

EDITORIAL

"What is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him? You have made him little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor" (Ps. 8:5-6). I am a man! The statement is simple enough. What it means, the idea it conveys staggers the imagination. God, using the slime of the earth, fashioned a creature into His own image—man. He elevated this creature to the supernatural order by grace; redeemed him from the corruption wrought by his own free will. God guards and guides through every moment of man's history. Most incredible of all, He infinitely loves this nothing, this man.

It seems almost ironic that although God, the all-powerful and all-wise Cause, esteems man so highly, man thinks little of himself. For proof, witness the devastating wars of modern times, the cruel racial injustices, the economic persecutions. Witness public opinion on such moral issues as mercy killing, abortion, birth control. Witness the materialistic ideologies espoused by millions. Such things would not exist if man accepted his own dignity. Certainly, it is a dignity that he does not have of himself, for he is a creature dependent in all things upon the God Who made him. But can this dignity be denied in the face of the fact that Christ, the God-Man, was nailed to a tree for mankind; that He bore the most excruciating humiliations and sufferings to insure our dignity?

Granted the dignity of man, personal implications must follow. I dare not look upon another man as an inferior because of color, race or creed. I must not use another man as an instrument for selfish aggrandizement, a steppingstone to my own comfort and security. Men truly are my brothers, demanding respect and love. The political and economic welfare of one man cannot be a matter of indifference to me. I must have concern for my neighbor's social and spiritual betterment. For I am involved. What happens to another human being happens to me. I am my brother's keeper because my brother is a man.

This is Christianity. It is the living, dynamic Christ-life. At times I may have to suffer, to sacrifice my own complacency. I too may be called upon to carry a cross. Yet it is only in a sweeping and generous commitment to the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ that man is a true Christian. Pope John tells us: "Every believer in this world of ours must be a spark of light, a center of love, a vivifying leaven amidst his fellowmen" (*Pacem in Terris*). To do this is to be a man; it is to live with dignity.