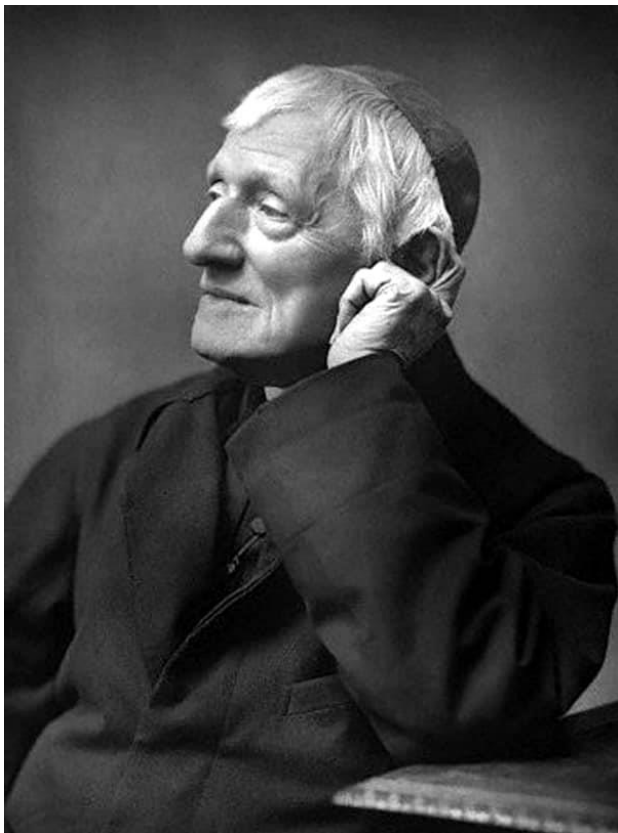


## My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 88

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### Vision, Part II



*John Henry Newman*

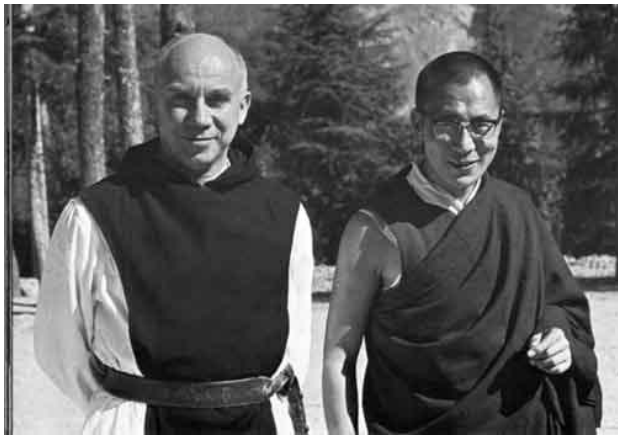
"God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about."-- John Henry Newman

In a recent Morning Devotion, Dr. [Chung Sik] Yong emphasized that God will surely provide us with a vision for our lives if we seek guidance in prayer from Heaven (09/17/21, Sermon #334). This has been my experience. I

have written about my time in the monastery before, however, I wanted to revisit these events in light of Dr. Yong's Internal Guidance.

While in the monastery, I determinedly questioned God in prayer about His will for my life. In retrospect, I can identify the answer as it arrived in three distinct experiences, the full meaning of which I could never fathom until I met my spiritual parent and heard the Divine Principle Lectures. When I initially received Heaven's inspiration, the cryptic character of the messages caused more turmoil than peace of mind. I struggled and prayed to understand but finally I had to allow my heart to rest in faith and trust in God. To do so, required me to deny myself. I had to surrender to the path before me, even though it remained hidden in darkness. Setting aside my fear, I cultivated a deeper bond with the monastic community and grew increasingly aware that I was "a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons." That link emerged as a horizontal and vertical bond of heart: there were the fraternal ties of community and friendship with individual monks, as well as the vital communion with those monks now in the spiritual world who preceded us along this way, a "great cloud of witnesses." These living connections served to ground me and give me hope for the future, even as I struggled in the present.

The initial answer to my prayer completely confounded me. I received a very clear revelation that I had the mission of John the Baptist. That such a thought would even surface in my mind made me deeply concerned for my mental health. I questioned my stability and sought to restore a sense of perspective by situating the spiritual experience in the context of the monastic tradition: I told myself that monasticism played a prophetic role within the tradition of Catholicism, and that God was calling me to be a "sign to the world" as a Cistercian Trappist. By living a celibate life of self-denial in obedience to my Abbot, with brothers similarly dedicated to daily conversion of heart, I would be a substantial witness to the presence of God's love in the world.



*Thomas Merton and the Dalai Lama*

There was one problem with this rationalization: it never satisfied me as an answer. I knew in my deepest heart there was something more and I could not rest.

As I wrestled with the first answer, the second began to appear to me in my waking dreams. I would find myself living together with my future wife and children outside of the monastic cloister, but somehow connected with its purpose and mission. During this time, a young Korean woman, Soon-Mi Shin, the daughter of the Korean Ambassador to the Vatican and my classmate at Marquette University, was writing passionate letters to me. We had much in

common: We were Marine kids from Catholic families. Her father, a retired General, was one of the founding officers of the Korean Marine Corps. As I began to have these dreams, I thought that I was just trying to "square the circle" and harmonize my romantic desires with my spiritual call. Nonetheless, the dream persisted and I gradually realized it to be deeply tied into my sense of spiritual purpose: I could find rest in this vision of my future, but in no way could I understand it. (I later witnessed to Soon-Mi but to no avail. She even attended a morning talk by True Father at Belvedere with me. True Parents became aware of her presence and very clearly wanted to meet her, but she escaped. Her family was quite opposed to our movement and negatively influenced her--she cut off all communication with me).

The third answer to my prayers came to me one afternoon while I sat in meditation at the back of the monastery chapel. I would often commune in heart with Jesus during these prayer sessions, but this was different. The sorrow of Jesus literally pierced my heart, infinite, inconsolable, and unresolved. In a moment, all of my concepts shattered, and I was reduced to tears. I could not understand this sorrow, I had no theological context to place it in. Had I done something to cause Jesus this pain? How could I comfort him? From this moment, the ground of my life changed but I could not even begin to comprehend the magnitude of the shift.

I had to proceed in faith as God informed my heart with the vision which would come to animate my life. The answer did not arrive to me in a simple format, or if it did, I could not comprehend it as such. Complementary pieces of the puzzle appeared, but I would not understand how to place them together until I met the Unification Movement and True Parents.