



**Ozanam: Translating Tradition,
in Terms of His Own Culture**

Ozanam perceived a tradition of Christianity, transformed and translated it in terms of his culture, and then handed it on as heritage for the future.

Interpreting the Good Samaritan
for his own times...

Although his first apostolate was an intellectual one as student, professor and writer, alongside this was an accompanying compassion for the masses and a practical program to work for them in the realm of action as well as ideas. This he pictured in terms of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

In interpreting it for his own times, he saw help to the poor coming under the guidance and care of the Church rather than according to current schemes of social reform, yet being accomplished by laymen because people feared the clergy.

In his words:

“Society today seems to me to be not unlike the wayfarer described in the parable of the Good Samaritan. For, while journeying along the road mapped out for it by Christ, it has been set upon by thieves of evil human thought. Bad men have despoiled the wayfarer of all his goods, of the treasures of faith and love, and left him stripped and broken by the wayside...”

In his words:

“...But this time [the Priests and the Levites] have approached the suffering, wretched creature and attempted to cure him. But in his delirium he has not recognized them and has driven them away...”

In his words:

“Then we weak Samaritans, outsiders as we are, have dared to approach this great sick patient. Perhaps he will be less affrighted by us? Let us try to measure the extent of his wounds in order to pour oil into them. Let us make words of peace and consolation ring in his heart. Then, when his eyes are opened, we will hand him over to the tender care of those whom God has chosen to be guardians and doctors of the soul.”

Ainslie Coates, trans., *Letters of Frederic Ozanam*. New York: Benziger, 1886, (Letters February 23, 1835), pp. 123-27.

Ozanam believed that the exercise of charity would do more to reclaim the lapsed than controversy or apologetics. In this he claimed St. Vincent de Paul as an example of someone whom even the revolutionaries admired for they “...considering the benefits he had bestowed upon the people, forgave him the crime of having loved God.”

Henry Hughes, *Frederic Ozanam*. St. Louis: Herder, 1933, p.58.

Source:

Frédéric Ozanam - A Layman for Now by Shaun McCarty, S.T.

http://famvin.org/wiki/Frédéric_Ozanam_-_A_Layman_for_Now_-_Shaun_McCarty,_S.T.