

FREDERIC OZANAM

and Providence

This is how providence acts to direct the activity of the human spirit. When winter begins, it looks like all vegetation will die. The wind sweeps away flowers and leaves, but it keeps something hidden, dry and powdery; the seeds and all plant life are found inside. Providence takes care of this. Some of these seeds have something like wings to travel in the air. The storm takes them off, and the waters bring them along until they find land and the ray of sunlight that is needed to make them flower.

In this way, when the barbarian times and the evil seasons of human life arrive, we see that all these flowers of poetry and eloquence wither, it seems like all plant life and thought will perish. It shelters, however, in issues that seem small, dry, and arid: still Providence takes charge. They thus cross through three or four centuries; the word escorts them into new lands and times, until they find the place and time they need, until a man of genius takes them for cultivation. When he adds his sweat and concerns, they finally burst into life.

Frederic was a man who trusted greatly in Divine Providence. This was not a blind faith in God but rather a realisation that we must play our part in the divine plan. Frederic gives us an example of how to work with determination as part of the divine plan. He was simple in living his Christianity and in witnessing to the name of God in all the moments of his life.

We should act energetically, living out the present moment in love and knowing that God is the only master of our future.

We have to think as if we would leave this world tomorrow, and we have to work as if we would never leave it.

Frederic allows himself to be guided as much as possible. He asks us to place our confidence in Providence, all the while telling us that we cannot remain in the cold, "under our comforter," careless and lazy. Frederic wants us to see it a little more like this:

I have always hoped that God would do the work, provided that we help him in it.

