

# Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)

Cullman, Alabama

[www.ChristTheKingAbbey.org](http://www.ChristTheKingAbbey.org)

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

## Saint Pius V Chapel

Birmingham, Alabama

9:30 AM

Every Sunday except  
first Sunday of each month

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION

May 24, 2009 – White

Mass of Sunday GI; Cr; Preface of Ascension

Weekly Bulletin #1096

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

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

By

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp.

1957

### Part II

Please keep all these parts.

Instruction with regard to the sacraments is obviously necessary; but it is in fact an instruction which points to the priest. It leads to a certain lack of self-reliance or independence in religious matters. The sacraments are more or less dependent on the priest. **BUT IF THERE ARE NO PRIESTS?** That contingency has now become something to be reckoned with. **As a consequence church and tabernacle are empty, and the altar has no significance.** If the spiritual life of the faithful is made entirely dependent on priests or sacraments and these outer supports are suddenly withdrawn, then there is great danger of a religious collapse on the part of many. **People have to be Catholics and remain Catholics even when there are no priests or sacraments;** they have to be Catholics not merely in Catholic but in pagan, even hostile surroundings.

Now the person who does not lead an inner life of prayer is practically totally dependent on the help of priest and sacraments, while he who knows how to pray well can for a time do without them and survive a period of emergency or persecution. He knows his way to God; he can keep in constant touch with Him and draw on Him for help. But where will people get help if they know not how to pray and if there are no priests and sacraments at their disposal? In such cases, as experience unfortunately shows, that is the end of religious practice as far as they are concerned, whereas we need not be too anxious about those who can pray properly. Important and necessary as is a training for reception of the sacraments, **a training in prayer is still more important.** Here too there is question of doing the one and not omitting the other. It is essential that a proper training in prayer be combined with instruction on the sacraments, not only because prayer can substitute for the sacraments in case of necessity, but also because the sacraments, like the spiritual life as a whole, can properly develop only when based on a solid foundation of prayer.

Perhaps it is that the priest's role is unduly emphasized, and, as a result, his responsibilities and his personal activity loom excessively large. He is minister and dispenser of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4, 1); he distributes sacramental grace to the faithful under his care; he instructs and teaches them; he places his services at their disposal; he mediates for them. **That is his task.** But it is the essential task of the faithful to exploit and make full use of the graces thus distributed. Basically, each one is the custodian of his own soul. **The priest, the minister of Christ, can only reach to a person's mind and understanding.** **But the deciding factor in the spiritual life is not the mind but the heart.** Whether or not the heart is touched and inflamed depends on the Holy Ghost and the individual soul in the first place, and not on the priest. Priests have as a rule a good deal of work, hard work, to face; but in many cases their efforts are unavailing, the reason being that the impression prevails that they have to do all the work and that success depends on themselves. In fact, however, the priest is only the "friend of the Bridegroom" (John 3, 29); he can but introduce souls to the Bridegroom; the final decision rests with those so introduced, and depends above all else on their prayer. Hence pastors of souls must take pains in the matter of a proper training in prayer. If only the faithful knew how to pray then the priest's labour in planting and watering would not fail in the desired increase (1 Cor. 3, 7). If his hearers laid the matter to heart (Is. 57, 1) God's words would blaze within as a burning fire (Jer. 20, 9) **Where lies the responsibility for training in prayer? First and foremost with the family, the home, and more particularly with the mother. She promotes devotion in the house...(end of part two)**

Please keep all these parts until the series is complete.