

# Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)

[www.christthekingabbey.org](http://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

SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLES

Weekly Bulletin #1158

*Ninth Sunday after Pentecost*

July 25, 2010 – Red

Mass of St. James Gl; Cr; comm. Sunday, Preface Apostles

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp.

Part 36

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When we pray by ourselves, it will be well to start first with personal prayer. We should speak to God as present mood suggests, treating with Him of what presses on the soul at the moment or of what moves and engages our affections. We should pray about the things that draw our attention away from God so quickly and become distractions. In this way, firstly, we are spared the effort of improvising a necessary link with the text of the prayer: it is there already. Further, what draws us away from God is made to serve as the very mode to attain contact with Him. What we have to say should be said in our own words. Why take the roundabout way of a prayer book if it is unnecessary? Each of us generally understands how to treat of his own affairs. There may be some people, poorly endowed, who have no eye for figures, let us say; but all can use their mother tongue if only they have an element of intelligence. They can give an account of themselves, can talk, can make lament, can ask and beg. Who in such circumstances falls back on a book? Or on texts learnt by heart?

Speech of man with man is a spontaneous procedure normally; it is the offspring begotten of the actual moment. Animated generally, it decks itself with the ready expressions and features of prevailing mood and situation. Speech with God, which is what prayer is, has in large measure been shorn of its character of spontaneity. It has become a recital, a rehearsal, a dictation. Is God not a living God, a living personal Friend? None is so close to us as He. "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17, 28). None should be on terms of closer intimacy with us than He. "I will not now call you servants . . . But I have called you friends" (John 15, 15). Our Blessed Lord has told us expressly that we may call God our Father (Matt. 23, 9), that we are consequently His children (1 Thess. 5, 5; 1 John 3, 2). On Easter morning He spoke to Mary Magdalen: "I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God" (John 20, 17). If God is His Father and ours, then Christ is our Brother too; He is the firstborn amongst many brethren (Rom. 8, 29). Speech between brothers or friends, or between betrothed couples especially, is not always carried on in set, finely-articulated formulae!

Many of us have for years been saying the very same morning and evening prayers, invariably the same formula. We can recite it, possibly, in an utterly mechanical way, so much has it become part of routine. We have said these prayers over and over, but how? Not for a moment, perhaps, have we been conscious that we were talking to God, that it was our morning or evening prayers we were reciting. The same formula, whether the day be exultant in joy or sunk in sorrow, whether it be Christmas or Good Friday or Easter, whether death has diminished the family circle or birth added to it. All the stirring and moving events in our lives, exhilarating joys and numbing sorrows, pass by without leaving a variant in our daily life of prayer. With many, prayer which should take its colouring from the events of life proceeds in an unvarying, unrelated way. No; prayer should show a correspondence to life's variety. Change should evoke change to maintain reality. We should lay before God our life as we have to live it, as we have to live it to-day, at this very hour and moment. Life and prayer should form a unity; both are meant to lead us to God, to unite us ever more closely to Him. "My beloved to me, and I to Him" (Cant. 2, 16). In prayer we should allow our hearts rather than our minds to speak. "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject" (1 Cor. 1, 19)