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January 1, 2023
Feast of the Circumcision

Dear Friends of Catholic Tradition,

This month marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Dom Columba Marmion, OSB. This issue contains a review of a recently published [book](#) about the rich spirituality of this master of the interior life. As noted in the review, the works of Dom Columba were highly praised and recommended by [John Vennari](#) (RIP), longtime editor of *Catholic Family News*.

January is the time that many people make resolutions for the new year. One of the important lessons we can take from this saintly abbot is the primacy of the interior life. With so many aspects of the crisis in Church and State becoming more manifest every day, it is easy to be tempted to the aspect of the Americanist heresy of activism. As Leo XIII explained in [Testem Benevolentiae](#), it is an error to privilege the active over the contemplative — to think that the restoration of the Church and the world depend so greatly upon our activity.

Now, it is true that God wants to use our activity. We are called to Catholic Action within the spheres in which we operate. Yet, as Fr. Jean Baptiste Chautard explains in his classic work, [The Soul of the Apostolate](#), without first developing an interior life of the soul, our activities will be only a “clanging cymbal” (1 Cor. 13:1). Morning and evening prayer, the Holy Rosary, regular periods of mental prayer, periodic retreats, and most importantly assisting at the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Altar are essential elements of building a solid interior life. Marmion teaches us how to understand and construct this life of the soul so that it is truly the soul of our apostolates.

When the founding members of the Traditionalist movement started to pick up the shattered shards cast to the floor by the Second Vatican Council and its aftermath, they turned to the inspirational writings of Marmion to center all their activity upon an interior relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ. As Archbishop Lefebvre would explain in his last will and testament, [Spiritual Journey](#) (Angelus Press, 1991), his work was not merely to hand on the activity of the priesthood. He states: “there appeared to me already the need, not only to confer the authentic priesthood, to teach not only the *sana doctrina* approved by the Church, but also to transmit the profound and unchanging spirit of the Catholic priesthood and of the Christian spirit, essentially bound to the great prayer of Our Lord which His Sacrifice on the Cross expresses eternally” (p. vii). He succinctly diagnoses the sickness of

the Conciliar Church as a lack of this profound and unchanging spirit that must animate all work. He states: “It is because the reign of Our Lord is no longer the center of attention and of activity for those who are our *praepositi* [our prelates], that they lose the sense of God and of the Catholic Priesthood, and that we can no longer follow them” (p viii).

Thus, let our resolution be to make Christ and His reign the “center” of our attention. Let Marmion and Lefebvre inspire us to resolve more than simply losing a few pounds or repainting the dining room. Let us resolve this year to make the development of our interior life the priority for 2023. Let us put this resolution into action by acquiring spiritual reading to aid us, such as Marmion’s [*Christ the Life of the Soul*](#), Chautard’s *The Soul of the Apostolate*, or Lefebvre’s *The Spiritual Life*.

We attempt to put this priority into practice in every issue of *CFN*. For this reason, in addition to penetrating commentary on the events of our times, each month you will find spiritual sustenance as well — lives of the Saints, explanations of the catechism, or inspiring stories of Catholic mothers, to name just a few examples. We need both activity and contemplation in order to properly nourish our spiritual life. We strive to be a resource for you in both areas.

We thank you for your continued support of our apostolate through your sharing of our videos and audio podcasts and for your continuing subscription to our monthly paper ([click HERE to subscribe or renew](#)). We wish all of you a holy and joyful New Year.

In Christ the King,

Brian M. McCall
Editor-in-Chief