A great man was once asked to choose among a great multitude of chapels, which was his personal favorite. The man quickly replied, “el calle,” that is, “the street.” With all of its secularism, it might seem that “el calle” would be the least likely response to such a question. The man who gave this response is St. Josemaría Escrivá, and his answer reflected a deep-seated truth of authentic Christianity. Although the secular world may be at times full of perversion and sacrilege, it is precisely there, among the events of daily life, (common to all people,) that the Holy Spirit works around us, in us, and through us. Even those called to a strictly contemplative way of life are called to serve in those ordinary tasks of their religious life. St. Thérèse of the Little Flower, a Carmelite nun, offered up the little things in her life, such as the task of washing dishes, as acts of love for God and the Church.

The Church that Jesus continues to build is made up of baptized persons, you and I, flesh and blood members of the Body of Christ. We profess a common faith and practice a common religion. The religion that Christ founded is a religion to be practiced at every second of the day. It was not confined nor restricted to ceremonies. The religious traditions that have developed over the centuries in the Christian Churches point us to Christ, the Light of the World. Through the sacramental life of the Church we encounter Christ and grow in His love. We are strengthened so that our work, the work of God, may bear fruit abundantly. Our religion is so profound, so radical, and so dynamic that it demands that we live always as members of the Body of Christ, called to live always in the presence of God. Jesus told us that “whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” Mt 25:40. It is through service in Jesus’ name during the events of daily life that we are meant to witness the saving power of God and not only to witness it, but to also be an instrumental tool in God’s plan for salvation! It is in this way that “the faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ’s mission as priest, prophet, and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are ‘consecrated to be… a holy priesthood’” (CCC, 1546).

When we gather to pray; to receive the Word of God; and to worship and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; “the lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value” (CCC, 1368). This is awesome! The new value that our lives acquire is the sanctification of the Christian’s daily life and thanksgiving. The Eucharistic celebration transforms these human acts as Christ draws all things to Himself in the sacrifice of His Crucifixion and death reenacted in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In this Holy Sacrifice, the ordained ministers minister to the faithful in the great pinnacle and culmination of Christian life. It is here that the ministerial priesthood of bishops and priests and the common priesthood of all the faithful offer to God the Father all that we have been given. We offer to God the Love that was offered freely to us. In the Communion of Saints we unite ourselves to those worshipping the Lord in praise, to those taking part in the sacrifice of the Mass, to those who are amid secular society far from a chapel, and to all Christians wherever they may be. To take this all a step further, through love, God brings the temporal world in communion with His heavenly Kingdom. “Four centuries ago…Francis de Sales (1567-1622), envisioned a world already reborn through the love of God. Francis’s vision of this world was founded on a deep appreciation of the love that God has showered upon us through the gifts of creation and human life, particularly in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Francis believed that beauty and goodness are the hallmarks of our world, as gifts born from God’s deep
and abiding love for each of us. Enabled and ennobled by this love, we are capable of much more than we might imagine. We are capable of living a true life of devotion in this world. We are capable of giving birth to a new world” (Dailey, 13). As Baptized Christians and adopted children of God, we are heirs to the Kingdom of God. St. Francis De Sales loved God well by living always in the presence of God, whether praying silently within a traditional chapel or by attending to his duties in the “chapel” that is the street of secular life.

Unfortunately, the modern way of thinking tends to split the religious life from the secular, the physical from the spiritual existence. In the United States of America today, it is often the case that the cultural dogma of “separation of church and state” has manifested itself not only in the courts but also in the hearts of many individuals. In such cases “separation of church and state” is used to exalt and can be utilized to glorify and support a schism between God and His relationship with the world that He created. In a valiant attempt to guarantee religious freedom, the framers of the United States Constitution specifically included wording to protect the rights of individuals to worship God freely. The results, however, have included a cultural mentality that secludes religion to a church, synagogue, or mosque. But as Christ Himself showed us, our religion is to be practiced “en el calle.” We are no less religious when we are enjoying the company of friends than when we are in silent prayer in the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. When we conclude our prayers with an “Amen!” this is truly a cry that tells the both God and the world “Let it be done!” “Let God’s Will be done!” This does not signal the end of our prayer, but instead a refreshing of our prayer. Through Christian living, we are forever in communion with the Lord.

Despite its problems and its marginalization of religion and religious life, our nation is a nation with hope. The Gospel truly is amazingly good news. Christ came not to save the righteous, but to save sinners. During Jesus’ public ministry, the Pharisees questioned the Lord and said to his disciples, “‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ He heard this and said, ‘Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous but sinners’” Mt 9:12-13.

We are the sinners that Christ calls. People we see each day are the sinners that Christ came to call. We are called to do the work of God. The work of God is not ours, but His. We are the instruments in the Creator’s hand. He is the artist, and we are the artist’s brush. If we allow ourselves to be given completely over to His divine will, then He will work wonders through the ordinary events of our daily lives. He is the potter and we are the clay. By giving ourselves over completely too Him, He can transform us into a vessel worthy of God Himself. He will look upon us and say “It is good.”

The greatest model we have to emulate is Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, and Our Blessed Mother. She acknowledged herself as the handmaid of the Lord. And when, through His angel Gabrielle, the Lord wished to reveal Himself to man through her, Mary humbly submitted herself to the will of the Father and said, “‘May it be done to me according to your word” Lu 1:38. Our God desires us to be with Him throughout all eternity, the eternity that begins the moment we come to search for, love, and know Him, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This eternity springs forth from following Mary and learning humbly from her beautiful example.

Our thoughts, attitudes, and actions must always be prayerful, for we do all things in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord. St. Paul tells us to pray always. “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” 1Th 5:16-18. He does not give an exception for the command. Of course this does not mean for us to never leave our knees for fear that we may cease to pray. What then does this prayer entail? The prayer St. Paul refers to is the foundation of the Christian life. It is to allow God to sanctify every moment of our lives through our constant trust in Him and His will. It means taking up our burdens, the crosses that we carry, and following Jesus Christ. It is to know and to love Christ Jesus. Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of the prayer which St. Paul speaks is the simple concept that we are to make every moment of the day into a gift for God. We are to live naturally, the way God intends us to live.

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told us, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Mt 5:8. This purity of heart is what enables us to remain in prayer at every moment of the day through seeing others at all times as children of God, children of the Lord Almighty. This same purity of heart is what allows us to become like little children, trusting in the Lord and thanking Him for all of His wondrous deeds. For the Lord has said, “unless you become like these little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Purity is the gift that allows us to see God manifested here and now in the world that He created and sent His own Son to redeem. As we begin to allow Christ to make us pure, something wonderful and amazing begins to happen within our lives. Through the ordinary events of our lives, we see God. Through the daily sufferings of our brothers and sisters, we see the Crucified Lord,
and we are given the opportunity to respond with filial love. We see Him, Emmanuel, God with us, in the love that is shared among friends. We see him in the helping hand lent to a perfect stranger. We see Him also as Mother Theresa of Calcutta saw Him in the face of a poor dying woman or man.

When we sincerely tell the Lord, “I want to see!” He hears our plea. The Holy Spirit gives us the grace to be pure of heart. He miraculously breathes life into our souls, makes the blind see, and makes the deaf hear. He shows us how to be made anew in the image and likeness of God; how to be human; how to live and be Christ to others on “el calle”, the chapel of life.

Works Cited


The Catechism of the Catholic Church.