

“See this dilapidated prayer,’ says the devil, ‘and tell me, Lord, whether You don’t think it has been a waste of time. Those yawns, for instance, and those furtive glances at the watch – they must certainly score heavily in my favor. And what about that lengthy digression on the subject of his health. Then there was that argument which would have been so convincing if it had in fact taken place instead of being a fanned up piece of self justification existing only in the mind. And those plans for August. Followed by at least ten minutes when nothing seems to have gone on at all. Surely, Lord, You got very little out of that prayer today – especially if You take into consideration those memories and imaginations which I suggested to his muddy mind: memories which would be unsuitable anywhere but which are especially so at prayer. Even the attempts at returning to Your presence, Lord, can be counted as winning points to me: they were so halfhearted and infrequent. Add to the total that confessedly bored attitude of mind in which the whole thing was conducted and You will admit that I have won hands down.’

“So much for the devil’s report. First of all there is nothing to show that our prayers are as boring to God as they feel to us. Moreover, even granted that in the given prayer there was nothing substantial which could be listed on the credit side (and there usually is something, though not always something you could put your finger on afterwards), it would surely be reasonable to think of God as countering Satan with the all-important question: ‘But whom was he doing it *for?*’ *That* is the point. It would be in keeping with the spirit of the Book of Job to consider the Lord pursuing Satan relentlessly. ‘It’s all very well for you to cite the distractions in My friend’s prayer,’ – so we would have the Lord defending His own – ‘but though he may not have made a very good thing of it, at least he has not gone back to bed or picked up a novel. He did, you notice, *go on*. Discouraged as he is about the result of his effort (unreasonably discouraged in point of fact) he will be at it again, you will find, tomorrow morning. His object all along has been – and still is – to please Me, and though he imagines he isn’t doing this, he has no intention of pleasing you. While certainly he isn’t, poor man, pleasing himself.’

“The prayer of futility, then, has this inestimable advantage: it keeps us in our place. (It has its dangers too: particularly dejection and laziness.) It enables us to say with sincerity: ‘I am nothing. I can do nothing. I deserve nothing but kicks and crosses. At the same time nothing in the world will induce me to give it up.’ Such is the mind of the man of prayer. A fixed refusal to be put off by failure: a willingness to forgo the taste of success. The true soul of prayer strives after God alone. Not after satisfaction, not after recollection (for itself’s sake), not even after sanctity (regarded as a state and not as a means of loving God), but simply after God Himself. And inevitably God is the reward of such a striving – but God expressing Himself more in His Absence than in His Presence.” □

1. **CATECHISM CLASS:** Children 6 to 14 please meet Father Joseph in the vestibule right after the 10:00 Mass.
2. **NOTICE:** After Mass at Saint Pius V Chapel in Birmingham and after the **10:00 Mass (only)** at the Abbey Church this morning, we will have the *Blessing of Automobiles*, in honor of Saint Christopher’s Feast Day (July 25). All automobiles present will be blessed.
3. Friday is the First Friday of August, with Masses in the Abbey Church at 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM, and all-day Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament from **10:00** AM until 6:00 PM.
4. Saturday is the First Saturday of August, with Masses in the Abbey Church at 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM.
5. Next Sunday, August 3, is the first Sunday of August. Therefore, **there will be NO Mass at Saint Pius V Chapel in Birmingham next Sunday.**
6. Also next Sunday, Father Sebastian will have the monthly meeting of our Oblates immediately after the 10:00 AM Mass in the Abbey Church.
7. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-ins of our Chapels. **LET US ALSO PRAY FOR EVERYONE.** Let us pray for ALL the priests and religious men and women of the world. **NO MAN, WOMAN, OR CHILD SHOULD BE LEFT OUT OF OUR PRAYER.**
8. **MASSES FOR THE WEEK:** (Father Abbot Leonard’s schedule only)
 - SUNDAY: For the People of our Chapels
 - MONDAY: Welfare of Wilma Kristofik
 - TUESDAY: Deceased Theodore Fournier, Sr.
 - WEDNESDAY: Deceased Frances Drljaca
 - THURSDAY: Deceased Verl Fisburne
 - FRIDAY: Deceased Catherine O’Connor
 - SATURDAY: Special intention Paul Roy Family

A Thought To Remember ...

In spite of our fallen human nature, we must be in uninterrupted saintly earnest

~ SEEKING ONLY TO LOVE AND SERVE GOD ~

totally forgetful of self.