

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

SS JOACHIM AND ANNE PARENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost

July 26, 2009 – White

Mass of Ss Joachim and Anne comm Sunday

Gl; Cr; Preface of Holy Trinity

Weekly Bulletin #1105

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

THE POWER OF PRAYER

By

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp. Part 3

1957

Confession and Prayer

For the vast majority of baptized persons baptism does not in fact suffice for the salvation of their souls. Not so many preserve unstained their baptismal robe. A great number have to wash it repeatedly in the blood of the Lamb (Apoc. 7, 14). Through grave sin the life of divine sonship is virtually killed; the sinner remains, indeed, a child of God, but dead to his friendship.

The greatest miracle worked by our Divine Lord, apart from that of his own resurrection, was doubtless the raising of Lazarus from the dead. But this miracle is as nothing when compared with the awaking from the dead which takes place in the Sacrament of Penance. Many who have lain in the tomb of sin, moldering in corruption for ten, twenty, thirty years, now rise again to the new life of children of God in virtue of Christ's word of power, "I absolve you from your sins."

Many cannot receive the Sacrament of Penance in their last hour. Frequently death comes so quickly that a confessor cannot be summoned; and even if there were time to call one none can be found. Prayer, then, remains the only possible means of salvation for the dying man. **In this case prayer expressing perfect love, perfect contrition, can substitute fully for the Sacrament of Penance.** Here too there is no substitute for prayer. We see once more the measureless power of prayer, the stupendous miracle it works by raising souls from the dead. And yet that prayer proceeds from a heart which is still sinful when it turns to God. What miraculous power, then, must a prayer have which mounts from a pure, loving heart? In truth such prayer suffices to trans-form the individual soul and renew the face of the earth.

In general, the vast majority of men can be saved only through prayer. For all those who have no knowledge of baptism, prayer (baptism of desire) remains in any case the sole possible means of salvation. They who have had baptism but not the Sacrament of Penance and have committed a grave sin can be saved only through prayer. Finally, persons who have received both these sacraments already but again sin have not always in their last hours a chance of confessing; for these too prayer is the only means at their disposal. **Hence without doubt prayer, and in particular, perfect contrition, is the most important and most general means of salvation.**

Some theologians assert that perfect contrition is a difficult thing to elicit. If that be so for the Catholic with so many graces at his disposal it must be almost an impossibility for those outside the Church, and the question arises how these can be saved. What substitute have they for prayer? Holy Scripture itself, it would appear, is not too optimistic. "A certain man said to Christ: Lord, are they few that are saved? But he said to them, strive to enter by the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter and shall not be able" (Luke 13, 24). Many go the broad way that leads to destruction; "Many indeed," he says: only the few find the strait way that leads to life (Matt. 7, 13 f.). Are we to take it then that Christ's Blood has been shed in vain for most men, that Satan claims the lion's share of the spoil, that here below the harvest field produces more weeds than good grain? No; God's mercy is without limit or end. It far outweighs man's sinful guilt. "Where sin abounded grace did more abound" (Rom. 5, 20).

Possibly an act of contrition so perfect as to admit a soul to heaven immediately after death is not easily elicited. He who has not made an effort during life to elicit even an act of imperfect contrition will not readily make a perfect one at the hour of death. **But an act of contrition which will at least preserve a soul from hell should not be so hard to make.** When a person is on the point of drowning he has to cry for help no matter what people think. And were this for-