

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

SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

Weekly Bulletin #1148

May 16, 2010 – White

Mass of Sunday GI; Cr; Preface of Ascension

THE POWER OF PRAYER Part 30

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp.

INTRODUCTION TO PRAYER IN GENERAL

I. Preliminary Remarks

The Jews were accustomed to pray often and long. Hence the apostles and disciples of Christ were familiar with prayer. The Master's prayer, however, must have been very different from that of the priests and scribes. How brightly His face must have shone when He returned to His chosen band from the seclusion of the mountain after holding speech with the Father! If Moses' face shone with such radiance after communing with God, how must it have been with the Saviour? "If that sentence of death, engraved in writing upon stone was promulgated to men in a dazzling cloud . . . how much more dazzling then must be the brightness in which the spiritual law is promulgated to them?" (2 Cor. 3, 7). The apostles' unspoken wish to learn to pray as the Master did became more pressing. They did not venture to ask Him directly; they chose an indirect approach instead: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11,1). But Christ could not yet initiate them into an understanding of the intimacies of His own life of prayer. The Holy Spirit had first to come upon them (John 16, 13). They were not yet mature enough for thorough acquaintance. Too preoccupied "with themselves and their earth-bound thoughts and aspirations, they had not yet reconciled themselves to the folly of the cross (Mark 9, 32; Luke 9, 45), nor understood all the parables He had propounded to them. "They understood not what He spoke to them" (John 10, 6). Only after the Resurrection could He give them an understanding of the Scriptures (Luke 24, 45). It was the Holy Ghost who would teach them all truth (John 16, 13).

Yet the Master gave them a summary form embracing the essential elements of what would later be developed. He indicated before all else that they might call God their Father. Besides, the Saviour had frequent occasion in His sermons and instructions to speak of prayer. In these He gave a clear exposition of its real nature.

If we would lovingly abide in God's presence we must get to know Him in prayer. Side by side with our duty to honour and glorify Him, we must believe in Him and love Him. Love of God is the final end we have to aim at, faith the immediate end. The end has to be kept in view from the first, though it is last to be attained; it decides the direction to be taken in order to reach the goal. We deal first with faith; we need not trouble ourselves specially in regard to love, as it will flower of itself from faith. In order to get to know God in prayer we must, as already mentioned, strive to lead a life pleasing to Him. However, it is not by action that we come to know Him; action does but create the necessary condition of learning to know Him in prayer.

We learn to know people best by speaking with them. Conversation is the bridge between man and man; across this bridge mind contacts mind. A person's speech reveals him, tells what spirit animates him. So too the bridge between man and God is conversation; across it we can enter into contact with the Divinity. The more frequently this contact is made by prayer the more intimate will our relations be with God, the better we learn to know Him and, by degrees, to love Him.

Prayer, therefore, is a speaking with a living person present to us and with whom we are on familiar terms. Speaking is to be understood in the widest sense of the term and so includes a communing without words. The persons whom we address familiarly include all those whom we can engage in prayer: God One-