

Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)
www.christthekingabbey.org

Cullman, Alabama
Every Sunday: 6:00 AM and 10:00 AM
Daily: 6:00 AM
Holy Days of Obligation:
6:00 AM - 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel
Montgomery, Alabama
10:45 AM
Only on first Sunday
of each month

St Pius V Chapel
Birmingham, Alabama
9:30 AM
Every Sunday except
first Sunday of each month

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

First Sunday after Epiphany

January 10, 2010 – White

Mass of Holy Family Gl; Cr; comm Sunday Preface Epiphany

Weekly Bulletin #1130

*O Lord, uphold us and
our absent brethren.*

Feast of the Holy Family **January 10, 2010**

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NOTICE OF DEATH

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Brother John Collins O.C.S.O.

Know well that the day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night
Venerable Brother John Collins, O.C.S.O.
Born September 11, 1927 – Died January 6, 2010
I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.
Please pray for Brother John.
May his soul rest in peace.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

By

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp. Part 20
1957

Viewed from without, Christianity as a religion bears the stamp of sacrifice and renunciation. Now human life entails enough privation and trouble already; and is one to become a Catholic just to lead a still more harassed and strait-laced existence? No, we believers must illustrate by our lives what *real Christianity* means and show outsiders a view of it which they otherwise could not have. *We must make them realize that what they are in search of we have already found, that despite manifest hardships and trials we are happy and contented people in the depths of our souls. So that they can say when they see us: What wonderful people they are! If only we could be as they! "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5, 16). They must be forced by our example to praise God, thanking him that such lives are still possible, that such people still exist!*

How insatiably men hunger and thirst for a modicum of joy and happiness! They are in continual search for a lost paradise, yearning for happiness, the motive power within; it never allows them rest. Even the sinner is on the quest for happiness, only he seeks it in a perverse way. **People would be bound to come to us if we showed forth by our lives the genuine happiness we experience in our faith.**

What a challenging, pregnant expression is that uttered by Christ and recorded in St Matthew's gospel (5, 14): "You are the light of the world"! Having the light of life (John 8, 12) we must not walk in darkness. **What a desperate situation if we who should be the light of the world are ourselves darkness "If then the light that is in thee be darkness, the darkness itself, how great shall it be!" (Matt. 6, 23).** We ought to "shine as lights in the world,

blameless and sincere children of God, without reproof in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil- 2, 15). Christ is the Light that should shine in and through us (John 1, 9). Of ourselves we are, as John the Baptist, but night and darkness; he was not the Light but was to give testimony of the Light (John 1, 8). That too we should do.



Union with God In Spite Of All

Most of us blame our lack of virtue and sanctity on our environment, on circumstances, on our neighbors, on our parents, on our superiors, or even on God Himself. Everyone and everything outside of us seems to be hindering us from drawing closer to God. But as we progress in our understanding of the spiritual life, we begin to realize that what is hindering us is not so much what is outside of us but what is inside us. There have been saints in every state and position in life: kings, queens, popes, priests, religious, married, single, widows, orphans, slaves, beggars, sick and bed-ridden, farmers, and former drunks or prostitutes. And many of these were in the most horrible and unholy of environments. The odds were against them, yet perhaps it was these very hindrances that made them what they were because they overcame them. They sanctified their lives, and redeemed their, perhaps, sinful and wasted past because they understood our Savior's unbounded love for them and His infinite power to sanctify them even in what seemed to be an impossible and totally un-ideal environment. By faith they saw God behind everything, and turned the "hell" in which they lived into a Purgatory, indeed, into a heaven on earth. They realized that God was always near, or rather, inside them wherever they were. And that the spiritual life is really the simplest thing in the world since it principally rests on the perfection of our interior intentions and motives, rather than on living in "ideal" circumstances, such as perfect health, leisure, understanding from others, or absence of persecution. As Abbot Chapman says, "When we come to know that our whole environment and everything that happens is God's hand upon us, and that we are in touch with Him at every moment, because every detail of life is a means arranged by Him to lead us to Himself; *then* we find that our great trouble is *self*." Of course, our environment can, and does, assist us, or make things more difficult, in our quest for union with God. But no situation, however bad, is totally unredeemable. We must do what we can to live in an ordered and holy environment, especially in our own homes. Usually it is impossible to make the "ideal" a reality. In this case, we must use, as best we can, what we have. God does not demand the impossible nor forget how difficult our situation is and how little time we have for prayer and recollection. But because He asks all of us to be holy, to be Christ-like, we know that this cannot be impossible for us, though perhaps difficult. The difficulty itself increases our merit and deserves and demands special graces from God.

1. There will be Catechism class after 10:00 AM Mass this morning.
2. Candles will be blessed on Candlemas Day, February 2, 2010.
3. On Thursday, January 14, 2010, will be held the postponed First Thursday Adoration and Holy Hour with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the Abbey Church from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM and from 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM.
4. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-ins of our Chapels. LET US ALSO PRAY FOR EVERYONE.
It is not for us to determine who to leave out of this prayer.
5. MASSES FOR THE WEEK: (Father Abbot Leonard's schedule only)

SUNDAY:	For the People of our Chapels
MONDAY:	Dec. Brother John Collins O.C.S.O.
TUESDAY:	Special Int. of the Donor
WEDNESDAY:	For the Poor Souls
THURSDAY:	Dec. Dennis Schnell
FRIDAY:	Dec. Anne McMahan
SATURDAY:	For the Poor Souls

A Thought To Remember ...

God is to be sought, within, away from distraction and noise. To find Him the soul must strictly enforce silence on all the disturbances; on all the endless and not too useful small talk by which nature often fights against grace; on all the interior arguments prompted by self-love or sensuality. These constantly stifle the inspirations of grace and keep the soul from ever finding the dwellings wherein lives God.

THE JUST MAN JOSEPH

From "The Golden Years by" Father Husslein S.J.

With slight adaptations

IT IS not difficult to picture the little workshop in which Jesus toiled with Joseph. There was a sunny corner at the back which looked out upon the hills, where the Boy had His bench and tools, and where Joseph's eyes would often wander to watch the sunbeams weaving a halo in His golden hair.

There, too, he would meet the gaze of eyes filled with the tender thoughts of a fresh young soul.

Father Faber tells us how the hand of Joseph lay upon the hand of God, guiding it in its self-appointed task. His was the task to teach God! Our soul is hushed in mighty awe and wonder, as we look upon the little hand that suffers itself to be pressed and guided over the rough board by Joseph's hard and toil worn fingers. Then, as we raise our eyes, we watch in Joseph's calm and saintly face the flush of many and great thoughts, and wonder at the silent mastery of his will, at the simple fidelity of his patient heart to the common duties of daily life.

It must have cost unceasing effort for Joseph, son of kings and foster-father to the King of kings, to train himself to such fidelity in the humble tasks of the life whereby the Son of God was to fulfill His destiny. He looked upon the royal hands of God, as they struggled with the rough work and bore their bruises and their soil. He looked upon the young shoulders carrying their burden of wood and tools, the coarse garments and the sweet flushed face which bent above the lowly work; and he saw, within, the glory and majesty of the King's Son, the unspeakable beauty of His servitude and humiliation in the strong, fair toils of love.

No scepter lay in those little hands; no crown was on His head; no ermine robes hung from His shoulders — yet He was every inch the King's Son! On His face was visible the unruffled sweetness and gentle dignity of a soul perfectly at peace, and the unbroken consciousness of the Royalty which reigned within. Time and again the soul of Joseph reached out to serve where it should command, and fell in gentle confusion under the apparently unconscious gaze of the Divine Son. Then Joseph would turn and busy himself about the shop, while the Boy worked on in the silence of His father's love.

There were times also when the two drew near each other in the fashioning of their work, and drifted into talk of Mary: Mary's sweetness, the lovely charm of her gracious ways, the radiant smile that lighted up her face as they turned up the little walk and found her in the glory of the setting sun. And Jesus would tell His father of the many pretty ways in which she sought to give Him unexpected pleasure; by the tales she told Him. The simple, steadfast silence of Joseph and his unquestioning adherence to the line of conduct which the Holy Spirit inspired were tested and tried day by day more deeply, as the Boy grew in grace and wisdom and entered more closely into His father's loving heart. All day long the two worked in the intimacy of their toil. Their thought and deed sprang up under the same impulse and followed the same supreme end.

It was the profound consciousness of his unworthiness which frequently sealed the lips of Joseph, for he was "a just man," and humility is but a true appreciation of our relationship to God. None the less, the great man's soul would press against the bar, yearning for hidden and holy things as his forefathers yearned for the milk and honey of the Promised Land. All through that heroic silence the divine eyes of the quiet Boy were fixed with infinite content and love upon the aspiring soul and toiling hands of His earthly father, rejoicing in His great strides heavenward along strenuous ways of sanctity toward the joy and glory that awaited him, in the kingdom of the Just.

Mary, also, knew something of that hidden struggle. And when the Child had gone to rest, weary with the hard day's toil, she drew nearer to her spouse and whispered the sweet comfort of her loving heart to allay the tired forces of his patient soul. That whisper bore with it, like "the north wind and the south wind" of the Canticle, all the strength and vigor and fragrance of the aromatical spices in the garden of the Beloved. Under this sacred spell his tense soul would relax, in perfect rhythm with the gentle music of Mary's harmonious spirit, and the just man rested in the peace of God.

Little is required—a delicate touch suffices to tune a perfect instrument whose strings have slipped through constant pressure of the human hand. How skilled was Mary's hand, how light her touch, how exquisite the harmony she drew from the yielding strings of that love-laden instrument, the soul of her virginal spouse. Her fair hand lingered in the rapture of those holy chants, while God smiled and the angels listened.

In all the years of close companionship between Mary and Joseph, through every test of pain and joy, amid the hardships of exile and the drudgery of daily life, the wonder of their perfect love never waned, its glowing colors never faded, its charm never vanished, its existence never fell to the colorless level of the commonplace. And the reason was clear to see. It sprang from the very bosom of God, flowing thence into human channels. It had but one Source and one mode of existence. It was celestially free from the trammels of the flesh and lived in the crystalline stability of spiritual light, it knew not age nor suffered the shadow of decline.

Joseph's quiet strength of soul, manifested in endurance of body, stability of temperament, and the patience of a disciplined character, was a constant source of admiration to his holy spouse. Her love went out to him in a sweet dependence, such as only the strong and self-reliant can call forth and fully appreciate; which made his responsibilities light and his anxieties bearable, and doubled his strength in the heat of conflict and his joy in time of peace. It kept sweet and active the hidden springs of tenderness in Joseph's manly nature, that Mary's lips might never thirst, and that the wounds she suffered from contact with the world might steep their fever in the healing waters of his love. And Mary drank and thanked God for the wondrous fashioning of that great soul of Joseph, whose depths, filled with the riches of God, her love discovered day by day. They were one in spirit and one in God. While Mary bestowed upon him the tenderness of her dependence, Joseph conferred upon her the comfort of his strength. In all things, that quiet interchange of love constantly operated in this ideal world.

With each day Joseph grew more dear to Mary's heart. As the years flowed on, so quietly, so undiversified in outward events, so rich in the unfolding of the spiritual life which lay lapped upon the glimmering tide of the Holy Child's Divinity, Mary learned to love more deeply the saintly soul of Joseph. The rarely beautiful character of his mission and the perfection of his conformity with its grandly simple requirements flooded her heart with a reverent affection, and opened noble vistas into the great soul which seemed in its humility to hide its beauty from its own unstartled consciousness.

As her love looked out from Mary's eyes, Joseph would lay her slender hand upon his own rough palm, and remind her humbly that as hers was created for the service of the Infant God, so was his made to labor for the King and Queen of Heaven. Its toil was that which from all eternity had been decreed and bore the blessing and the glory of the eternal years. And Mary told him it was fashioned after the Father's own, whose patience and goodness, whose beauty and strength were traced in every rugged line. In years to come the toiling world might see and ponder that hand of Joseph, and joyously lay its hand in his for faithful help and guidance.

About them hovered the sense of being guided, silently, but irresistibly, in thought and deed, by the Holy Child. In His absolute subjection was an underlying power which radiated from His Divine Personality, and exercised its quiet force upon their highly spiritual life. As the moon, in a serene and lofty sky, governs the sweep of the mighty tides, yet yields to them the fulness of its silver beauty till all the waters gleam from coast to coast, so the life of the Divine Child, in its beauty and supernatural light, shone ever more resplendent over the waters of their souls, until that beauty became a living force to draw them almost irresistibly along the high and perfect way of God's Will. Their liberty, indeed, remained, that they might serve God freely, but they were, in its most profound sense, captured and drawn by the Divinity in Christ that is wisdom as well as loveliness, providence as well as sweetness, harmony as well as light, and which contains eminently all virtues in the fulness of their splendor.

As these holy souls expanded to the power of the Divine Presence and grew more yielding to Its tranquil sway, they mirrored ever more perfectly that Divine Principle which governs yet is governed by its own most perfect law. Happy Mary! Happy Joseph! to be so joined in that mutual love of holy wedlock whose bond was the Spirit of God, the Divine Spirit of Love Itself. Only thus can we have the perfection of the Christian home, in which the children whom God may grant shall preciously grow up in the likeness of the Christ Child, with the love of the Saviour deep in their hearts and constantly advancing like Him "in wisdom and age and grace with God and men."

How happy were Mary and Joseph, when, sitting down to their simple meal, they had the little Jesus between them; when, morning and evening, they knelt beside Him, knowing that He whose prayer went up with theirs was Himself the God to whom they prayed. See them — how reverent they are, how still, how attentive. Was there ever a scene on earth more beautiful than morning and night prayers at Nazareth!

But there were times when Mary and Joseph looked forward together to the day when the silence of those boyish lips of Christ should at last be broken and His words would flood the world with new revelations of beauty and truth. They knew not how it would all come about, yet they knew that His victory was secure; they knew that the light of Truth would kindle and burn, and would blaze forth under the quiet power of the Hidden Hand. And Mary knew, in their mutual love, how the shadow of the Great Sacrifice hung over them, for the vision of the Lamb of God, immolated for us, not seldom shone in the gentle face of Jesus to wring the hearts that held Him close in their adoring love. This, too, it was which drew them together ever more intimately.

The love of Mary and Joseph, centered as it was in Christ alone, must for all time be the model of every wedded love which maid and man shall pledge each other, that it may last through life, and its fruit may be garnered up for them unto all eternity.

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Blessing of Homes today