

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

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

April 13, 2008 – White

Mass of Sunday; GI; Cr; Pref. Easter: comm. St Justin

Weekly Bulletin #1037

THE EIGHTH STORY OF THE MOUNTAIN

There is something rather special about the life that is lived in a monastic setting. There is something that cannot be easily explained about it, and a clear answer is not easily given to anybody who wants to know why normal men and women seek to live in “gloomy” monasteries or convents. Incidentally there is nothing “gloomy” in a true monastery or a true convent. Either place is constantly bursting with life and energy and activity. Only they can understand what a monastery or a convent is who shall have sacrificed a large part of themselves for their monastery or convent, who have fought to save it, and who has struggled to make it a beautiful and holy place of prayer. After this is done, and only then, will the love of the monastery or the convent fill the heart of the monk or the nun. This cannot be described.

Contemplative Benedictine monasteries and convents do not really accomplish much in the material order. The greatest work of monasteries and convents is spiritual. In a world in which men have forgotten the value of prayer, it is the prayer of monks and nuns who pray for the world and for all those in the world who have forgotten how to pray that truly matters. Somewhat difficult to comprehend, but if there is some small degree of happiness and spiritual joy and faith to temper the anger, rage, hate, and despair of our time, it has been obtained by prayer. And if people have been able to discover any meaning at all out of the chaos and confusion of our world, they owe it to the grace of God, which was obtained for them by somebody's prayer.

The crumbled religious condition of the Church which was founded by Jesus Christ, is, indeed, a serious prayerful concern of every monk and nun. But the monk and the nun realize that correction will never be brought about by all the on-going arguments and debates about the present-day religious bewilderment. The monastic properly has recourse to prayer. Because of the monastic vocation, the religious knows that it is prayer, not argument, that will reach the ear of God. Besides, polemic is not the work of monks or nuns. Prayer is! Therefore the monastic takes the religious (as well as the world's) problems out of the bungling hands of man and prudently and humbly places them all in the hand of God, where they rightly belong. Wrangling, debating, and proving are simply not proper for monks or nuns, and give disedification to all onlookers. The truly religious person simply remains apart from contention and discord and turns their attention only to prayer! In so doing the monk or nun is not thereby a coward. Sadly, there are those who cannot or simply will not be convinced of this all important point.

Benedictine monasteries and convents are not places where business transactions take place. Benedictine monasteries and convents are places where the power of prayer can achieve things that are beyond the thinking of man. And because monks and nuns know what they must be about, monasteries and convents enjoy peace and contentment and joy. Why is it that monastics who have none of the pleasures of the world have a happiness that the world is unable to find? Why is the silence of monks and nuns more eloquent than all the speeches of the politicians and the showmen of the world? Naturally there are many difficulties with living in common, but no doubts, except for those given to doubts.

Why is the silence of the monastic cloister so much more beautiful than the noise of all the radio and television sets and cassette players we are forever listening to? Why do the smiles of monks and nuns have more joy in them than has the loud, nervous, raucous laughter of thousands of people of the world? When the monks and the nuns raise their eyes to the hills or to the sky, or when they see the little chipmunk or the tiny blue tailed lizard or the little bird in its nest, they see a beauty which many people cannot see. At the end of the work day, when they slowly find their way to the monastery or convent, they are tired, and they appear to be alone, but their hearts are at rest because they are absorbed in a companionship that is tremendous beyond the understanding of others, and the sky and the little creatures, all of them, speak of God. The silence of the cloister allows the sounds of another world to be heard. And all things, big and small, speak of the One from Whom all things come and to Whom all things will one day return.

The world was made for prayer! Therefore, the monastery must be a place that guarantees solitude of spirit and heart and soul so that the fragrance of prayer is always filling the air, where nothing is heard but the voice of the soul praising God and the Voice of God replying to the soul. But no one can enter into this kind of prayer unless God brings him or her into it. God gives such a calling to whom He will. He does not demand it of all. *(continued on page two)*