

Editor’s Note: As *anno Domini* 2021 draws to a close today, we offer readers the following meditation from [Divine Intimacy](#), a classic spiritual volume by a Carmelite priest and master of the interior life, Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen (1893-1953). On the final day of the calendar year, Fr. Gabriel focuses our attention on the gift of time and how we must make good use of this precious gift in order to grow in charity (love of God and neighbor) before “the short day of this earthly life” is spent and we are called to render an account to the Giver of the gift.

May Fr. Gabriel’s insights and exhortations spur us on to a more generous pursuit of God and growth in the spiritual life throughout the coming New Year!

35. Let Us Make Good Use of Time

By Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.

1. Time passes and does not return. God has assigned to each of us a definite time in which to fulfill His divine plan for our soul; we have this time and shall have no more. Time ill spent is lost forever. Our life is made up of this uninterrupted, continual flow of time, which never returns. In eternity, on the contrary, time will be no more; we shall be established forever in the degree of love which we have reached now, in time. If we have attained a high degree of love, we shall be fixed forever in that degree of love and glory; if we possess only a slight degree, that is all we shall have throughout eternity. No further progress will be possible when time has ended. “Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men” (Gal. 6:10). “We must give every moment its full amount of love, and make each passing moment eternal, by giving it value for eternity” (Sr. Carmela of the Holy Spirit, O.C.D.). This is the best way to use the time given us by God. Charity allows us to adhere to God’s will with submission and love and thus at the close of life we shall have realized God’s plan for our soul; we shall have reached the degree of love which God expects from each one of us and with which we shall love and glorify Him for all eternity.

2. The growth of charity depends upon meritorious acts, that is, good works done under the influence of charity. Every good act merits an increase of charity, which may be given to the soul at once or withheld until the end of life, according to whether the act had been performed with all the love of which the soul was capable, or whether, on the contrary, it was performed with less vigor, generosity, and carefulness than was possible at that moment. In the first case, the increase of charity comes like interest which is immediately accrued to the capital, and which then bears interest together with it. In the second case, it

is like interest which is kept separate from the capital and hence does not increase with it, even though it remains the property of the one who has acquired it.

In order that the merit of our good works, that is, the increase of charity which we have merited by them, be granted immediately, it is necessary that these works be done with all the love possible, that is, with all the good will and generosity of which the soul is capable. Then it is as if the soul opens to receive the increase of love it has merited; and this is added at once to the capital of charity already possessed, immediately increasing its degree and intensity.

We have only the short day of this earthly life in which to grow in love, and if we wish to derive from it the greatest possible profit, we must overcome our natural inertia and carry out our good works “with our whole heart.” Then love will increase immeasurably and we shall be able to say to Our Lord like St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus: “Your love has grown in me and now it is an abyss, the depth of which I am unable to sound” (*Story of a Soul*, 12). We must, then, make haste while we still have time, for “the night cometh when no man can work” (John 9:4).

Text taken from [Divine Intimacy](#) (Baronius Press, 2015), pp. 100-102.