

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

TWENTY FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

November 15, 2009 – Green

Mass of Sunday Gl; Cr; Preface of Holy Trinity comm. St Albert the Great

Weekly Bulletin #1121

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

THE POWER OF PRAYER

By

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp. Part 17

1957



There is much goodwill among men, and God's graces are at our disposal in rich profusion. And yet how much failure there is to chronicle! *The will is well disposed for active endeavor, but it is weak. In the very act of willing many lose the power to will! And no wonder: the will is supposed to be ever at the ready for a programme of sacrifice, surrender, renunciation. But the best will, despite best intentions, cannot put up indefinitely with such a programme, unless it is continually nourished from the well-springs of prayer. This all the more that the struggle of modern life, with its rush and excitement, its unrest and uncertainty, calls for a much greater expenditure of will-power than in earlier times.* Men's souls must assuredly have a far greater toughness and vitality than their bodies; else the human race would long since have perished of inner restlessness. How different it would be if prayer became once more a living source of strength and uncovered all the other sources of strength which, our faith provides! Desert wastes would again bud forth and blossom; feeble hands would be strengthened and weak knees confirmed (Is. 35, 2.); fountains of living water would issue forth from us to flow out on the world.

What profits our knowledge of Christ as source of strength if we fail to approach him for the necessary succour? He invites us to come to Him (He goes after sinners but His followers have to make their way to Him: Matt. 11, 28). **He who fails to draw continually from the wells of strength to be found in prayer cannot long persevere in a life pleasing to God.** Prayer is action's best ally. As with modern life, so too the life of the spirit is characterized by excessive rush and scurry; we have to be always busy, always getting things done; we lack courage to intermingle pauses in our work; we grudge the time. And yet, it is only when we draw on inner sources of refreshment that our work is blessed by God. *It is just that creative pause we insert in it which lends substance to our activity; otherwise it tends to become spiritless and superficial, little more than "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal" (1 Cor. 13, 1). Even at prayer we fail to find leisure for recollection and repose.*

A wealthy merchant once called on Father Ravignan, the Jesuit, and complained of strain and fatigue, mentioning that all the doctors he had consulted and the remedies they had suggested proved of no avail: could he suggest a cure? Yes, he could. "Spend a quarter of an hour each morning in meditation." The merchant rejoined: "I think, Father, you have not understood me aright. I told you I was worn out and restless owing to hard work and worry." The Father's reply was: "If things are as bad as that then a quarter of an hour is not enough; you must spend at least half an hour in meditation"

Prayer is the quickener of all the virtues. "If you deprive yourself of prayer, says St John Chrysostom, you are like a fish out of water; as water is the fish's vital element, so prayer is yours. Prayer makes a man a temple of Christ. . . What water is for the tree prayer is for the Christian. What the foundation is for the building prayer is for the soul." We achieve little or nothing simply because we do not pray aright. "You contend and war with one another, and you have not because you ask not" (James 4, 2).

Perhaps there is no finer or more agreeable form of relaxation than an hour's chat with a good companion, an intimate friend. Is a child's talk with its parents regarded as a sacrifice? Or a brother's with a brother, a friend's with a friend, a bride's with her husband? If such conversations as these were held to be painful then there must be something wrong. Does not the Saviour wish to be our Friend? And if we allowed Him to be so, even in a small degree, then prayer would no longer exhaust our strength or be regarded as a sacrifice. On the contrary, we should experience the power that goes out from the Saviour and be able to resume our work, inspired and invigorated by prayer. **To be Continued...**