

# ing in place

Usual-  
rdinary  
God acting in the world, in our  
life."  
At the same time, Father Young  
knows that life is no "Polyanna  
existence." Many people find life  
"grinding, wearing, difficult,"  
even when they realize they are  
doing badly needed work, he  
says.  
He recalls being in Boston when  
Dorothy Day explained how she  
avoided personal burnout in her  
work for the poor. She was accep-  
ting the Father Isaac Hecker  
award for her many decades of  
social service.  
Father Young recalls that Miss  
Day told how, when respon-  
sibilities threatened to overwhelm  
her, she would go to New York  
City's Nativity Church where  
Father Hecker, the founder of the

Paulist religious order, once  
prayed. Often she would think  
about Father Hecker and especial-  
ly a vision of angels he had,  
Father Young said.

Angels were the last thing the  
social-justice audience in the  
church that day had come to hear  
about, Father Young said. But  
Miss Day explained why that vision  
helped her. It pointed to a  
"transcendent dimension to life."  
It helped her see "beyond squalor  
and suffering."

Miss Day's point, as Father  
Young interprets it, was that faith  
"allows us to see beyond present  
pain and gives meaning to pain."

He recalled celebrating Mass  
recently with a family and some  
of their friends. The small group  
focused on and prayed for a  
woman suffering from a serious  
illness. The woman, who was pre-  
sent, was recovering after major  
surgery. The experience proved to  
be wonderfully supportive for  
everyone, he concluded.

Liturgy reminds Christians that  
they can find God in each other,  
said Father Young. It reminds  
them that they are on a common  
journey and can nourish each  
other.

(Ms. Bird is associate editor of  
Faith Today.)

or human beings takes place in  
ents and intelligence and spirituali-  
th other people. This brings us

# for the world

The answer is obvious. There is  
only one world for him to love: It  
is the world in which we live, the  
world on pilgrimage to the  
kingdom.  
Put simply, there really is no  
sharp distinction between secular  
and sacred — not in God's world.  
All creation is permeated by God's

To the Jewish mind in the time of  
Jesus there were only people —  
people who did not "have"  
bodies, but "were" bodies.

Jesus ministered to these living,  
breathing, laughing, crying, danc-  
ing, hurting people. He cured the  
sick, gave sight to the blind, fed  
the hungry, consoled those who  
mourned, healed the crippled,  
raised the dead, restored dignity  
to the exploited.

He taught them how to find  
happiness here and now by living  
in accord with the designs of a  
loving Father. He taught them to  
seek happiness by being reconcil-  
ed to this Father and to each  
other.

"Surely (the Lord) did not come  
to help angels, but rather the  
children of Abraham; therefore he  
had to become like his brothers  
(and sisters) in every way...Since  
he was himself tested through  
what he suffered, he is able to  
help those who are tempted"  
(Hebrews 2:16-18).

(Father Castelot teaches at St.  
John's Seminary, Plymouth, Mich.)

Solomon and Isaiah felt that in  
selves to human concerns they  
themselves to divine concerns as

presence, power and saving love.  
Christianity, by its very nature,  
is interested in the world and the  
life of human beings. For God  
created humanity in "the divine  
image" (Genesis 1:27). God loved  
humanity, redeemed it, destined it  
for glory.  
Reflect for a moment on the  
career of Jesus. He did not go  
around saving disembodied spirits.

# FOOD...

## ...for thought

Think back to the last time  
you felt genuinely frustrated.

—Maybe you had an argument  
with someone at work or in  
your family — a misunderstanding;  
afterward you realized that  
if either party had understood  
the other, the argument would  
not have occurred.

—Or maybe you felt frustrated  
when you saw the impact of real  
injustice on people's lives.

Now think back to the last  
time you experienced a sense of  
disappointment.

—Was it when a child you  
care about was trying for a place  
in your community's summer  
All-Stars Swim Meet? She placed  
13th in tryouts, but only the top  
12 qualified.

—Or was it after you prepared  
a fine dinner for close friends,  
only to find at the last minute  
that they had been struck by the  
flu and couldn't come? Once  
again you realized that well-made  
plans can come apart at the  
seams.

Frustrations. Disappointments.  
In one degree or another, they  
are among the stuff of daily life.  
Can people be expected to  
believe they can encounter God,  
or learn about life's meaning, in  
the midst of such uninvited  
events?

Of course, frustration and  
disappointment do not tell the  
whole story of daily life. In daily

life you get to witness the per-  
sonal growth that has occurred  
in others or in yourself. Daily  
life is a forum where something  
unexpected may yield a solution  
to a complicated problem. And  
daily life offers opportunities to  
express love and to share talents.

Daily life, it seems, is a mixed  
bag. So what does it really mean  
to speak of God's presence  
there?

Think about it. Talk it over.

It is easy to think that God  
cannot be encountered in the  
messiness of daily life — or that  
if God were encountered there, a  
person would be too busy to  
notice.

Thus, it pays to step back from  
the rush of events in order to  
ponder what is happening in  
your life. God surely can be en-  
countered during the quiet  
moments when you take stock of  
things.

But isn't it also possible to en-  
counter God when the frustra-  
tions and disappointments of dai-  
ly life tear at you? Often they  
force you to give attention to  
something or someone that  
means much to you. They push  
you to come to terms with why  
you care so much and how  
much you care.

How is God present in daily  
life?

What do you think?

## ...for discussion

1. You often will encounter  
God through other people, it has  
been suggested. Can you think of  
a time when this happened to  
you? Can you think of a time  
when it happened for someone  
you know, or for a character in  
a book you read or a film you  
saw?

2. Do you feel there is a con-  
flict between the time given to  
your work in the world and the  
time that ought to be given to  
God? Why, or why not?

3. How might your family life  
or career responsibilities cast  
light on God's meaning for you?

4. Trappist Father Basil Penn-  
ington provides some guidelines  
on making space in one's life for  
the Holy Spirit. Do you find his  
suggestions helpful?

### SECOND HELPINGS

"O Holy Mountain!" by Father  
M. Basil Pennington, OCSO.  
This is a journal of Father Pen-  
nington's seven-month retreat  
at Mount Athos, the historic Or-  
thodox monastic community in  
Greece and "the only monastic  
republic existing in the world to-  
day." Why would a Trappist  
priest need to go on retreat at  
all? In this book the author ex-  
plains why. At Mount Athos, the  
author says, he was "purpose-  
ly stepping back or out of his  
usual world vision and concern  
and centering upon his own per-  
sonal being before his God." Readers will find in this book not  
only an account of steps taken  
during one man's special  
spiritual journey, but many in-  
teresting stories about the peo-  
ple, the places and the history  
of Mount Athos. (Michael  
Glazier Inc. 1723 Delaware  
Ave., Wilmington, Del. 19806.  
\$7.95.)