

Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)

Cullman, Alabama

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

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 19, 2009 – Green

Mass of Sunday Gl; Cr; Preface of Holy Trinity

Weekly Bulletin #1104

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

THE POWER OF PRAYER

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp. Part 2

1957

“The Necessity of Prayer”

1. Prayer and the Interior life

Though there is a big difference between the interior life and the life of prayer they can, practically, be compared, and the terms can be interchanged one with the other. You can say, in effect, that the quality of a man's interior life can be gauged by his life of prayer, and conversely his life of prayer by his interior life. “Even thy speech doth discover thee” (Matt. 26, 73). “Thy accent betrays thee as a Galilean; and you Galileans, credulous people, you all run after this Nazarene!” Our speech reveals our origins. It reveals too of what spirit we are. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil! For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Luke 6, 45). Speech develops with the spirit and grows with its growth. No one can speak more learnedly than he knows how. “When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man I put away the things of a child” (1 Cor. 13, 11); I spoke as a man, I understood, I thought as a man.

As our speech reveals us, so too our prayer. Tell me how you pray and I will tell you who you are. The mutual interdependence of the interior life and the life of prayer is so close that the former, especially in its higher grades, can be grasped and described only in terms of the grades reached in prayer. By the dimensions of one's life of prayer can be gauged the intensity of one's interior life. If the latter deepens, the former necessarily extends too. If, however, such is not the case, it is proof that one's life of prayer is mechanical, not organic or co-ordinated.

2. Prayer a substitute for all else

Prayer is one of the crowning characteristics of the spiritual life in general. It is really as old as religion itself: indeed, religion without prayer is an impossibility. There is nothing more important and more necessary in the religious sphere than prayer. **It can substitute for all that is necessary for the individual's salvation, substitute in some cases absolutely. But there is no substitute for prayer itself.** Not as though prayer were the most valuable thing there is: far more valuable are the sacraments of Holy Church, those mighty channels of grace which unite us with God through Christ. **But as in life, so here too what is most valuable is not always the most important.** Wine is a more valuable commodity than water, but the latter is more important than the former. Without wine one can live one's life tolerably well, not so, however, without water. Actual reception of the sacraments is not always feasible, nor indeed absolutely necessary for attaining the goal. But without prayer the adult will never reach his goal. “He who does not pray will perish” (St. Augustine).

(a) *Baptism and Prayer*

Baptism is of outstanding importance among the sacraments. It is *the* sacrament; the others can add nothing essentially new to what we have received in baptism; they can only complete it, deepen and enlarge it, supply it with a fresh access of supernatural life. By baptism we experience a new creation, a new birth; we are called and actually are children of God. Through baptism we are dedicated, transformed and divinized to such a degree that, were we to die immediately after its reception, we should be united eternally that very instant with God. We become “flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone” (Gen. 2, 23).