

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

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Weekly Bulletin #1146

May 2, 2010 – White

Mass of Sunday GI; Cr; St Athanasius BCD Preface of Easter

THE POWER OF PRAYER Part 29

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp.

FOR RELIGIOUS

A good, ingenuous Sister who had lived thirty years in religion once said at the end of a retreat: “How well I could pray in the world! Prayer was for me then a recreation and my deepest joy. But since I entered I felt my heart had been robbed of its most precious possession; I simply could no longer pray despite my desire to pray well. Now after this retreat I can pray again, pray exactly as I did in the world.” It happened that in the convent to which she belonged mental prayer was explained in terms of a rigid method. Anxious though she was to pray properly and in an intimate manner, she adhered rigidly to the method as explained, believing that otherwise her mental prayer was no prayer at all. The result was that her familiar intercourse with God was spoiled, even made impossible. This good soul was simple and child-like and could make nothing of a rigid system; before her entry into religion she had managed quite well without systematized prayer. “The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2, 27). The sabbath is meant to be a day of rest and relaxation instead of being burdened with many rules and prescriptions. Rules and methods are meant to help us in prayer, not to be a burden and restriction; if they impede and weigh us down they no longer serve their purpose and should be relinquished.

In a certain convent an elderly nun hard of hearing used to pray half-aloud to herself in the choir with the result that she could be overheard by a large number of the community. The Mother Superior drew her attention to this: “Sister, you must pray a little less loud, you are disturbing the others in the choir. The Lord can hear you quite well.” The Sister replied: “I feel that if I don't hear myself praying I have not prayed at all.” Cry louder, the louder the prayer the better! (3 Kings 18, 27). Are we so far removed here from the Buddhist prayer-wheel? And what has become of mental prayer, the prayer of quiet and recollection? Without a life of mental prayer there is no proper interior life.

In a large hospital run by Sisters—a fervent community they were, eager for sacrifice and prayer—a thousand *Hail Marys*, that is twenty Rosaries, used to be recited on Sundays by each Sister. Note well, these were extra prayers over and above the many vocal prayers prescribed by rule. In addition there was the hospital work to attend to on Sundays as on week-days. One could not reproach the Sisters' spirit of prayer and sacrifice, but their practice in prayer might merit remark. Twenty Rosaries, along with all the other prayers and exercises, with professional work thrown in, are surely an excessive burden. A programme such as this is spiritual hard labour and contributes precious little to familiarity with God. A thousand *Hail Marys* must be “worked off” at all costs! Such a load of prayers, far from promoting recollection and the interior spirit, makes those burdened with it only more superficial and “nervy.” Instead of finding repose of mind in contact with God they feel as a result utterly exhausted in body and spirit.

Prayer is not to be counted but assessed at its proper worth. What matters is not the number of prayers we say, but their depth. As it is, we mortals are limited in our capacity; when we spread ourselves overmuch it is always with a loss of concentration. “Speak not much, as the heathens; for they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. Be not you therefore like to them; for your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask him” (Matt. 6, 7). God values the intensity of prayer much more than its outward expression. In sports the best element is lost when they are conducted watch in hand. And prayer ceases to be prayer when one begins to look on it as a feat, and to reckon it up. He lives rightly who knows how to pray aright. Hence in religious houses, as well as in the world, more stress should be laid on a proper training in prayer. What is neglected in early formation in the home can only with difficulty be made good in later life. So in religion too, an adequate training in prayer should be provided from the beginning. Neglect in this matter during postulanship, and especially during noviceship, can scarcely be repaired later. There is no atmosphere more congenial to such training than that of the novitiate: if a religious fails then to learn how to pray properly he will scarcely learn it later when conditions are much less favourable. □

May Crowning — Next Sunday

Next Sunday is May Crowning of our Most Blessed and Beautiful Mother, Mary. Next Sunday is also the day we give honor to our own mothers, those wonderful women who brought each one of us to life and light. In addition, next Sunday one of our little children will receive, for the first time in his young life, Our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion. Next Sunday will be a most wonderful day and a day which the Lord has made. Let us pray that the holiness of that day will fill the minds and hearts of all of us assembled here in this place. Miss Teresa Sheppard will act in the place of us all in placing the crown on our Most Blessed Mother, Mary.

Mary is our Mother, as at the same time the Mother of God, Himself. Is she not, therefore, a Queen? Is she not, therefore, a Queen over and above all queens — all queens who have come before and all who are yet to come? Is not the homage and honor due to her greater than is due to any other? How can any act of homage and prayer offered to her be commonplace and ordinary? After our work, labor, and love for God, our work, labor, and love should go to her.

In these terrible days we need blessing and protection. In our troubles, let us run to her and place ourselves at her feet. Let us not ever omit taking advantage of any honor which is given to her — “our tainted nature's solitary boast.” Let us not ever omit taking advantage of any act of gratitude offered to her. Let us not ever omit taking advantage of any prayer lifted up to her. Let us not omit praying for Miss Sheppard, who so eloquently gives solemn expression to all that is good, holy, and blessed in the hearts of all of us here next Sunday. May God Bless us all. May Mary pray for us all. And protect us all.

1. There will be Catechism Class this morning.
2. There will be an Oblate meeting after the 10:00 AM Mass this morning.
3. May crowning will be held today after Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel, Montgomery.
4. **N.B.:** There will be no Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel in Montgomery on June 6 (First Sunday). There will be Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes in Montgomery on June 13 (Second Sunday). The Chapel Picnic will take place after Mass, June 13, (Second Sunday). There will be no Mass at St. Pius V Chapel in Birmingham on June 6, nor on June 13, we return to our regular schedule of Mass at St. Pius V Chapel on Sunday June 20.
5. **Special Notice:** In your Charity, please pray for Mr. Kenneth McHenry, who died on Monday, April 26, 2010. Mr. McHenry is the father of our Brother Louis, OSB. Please pray for Brother Louis also.
6. Month of May Daily Rosary every evening in the Abbey Church at 7:20 PM.
7. Monday, May 3rd, is the Feast of the Finding of the True Cross. The third and last blessing will be placed on the little Palm Crosses on that day.
8. Tuesday May 4th, is the Name Day of our beloved Mother Monica, OSB, in your charity please pray for Mother Monica.
9. Our Annual Church picnic will be held on Sunday, May 16th, — Third Sunday of May. Leaflets concerning the picnic are on the Bulletin table in the vestibule. Everybody is welcome with or without a prepared dish. For special information, speak with Mrs. Carol Girardi.
10. Thursday is the First Thursday of May. Holy Hour and Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the Abbey Church from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM and 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM.
11. Friday is the First Friday of May. Masses in the Abbey Church at 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM; all-day Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM.
12. During the Month of May — please pray the family Rosary daily. The help of our Most Blessed Mother is so very necessary, especially today. Are we fulfilling Our Lady of Fatima's requests?
13. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-ins of our Chapels. LET US ALSO PRAY FOR EVERYONE.
14. John Patterson will make his First Holy Communion next Sunday
15. **MASSES FOR THE WEEK:** (Father Abbot Leonard's schedule only)

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| SUNDAY: | For the People of our Chapels | THURSDAY: | For the Poor Souls |
| MONDAY: | Special Int. Paul Roy Family | FRIDAY: | Dec. Stephen Holup |
| TUESDAY: | Special Int. Mother Monica OSB — Nameday | SATURDAY: | Special Int. Ann Roberts |
| WEDNESDAY: | Dec. Kenneth McHenry | | |

A Thought To Remember ...

Many well intentioned faithful people, in pursuit of the final end of the Christian life, prefer to devote their attention to acquiring perfection of conduct rather than to cultivating the Love of God, and find, as a result of their efforts, that they are as far off from one as from the other.