

Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)

(Formerly St Francis of Assisi Chapel)

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

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Weekly Bulletin #1004

September 2, 2007 – Green

Mass of Sunday; Gl; Cr; Pref. Holy Trinity

BLESSED ARE THE CLEAN OF HEART

(Part one of two parts)

Herein follows a sermon preached by Father Edward Leen to a convent of nuns, and is taken from his book, "The Voice of the Priest," published in 1945. What greater emphasis must his words be given in 2007?

"To one who casts seeing eyes on the "world of Christianity" today, what picture is presented? Notice, I do not say the Christian world, for can what is around us be so described? One sees a picture of shreds and tatters of Christianity sewn on to a ground of paganism and masquerading as the nuptial robe with which Christ clothes His followers. The beauty, harmony, reserve, dignity, sublimity of Christianity all submerged, all disappearing in the mad pursuit of inane and degrading pleasure.

"God does not count, and therefore He is no longer sought by Christians. How many, even in our own land, make God the law of life? And yet there can be no other end set to a life that is Christian. The old terms of our Faith remain, we still use the same phrases and the same words, but have they for us the full content of meaning they had of old? The cross still remains, but remains as a memorial, not as a reminder. It has become a monument reared to commemorate a historic and tragic event that took place many centuries ago and is not, as it should be, a living, speaking thing, setting before us the only true theory of life. It tells us of something that has happened to some one else and which wrought His death: it does not arouse in us a consciousness of what should take place in us, in order that we may live. Practices have replaced principles; observances tend to replace the true worship of God; the real reason of religion is being buried under an incubus of formalism; and true devotion to God – that is, devotedness to God – is being swept away in a tide of soulless devotions. The spirit of sacrifice – the essential spirit of religion and therefore the essential spirit of Christianity – tends to disappear from our midst. Who speaks of sacrifice now? Who understands what the term implies? To the average Christian it means the surrender, through liberality, of what he would be perfectly entitled to hold, not the renouncement to which he is absolutely obliged if he is to attain the end for which life is given him. From the consoling, pathetic, and (should be) inspiring truth that "Christ died for us," the pleasure-loving Christian derives the comfortable illusion that he is dispensed from the unpleasant necessity of dying for himself and dying to himself; yet it was precisely to encourage him to face that death to self, and to make that death to self fructify in life, that Christ surrendered His life on the cross.

"What part has the cross in our lives to-day? What lesson does Christ preach to us from it? Is it the doctrine that Christians may freely indulge in all that their blunted, and often false, consciences tell them is 'no harm' in all that they do not regard as positive mortal sin? Does the Book of the Cross teach us how, by skilful casuistry, to hug with security the confines of mortal sin and escape shipwreck? Does the cross convey the lesson that the life-effort of the Christian consists in 'not doing wrong' rather than in 'doing right'? Does it encourage the utmost self-indulgence that can be conceded to oneself with safety? Is the Christian ideal merely that of 'safety first' in the moral sphere? Can that be called Christianity? To all warnings against courses and fashions that are at variance with the spirit of Christianity, does the Christian make a valid defense when he can say, there is 'no harm' in them. Alas! What deterioration of manners has taken place through the wide acceptance amongst Christians of the baneful principle of conduct implied in the phrase 'there is no harm in it'! Did not Christ die precisely to warn us that for us 'what is no harm' is really dangerous – that we must mortify ourselves in what is legitimate in order that we may be preserved from what is forbidden? The Crucifixion was not an idle and useless display of heroism on the part of Our Divine Lord. He died because we must die to our evil selves in order to live. It is not by self-indulgence but by self-denial that we are to attain to happiness, and the death on the cross is the supreme example of self-denial. We must deny ourselves – that is, we must die to our evil selves – if we are to be happy; and it is this truth that Christ, having first preached to us by word in the Sermon on the Mount, drives home to us by dying on the Cross. (Continued on page two)