

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

FEAST OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 24, 2008 – Red

Mass of Feast; Gl; Cr; Pref. Apostles; comm. Sunday

Weekly Bulletin #1056

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

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

(Part three – conclusion)

If our faith is strong and our love ardent and pure, God will show Himself very generous to us. The same goes for our spiritual Communion. However, spiritual Communion does not work like the Sacraments, *ex opere operato*, but *ex opere operantis*, that is, by the work of the *worker* – by our own dispositions and desire. *Everything* in spiritual Communion, all the grace which we receive, as with our other private devotions, really depends on our interior desire and fervor. This is, in a sense, the beauty of spiritual Communion, for we cannot really practice this devotion out of mere routine. We can, of course, recite the mere words of the formula, but such words are not what this devotion is all about – it is essentially the *ardent desire* to receive Jesus. It is true that sacramental Communion is of itself of far greater value, for by it we truly receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ, and it is capable of conferring more grace and of producing greater fruit, than spiritual Communion; yet if we make a spiritual Communion with better dispositions, with greater faith, more humility, reverence, love and desire, it is possible to receive more grace than by a sacramental Communion made half-heartedly and out of routine. This is what the saints and masters of the spiritual life all teach.

St. Leonard of Port-Maurice says: ‘Spiritual Communion is a treasure which enriches the soul with inestimable wealth and is capable of producing the very same graces as sacramental, and in some instances greater.’ St. Alphonsus, the great Doctor of the Church, teaches the same thing. The spiritual writer, venerable Alphonsus Rodriguez says: ‘God often bestows the same graces to those who communicate spiritually as to those who really receive under the Species. Nay, it may sometimes happen that he who communicates spiritually may receive more graces than he that actually communicates.’ The great theologian, Cardinal de Lugo, also teaches that ‘the soul, because of the vehemence of its desires, may sometimes receive greater graces from spiritual, than from sacramental, Communion.’ *All this should teach us the primacy of desire and love in the spiritual life. This is what God really looks for and what He blesses more than anything else.*

Spiritual Communion has always been greatly esteemed by the saints, who sought, by this powerful and precious devotion, to unite themselves to Our Lord and to nourish their love for Him. If we wish to rapidly and more surely rise to greater union with God and holiness of life, we should make frequent use of this devotion, for it draws down precious graces into our soul. Best of all, there is no limit to the use of this devotion. We can communicate spiritually *every hour of the day*; the oftener the better. As we have seen, nothing is more simple and easy than to make a spiritual Communion. We can make one *anywhere* and *anytime of the day or night*, and as *often* as we wish. It is not necessary to be fasting, to have a priest, or to spend much time. All we have to do is form the *desire* to receive Jesus, present in the Blessed Sacrament, spiritually, since we cannot receive Him sacramentally right at that moment. This desire can be wholly interior, or we can express it in a longer formula, or in a simple aspiration such as ‘Jesus, come into my soul.’ This is an ideal devotion to use throughout our busy day, for often we simply do not have the time or opportunity to kneel down and recite a long prayer. Spiritual communion, therefore, can be made during any work or occupation whatsoever. As there is really no time or occupation in which we should feel guilty about praying, so there is no time in which we could not make a spiritual Communion. Even if we are in sin, we can and should often spiritually communicate during the course of the day and even during the wakefulness of the night. It is especially recommended to be made during Mass, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, before going to sleep, on rising, in times of danger, sickness, etc.

It is said that Blessed Angela of the Cross used to make a hundred spiritual Communion every day and the same every night. Some may wonder how she could make so many. St. Augustine gives us the answer: ‘Give me one that loves, and he understands what I say.’ In other words, give me a soul that loves nothing but Jesus Christ, give me a soul that knows what love means, and he will not wonder at it. Spiritual Communion answers a need, a hunger of the soul. When we are separated from loved ones, we transport ourselves near them in mind and heart. It feels like ‘torture’ to be apart, for love craves union. Thus does a lover of Jesus act in his relations with his Eucharistic God. He loves to think of Him, and wishes to be united with Him. Spiritual Communion accustoms the soul to converse frequently with Our Lord and to live in intimate union with Him. It is love yearning for the Beloved. It is love drawing Jesus to itself. →