

Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)

www.christthekingabbey.org

Cullman, Alabama

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

St Pius V Chapel
Birmingham, Alabama
9:30 AM
Every Sunday except
first Sunday of each month

Weekly Bulletin #1133

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

Septuagesima Sunday

January 31, 2010 –Purple

Mass of Sunday no Gl; Cr; comm St. Peter Nolasco and

Raymund of Pennafort Preface Holy Trinity

THE POWER OF PRAYER

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp.

Part 23

1957

i. FOR THE LAITY

Prayer is perhaps one of the most important elements of religious practice. It can substitute for the sacraments (in some cases absolutely), even though in God's ordinary providence these be necessary for eternal salvation. But nothing else can supply its place. Hence, one of the chief tasks of religious education is a training in prayer. And yet no duty is perhaps more casually undertaken than just this. In many cases, we Catholics are acquainted with vocal prayer only, and this in set texts and formulas. We are fully acquainted with prayer of petition; we have frequently heard of the prayer of praise, of glorification, of thanks, but scarcely anything of mental prayer. Many, indeed, are in the like case with the new converts in Ephesus mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles: "Paul found certain disciples, and he said to them: Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? But they said to him: We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost" (Acts 19, 1). They had not received Him and they had never heard of Him. Similarly, many of the faithful can say: "we have not practiced mental prayer; we never even heard of it."

Without mental prayer there can be no interior life. Now all Christians are assuredly called to live such a life and, as a consequence, to foster it. And yet many of the laity hold that such an obligation binds priests and religious only, not themselves. Is it a wonder, then, that the spiritual life of many followers of Christ is so sickly and so superficial? Our religious training is almost wholly confined to instruction on the sacraments; they alone are kept in view. Adults receive a thorough instruction on these before receiving Baptism. We are familiar with instruction for First Confession, first Holy Communion, Confirmation. When at all possible, instruction is given also to engaged and married couples. We need not mention the long training which candidates for the priesthood receive before they are ordained. Instruction with regard to the sacraments is obviously necessary; but it is in fact an instruction which points to the priest. It leads to a certain lack of self-reliance or independence in religious matters. The sacraments are more or less dependent on the priest. But if there are no priests? That contingency must sometimes be reckoned with. As a consequence church and tabernacle are empty, and the altar has no significance. If the spiritual life of the faithful is made entirely dependent on priests or sacraments and these outer supports are suddenly withdrawn, then there is great danger of a religious collapse on the part of many. People have to be Catholics and remain Catholics even when there are no priests or sacraments; they have to be Catholics not merely in Catholic but in pagan, even hostile surroundings.

Now the person who does not lead an inner life of prayer is practically totally dependent on the help of priest and sacraments, while he who knows how to pray well can for a time do without them and survive a period of emergency or persecution. He knows his way to God; he can keep in constant touch with Him and draw on Him for help. But where will people get help if they know not how to pray and if there are no priests and sacraments at their disposal? In such cases, as experience unfortunately shows, that is the end of religious practice as far as they are concerned, whereas we need not be too anxious about those who can pray properly. Important and necessary as is a training for reception of the sacraments, a training in prayer is still more important. Here too there is question of doing the one and not omitting the other. It is essential that a proper training in prayer be combined - with instruction on the sacraments, not only because prayer can substitute for the sacraments in case of necessity, but also because the sacraments, like the spiritual life as a whole, can properly develop only when based on a solid foundation of prayer.

Perhaps it is that the priest's role is unduly emphasized, and, as a result, his responsibilities and his personal activity loom excessively large. He is minister and dispenser of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4); he distributes sacramental

grace to the faithful under his care; he instructs and teaches them; he places his services at their disposal; he mediates for them. That is his task. But it is the essential task of the faithful to exploit and make full use of the graces thus distributed. Basically, each one is the custodian of his own soul. The priest, the minister of Christ, can only reach to a person's mind and understanding. But the deciding factor in the spiritual life is not the *mind* but the *heart*. Whether or not the heart is touched and inflamed depends on the Holy Ghost and the individual soul in the first place, and not on the priest. Priests have as a rule a good deal of work, hard work, to face; but in many cases their efforts are unavailing, the reason being that the impression prevails that they have to do all the work and that success depends on themselves. In fact, however, the priest is only the "friend of the Bridegroom" (John 3, 29); he can but introduce souls to the Bridegroom; the final decision rests with those so introduced, and depends above all else on their prayer. Hence pastors of souls must take pains in the matter of a proper training in prayer. If only the faithful knew how to pray then the priest's labour in planting and watering would not fail in the desired increase (1 Cor. 3, 7). If his hearers laid the matter to heart (Is. 57, 1) God's words would blaze within as a burning fire (Jer. 20, 9)!



Septuagesima Sunday

Let us change our garments for ashes and sackcloth; let us fast and lament before the Lord: plenteous in mercy is our God to forgive our sins (Joel)



SUGGESTED READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE FOR EACH DAY OF THE SEPTUAGESIMA SEASON
Please do your best to observe these Scripture readings at the principal meal of day when all of the members of the family are gathered together, and this must be done by the Father or the Mother of the family.

SEPTUAGESIMA

Sunday: Gen. 1: 1-26
 Matt. 20: 1-16
Monday: Gen. 1: 27-31; 2: 1-10
Tuesday: Gen. 2: 15-24
Wednesday: Gen. 3: 1-20
Thursday: Gen. 4: 1-16
Friday: Gen. 4: 17-26; 5: 1-5
Saturday: Gen. 5: 15-31

SEXAGESIMA

Sunday: Gen. 5: 31; 6: 1-15
 Luke 8: 4-15
Monday: Gen. 7: 1-5, 10-14, 17
Tuesday: Gen. 8: 1-13
Wednesday: Gen. 8: 15-22; 9: 1-6
Thursday: Gen. 9: 12-15, 20-29
Friday: Gen. 10: 1-6; 11: 1-8
Saturday: Gen 11: 10-30

QUINQUAGESIMA

Sunday: Gen. 12: 1-19
 Luke 18: 31-43
Monday: Gen. 13: 1-16
Tuesday: Gen. 14: 8-20

I. MASSES FOR THE WEEK: (Father Abbot Leonard's schedule only)

SUNDAY: For the People of our Chapels
 MONDAY: Dec. Albert Patterson III
 TUESDAY: For the Poor Souls
 WEDNESDAY: Special Int. Ann Roberts
 THURSDAY: Thksg. Bernadette Slusher
 FRIDAY: Special Int. Jerry Venuto
 SATURDAY: Special Int. Paul Roy Family

A Thought To Remember ...

Let us understand this well! There can be no doubt that we form part of the Court of the Immaculate Lamb! The glory that we can give our Heavenly Father surpasses incomparably that of the Angelic Spirits, for they have never experienced the frailties of human nature, and have neither to struggle nor to conquer in order to remain pure!!