

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

Anyone familiar with this book in one of its two previous English editions (1959 and 1963) will notice that a few changes have been made, including the wording of the title. The original title, *El valor divino de lo humano* (literally, “The Divine Value of the Human”), was previously given in English as *Man the Saint*. The purpose of all our adjustments is to restore the original directness, relevance, and impact of this little book. When it first came out (in Madrid, in 1948), it had a freshness, an immediacy, a tone of voice that startled readers into action. They felt that here was a man who knew them personally, who knew exactly where they were coming from and where they needed to be going.

But that was in Spain, and that was nearly fifty years ago. To present this treasure, with no loss of impact, to American readers standing on the threshold of a new millennium, a few adaptations were in order—actually, surprisingly few. Occasionally a quotation was given with little or no source information; in such cases we have substituted another quotation, usually from the same person. Also, where these were not given, we have supplied references for biblical texts.

Originally addressed explicitly to young men, this book has a great deal to say to Christians of any age and of either gender; so the language has been made inclusive. Interestingly, though, relatively few statements or examples needed substantial adjustment. The focus is still primarily on what would traditionally be called “masculine” traits, but now and here, where we are well aware that every person has both a masculine and a

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feminine side, and where we do not assume that strength and courage are virtues for men only, this book needed little adjustment in order to come across as amazingly contemporary.

It is our hope that Father Urteaga's white-hot love for our Lord will succeed once more in igniting in thousands and thousands of souls that same fiery love.

INTRODUCTION

MY PEOPLE HAVE COMMITTED TWO EVILS: THEY HAVE FORSAKEN ME, THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS, AND HEWED OUT CISTERNS FOR THEMSELVES, BROKEN CISTERNS THAT CAN HOLD NO WATER.

— Jeremiah 2: 13

RUNNING AWAY FROM GOD

Open your eyes for a moment, and you will see your God in tears. Open your eyes, and you will see the utter confusion of this age in which we live. In all the history of humanity has there ever been worse chaos? Men and women, young and old, rich and poor, have all run away from their God. They have unshouldered the sweet yoke of the Almighty and have thrown it far away. The nations of the earth have rebelled against their Lord and against his Christ. Perhaps with the prophet (see Jer 5: 4) we think that it is only the uncultured and the illiterate who are ignorant of the ways and precepts of Yahweh. We turn to the ones with influence, the ones with power, and we speak to them of God. Surely they, at least, will know his commandments. “But they all alike had broken the yoke, they had burst the bonds” (Jer 5: 5).

Look at them—they are all running madly from their God. And then, in their wild, irrational flight, they suddenly stumble against the cross standing dark and lonely in their path. They keep on running to escape from this cross, leaving it behind, alone and forgotten. A great army of determined creatures united in their hatred of

their Creator. And the mad torrent of those who hate him sweeps along with it the indifferent and the lukewarm.

Where are they going? They have left God far behind, and now they go in search of something worth believing in, something to quench their thirst. Now it is the turn of unbelievers, nailed to the cross of their own unbearable lives, to cry "I thirst"—and they do not know where to look for water. For them the earth is a hateful place, and heaven is so far off. But where are they going? They seek new gods and new creeds. They all, whether it be in their nation or race, or money or whatever, seek something which none of these things can give. They try to replace worship of God, who is our Father, with worship of his footsteps in the filthy mire of their evil ways.

The ancient cry of the Holy Spirit is woeful and still new: "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." And nowadays it is these cistern makers who shape the destinies of the nations of the earth. They know only hate, nothing of love. The education and formation of the people of tomorrow is in their dirty hands, crooked and deformed from fondling their money. It is these who talk of peace, who try to console the victims of war, the sick, the mutilated. These are the leaders in the present disorder; and they vainly promise order and prosperity. They speak of one great family that will unite the rich with the poor, executives with employees, children with their parents, soldiers with politicians. They speak of this great union which will ignore Christ and laugh at his Church. These vain cistern makers, in their mad escape from God, tell us of new "sacraments" which can give life to rotting skeletons!