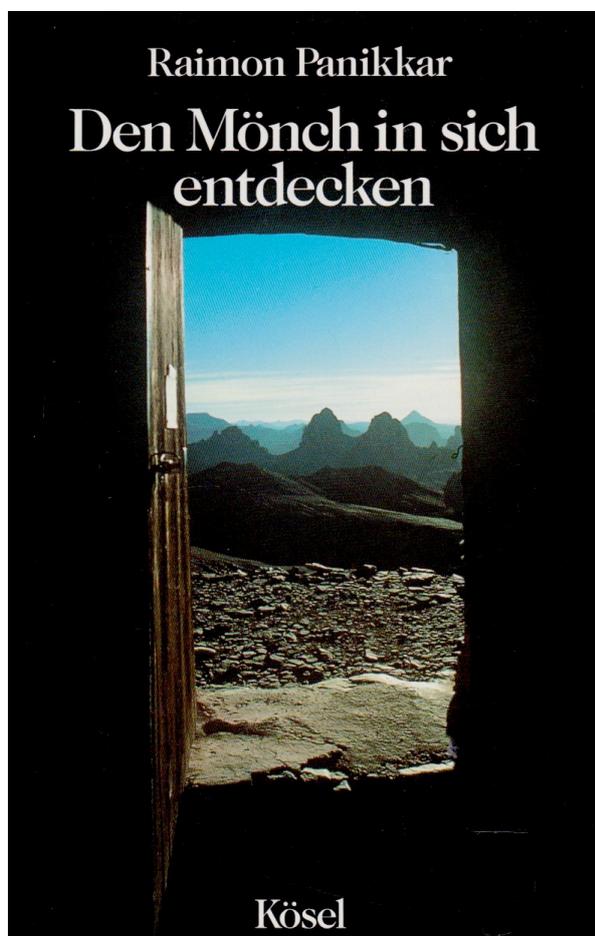


ROLAND R. ROPERS

## *Blessed Simplicity*



In 1982 **Raimon Panikkar's** book „*Blessed Simplicity*“ was published in the USA.

The German version was published with my help in 1990 under the title:

„*Den Mönch in sich entdecken*“  
(„*To discover your monkhood inside yourself*“)

**Sister Pascaline**, born on 22nd January 1927 (same year as German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger - 16th April) is a wonderful person, living at her spiritual inner source.

In September 1993 we gathered in **Osage Monastery** to establish **The BEDE GRIFFITHS TRUST** (my close Australian friend **Dr. Meath Conlan** was with me amongst others)



Sr. Pascaline Coff is a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration since 1951. She spent

one year at Father Bede's ashram in S. India and was one of the founders of the Monastic Interreligious Dialogue Board. She created and edited the East-West Intermonastic Bulletin while serving as Executive Secretary for 10 years. She is foundress of Osage Monastery in Sand Springs, Oklahoma, U.S.A. where Father Bede enjoyed satsangs and gave numerous conferences.

Pascaline Coff O.S.B.

## A personal tribute to Raimon Pannikar

In 1980, the great sesquimillinium year for monastics, our *Intermonastic Dialogue Board* invited **Fr. Panikkar** to come to **Holyoke**, MA to give us, through his wise, gifted and many faceted filter, input on the monk, monkhood and the monastic archetype. Panikkar himself, though not a professed monk, had just spent sabbatical time in India and came to us aflame with what was eventually entitled **Blessed Simplicity**. (Seabury, 1982). His main aim was to describe and explore monkhood as a fundamental human archetype.

No one present, even after all these decades, can forget his insistence that monkhood's uniqueness as a distinctive human archetype of searching lies in its seeking that relationship with the transcendent through the mode of simplicity, and he believed that every human being has potentially the possibility of realizing this dimension, though a dimension that must be integrated with other dimensions of human life in order to fulfill the humanum. (p.14) (cf Matthias Neuman OSB, ABR 35:2- June 1984).

***"The monk down the ages has been seen as the one who sails against the wind propelling all things, in search of the simplicity of the source. The monk is one who tries to swim upstream, against the current, to the origin which one supposes to be simple"***. (p.30)

***Blessed simplicity***, Panikkar stressed, in order to be blessed was/is a simplicity conquered with blood and then sanctified in the singlemindedness that reduces everything to its quintessence and reached the ultimate transparency of truth (p.30) This is indeed the monastic's vow of ***conversatio***, that constant effort of discipline and structural changes of life that alter one's ways of being human and being religious. And this as Panikkar and monks through the centuries have known, comes very close to the ancient quality of purity of heart wherein one concentrates all one's energies into a singleness of purpose which directs the self toward the one thing necessary, God.

Our dialogue board knew of Panikkar's love for the dialogue with other religions. In 1963 he wrote:

*“The Christian, when he is not prejudiced, instinctively falls in love with the positive aspects of other religions, because he believes he discovers there the footprints of God’s redemption, and some veiled and perhaps disfigured grace which he feels he must un-veil and reform, out of love for his neighbor and a sense of responsibility for the faith God has given him. Moreover, this lifting of the veil, the thick veil of centuries covering the dust of history and the stains of sin, does not occur without pain and conflict. It is said that when Christ was stripped of his garments before climbing to the cross, his wounds were reopened and strips of his flesh torn away. Only his naked body healed by God was left aside. Christian revelation is by no means a superficial brushing up. But an ontological stripping off, only to rise again...”*

Even as truly **Fr. Panikkar** had fallen in love with and was on fire with monkhood within he also was passionate in his pursuit of the dialogue with other religions. He pilgrimaged with **Fr. Bede Griffiths** in India to get in touch with his own Hindu roots and he travelled with **Abhishiktananda** and other Christians in pursuit of the dialogue. He frequently was the chosen guest speaker at **Mme Odette Baumer Despeigne’s** home in Switzerland when many were invited there to gather and share on monkhood within and without. As we continue to unearth his wisdom and reflections from his past 9 decades, we are eternally grateful to Fr. Panikkar for his delightful coining of words and disbursement of the same over the years in his efforts to explicate and live the archetype of monkhood: In intention and life style, any human person in any walk of life, in any religion, can realize the archetype of monkhood.

Sr. Pascaline Coff, O.S.B.  
Bede Griffiths Trust  
Osage Forest of Peace  
Sand Springs, OK 7/11/08