

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

18th

Saint Pius V Chapel

Birmingham, Alabama

9:30 AM

Every Sunday except
first Sunday of each month

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

October 4, 2009 – Green

Mass of Sunday Gl; Cr; comm. St. Francis of Assisi

Preface of Holy Trinity

Weekly Bulletin #1115

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

THE POWER OF PRAYER

By

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp. Part 12

1957

FUNCTION OF PRAYER IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

In order to see it is not enough to have eyes; they must be opened and trained on objects. Further, there must be light if they are to be employed. Without light the best eyes in the world are of no avail, as little avail as light is without eyes to see. As man needs the atmosphere of light if he is to see, so he needs an atmosphere of supernatural light if he is to believe. Without this one cannot acquire a living faith or a living love of God. How are we to reach the light of faith, the supernatural vision mentioned? All men stand between two extreme poles, between God who dwells in “light inaccessible” (1 Tim. 6, 16) and Satan, the prince of darkness who has been banished to exterior darkness (Matt. 22, 13). He who lives in accord “with the divine will and leads a life pleasing to God draws progressively nearer to Him. He comes more and more to the light. “He that doth truth cometh to the light” (John 3, 21). He becomes light himself (Matt. 5, 14), “light in the Lord” (Eph. 5,8). But he who does evil hates the light (John 3, 20). “He that hateth his brother is in darkness and walketh in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth” (1 John 2, 11).

The deciding factor, then, is action not knowledge. Action alone tells which way we are going, mounting or descending, approaching God or Satan, light or darkness. Action alone leads to the truth and brings us true wisdom. The Saviour never speaks of our having to study His sermons or learn them by heart, but He is constantly demanding of us to “keep his word” (John 8, 5) to follow Him in our conduct. “He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness” (John 8, 12). “If any man will do the will of Him he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God” (John 7, 17). He who lives in the night of sin comes not to the insight of faith despite the preaching, the miracles and the exemplary life of Jesus. You have eyes to see and yet you see not (Mark 8, 18). Even God who is the light cannot be seen in the night of sin. “And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1, 5). Only in the light of faith can we recognize him. “In thy light we shall see light” (Ps. 35, 10).

In baptism we received “eyes of faith”. We must endeavour to increase the light of faith by living virtuous lives pleasing to God. Now by prayer we enter into contact with God. To pray means nothing else than to look out for God with the eyes of faith. But without action no prayer leads to a living faith. Action is the prerequisite for prayer, else prayer would be like gazing into the darkness of night. “We cannot reach” union with God in prayer, says St Teresa, unless that union which consists in the complete surrender of our wills to the divine will is present” (The Interior Castle, p. 104-G.T.). Such “humble, persevering prayer is the best means by which a creature can savour the truth and be enlightened by it” (St Catherine of Siena); and St Teresa says: “Only along the path of such prayer can we ordinarily find God; he deceives you who would show you another path.”

To be continued...