. All such theology

emerges within an obedience-discipline environment that seeks to regard everything as potential food for spiritual reflection and growth. Theology done in an ascetical way brings everything to God and assumes all data, even the most arcane bit of doctrinal nuance or ancient liturgical evidence, and certainly all doctrine, dogma, liturgical rite, ministerial encounter and, yes, everyday experience, impinges upon—that is, has some degree of actual or potential relationship with—our corporate prayer life. The great works of theology, as Thornton emphasized, are almost invariably occasional because they are ascetical. Ascetical theology, whether by Thornton or anyone else, invites spiritual growth because it is always prayer speaking to prayer. From both he derives his understanding of the Book of Common Prayer as our fundamentally Catholic and Benedictine system of ascetic, as well as his particular paradigms of ascetical theology and ascetical-theology. Theology in the Thorntonian sense demands that everything, whether mundane or sublime, be interpreted as food for discipleship because the true purpose of everything is only revealed by God Almighty—the maker, lover, and keeper of all things bright and beautiful, the telos of all creatures great and small. The first statement is from personal email correspondence and the second from a private interview granted me on July 2, in Cambridge. Martin Thornton, *English Spirituality*: Oxford University Press, , and Cowley, , This book was originally published as *Pastoral Theology*: Nashotah House Theological Seminary, See Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. *Reflections on Religion* Toronto: Stoddard, ,