

# 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

TWENTY THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 8, 2009 – Green

Mass of Sunday Gl; Cr; Preface of Holy Trinity

Weekly Bulletin #1120

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

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

By

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp. Part 16

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Prayer is the most important source of strength in the life of the Christian and indeed in the life of any worshipper of God, the reason being that it is the medium of all supernatural power. But only when prayer is experimentally appreciated as a source of strength will it be utilized to tap other sources of strength. Streams of life and power will then flow in upon us from every side, and our spiritual vigor never fails thereafter. Prayer is the quickener, the vivifying principle of the spiritual life; in its absence no interior life is possible. Let it become a living force within, then every faculty of the spiritual man palpitates with life. Prayer, if not the greatest source of our strength, should at least be continuously employed. Should be, but in fact with many it has long ceased to be such; it rather results in dissipating our reserves in that its practice actually costs us, at times, a greater effort than applying ourselves to the heaviest type of work. And so we are easily inclined to put prayer as much as possible on the long finger, preferring hard work to it. And it is here, perhaps, that our spiritual life is most seriously impaired. What should impart vigor for a programme of self-sacrifice and dedication spells a loss of strength and costs us a greater effort than would the programme itself. No wonder then that slowly but surely our spiritual life declines. How could it be otherwise? One is eating into one's capital instead of living on one's interest; and capital, were it ever so substantial, is bound to diminish when it is being constantly used up and nothing is added to it.

We pray because pray we must; prayer has become for us a sacrifice, is listed among the sacrifices we have to make. A falser notion of prayer can scarce be imagined. Prayer, no doubt, calls for effort; and as all else in life, it has to be learnt, and years of apprenticeship are never years of mastery. In the beginning we have to bargain for some sacrifices; only by patient practice is growth in prayer possible. We cannot expect to sow to-day and to reap in joy just to-morrow; between sowing and harvesting a fairly long period must elapse. So with our apprenticeship in the art of prayer. And, besides, there are times when sacrifice, especially interior sacrifice, is demanded of us. We have but to refer to those painful experiences of the spirit, the "dark night" of the sense and of the soul, when prayer can be a grievous burden to human nature. And yet such experiences should entail no loss of inner strength; despite the sacrifice involved one should become conscious of a strange power that flows from prayer. Difficulties, too, will often crop up, due to bodily indisposition.

These, however, are incidental and only illustrate how much the soul depends on the body precisely in this matter of prayer. Hence one must give the body what the body requires. It is not to be pampered and treated softly, but rather subjected to control and discipline; on the other hand it must not be denied its legitimate demands. If these are granted, it will be doubly obliged to the soul and will prove itself more co-operative, especially where prayer is concerned. When we are worn out with fatigue and at the end of our resources not much is to be expected from our prayer. However, with body and mind vigorous and alert, prayer becomes easy once more.