

Consecration

This is a grand and glorious word. It's used in Greek of temples and sacrifices, of holy places and people. The people of God can consecrate something to God, and it becomes holy, clean, set apart. This holiness is intimately connected with God, who alone is truly holy; so consecrated things or persons become holy only when they share the true holiness of God. God's holiness is in contrast to the lives of his creatures, who are imperfect by comparison with the divine perfection. But by his coming to dwell in the midst of his people, God continually raises them to share his perfection, and thus consecrates to himself a holy people.

Cut Out What Is Unholy

Our task is to purify our lives so that they become lived in response to God's holiness. We do not understand this holiness of God: it is beyond us, and therefore mysterious to us. It isn't something we could create in ourselves, or define; it is part of the infinite and the eternal, and we can only approach it in a state of awe and wonder. We can watch it unfolding as we search for its tremendous forms with our inadequate senses and our small wisdom. It is a sorry fact that many of us lose the way and look for much smaller meanings to our life, and end up living rather small lives, not to say mean ones!

Go For Something Holy

Instead of thinking about *ridding ourselves* of what's unworthy, why don't we try for something immensely holy? Be positive! Why not contemplate a search for the mysterious presence in our life of the eternal? People who live in fear of dishonour are coming at it the wrong way; they become dominated, anxious souls, living life in a constant state of reaction. "What will other people say? How do I look from outside?" It is pretty childish to live in obedience to others like this; but many of us do it without realising. Sometimes the reason why a mogul of earthly power is held back from total iniquity may just be the thought *My mother would kill me* - even if she's been dust and ashes for a quarter of a

century. It's a curious second-hand morality, and it may prevent some evil; but it certainly isn't saintliness!

Truth Will Out

To consecrate our lives to God is not to replace childish obedience with an even more dominated state. God's way isn't to terrorise us into compliance. Jesus came not to condemn, but to give life in its fulness; as the perfect parent God the Father delights in the maturity and power of a humanity that is alive and in charge: Eternally he commands us: *Increase, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it!* We easily become obsessed by evil, to the point where we spend more time on evil than on good. It's as if *evil* wants to be our real god, and to take up the space in our heart. If this is happening to us, we must take steps to end the process: *you shall not put strange gods before me*: the first of commandments. The truth is that God is a living and life-giving God. He will bring us all to acknowledge that truth sooner or later. *See, today I set before you life or death: choose!*

Be Consecrated To Life

Choosing good means learning to hunger and thirst for goodness all our days. It means becoming an active enemy of meanness and compromise: a thirst for fulness, for glorious and generous life. The consecration bit comes when you realise that thirst like that has to be nurtured, deepened, sharpened; that's where refusal of evil has its proper place. We won't have what is less than good at any price, *because it takes up the space where glory belongs*. The wisdom of the saints is in their ardent love for goodness, their seeing through falsehood and their delighting in truth. There isn't anything in the world that is more beautiful, more lovable, more desirable, more daring than that. It's the speed of the swallow, the stoop of the kestrel, *foie-gras* to the sound of trumpets, the calm of the lake, the surging of the sea, the majesty of mountains, the glory of God. For this, Jesus went to Calvary; for this, God raised him

from the tomb, and made him our way, truth,
and life. *Fr Philip*