

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

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 6, 2009 – Green

Mass of Sunday Gl; Cr; Preface of Holy Trinity

Weekly Bulletin #1111

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

THE POWER OF PRAYER

By

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp. Part 9

1957

Prayer and the Spiritual Life

1. Christ and Prayer

Prayer has to be viewed in relation to the spiritual life as a whole; for great and powerful as it is in its own right, it cannot be regarded as an independent power.

Our finest hour was the hour of our baptism. As birth saw the beginning of our natural life, so our supernatural life began with baptism. A mightier effect by far was then wrought in us than at the creation of the physical world. "When a man becomes a new creature in Christ his old life has disappeared; everything has become new about him." We no longer live a purely human life; we live now by Christ. "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me." He who said, I am the life, has also become our life. We are Christ's and no longer belong to ourselves. We live in a very intimate community of life with Christ; we belong no more to earth but to heaven.

Christ within us — that is the secret of our life. Our life's task is to contribute, of our personal store, towards the building up of the frame of Christ's Body. He must increase but we must decrease. As Christ is now the source and origin of our entire supernatural life, so too He is the sole Mediator and way, and at the same time our goal and final end. Christ's image has to be formed in us. We have to be moulded into the image of His glorified body and be made conformable to Him.

What holds for the entire spiritual life holds too for prayer: no other foundation can be laid than that which has been laid, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3, 11). He who is not united with Christ cannot pray in the real sense of the term. As all else, so prayer must proceed from the Head. Of ourselves we are merely members, dead members; it is only through association of life with Christ that we can pray. That word of His: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me" (John 15, 4), holds for prayer too.

It is only through Christ and because of Him that our prayers can reach the Father. He has been set as Mediator between God and ourselves for prayer as for all else. "For there is one God and one Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2, 5). Our prayer can reach the Father only through Him: "No man come to the Father but by Me" (John 14, 6). The Father is the final end, for He is the Head to which Christ is united (1 Cor. 11, 3).

It is His own prayer, not ours, that Christ presents to the Father. Our contribution consists in attaching ourselves with our wills to His prayer. He prays in us through the Holy Spirit. "The sole essential element of prayer is the assent we give in the depths of our hearts (our supernatural willing) to the unceasing prayer of the Holy Spirit who lives in us" "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3, 5). Our prayer is a gift of God, says St Augustine. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what the Spirit desireth, because He asketh for the saints according to God" (Rom. 8, 26). Through Christ we have received the adoption of sons; and as we are now sons of God He has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying: Abba, Father (Gal. 4, 5). "From the time we were baptized, or since we recovered baptismal grace, Christ is present within us praying." When we give ourselves to prayer we should reflect that it is He who prays within us and that we are expected to join in the prayer of the "firstborn amongst many brethren" (Rom. 8, 30). "Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15, 57).