

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

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Weekly Bulletin #1162

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

August 22, 2010 – White

Mass of Feast Gl; Cr; comm. Sunday Preface BVM

THE POWER OF PRAYER

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp.

Part 38

1957

How to Pray

Instruction on prayer has to be very simple, so simple that any one can understand and practice it. Prayer is the primary and most fundamental activity of religion; without it there can be no religion. Just as religion comes naturally to a human being (we speak here of such as have attained the use of reason), so too the ability to pray. Prayer, therefore, must be quite a simple thing. None may excuse himself, when he comes to be judged, that prayer was so hard and complicated that he could not understand it nor practice it. **Hence prayer—less so even than preaching—cannot consist in loftiness of speech nor in the persuasive words of human wisdom (1 Cor. 2, 1, 4).** None of us requires much schooling in order to converse in a simple, direct and unaffected manner with parents or brothers and sisters or friends. We should adopt the same manner when speaking with God, with our Savior or with our Lady. The simpler and more direct the better. Anything that is forced, involved or unreal should be excluded. In praying we should speak of what we have most at heart, but also in the way we like best.

What form our prayer should take is not a matter of major importance; we should speak as the heart prompts. Much more important than the form and the framing of our prayer is the disposition we bring to it. He who "searches the reins and hearts" (Apoc. 2, 23) understands what we are saying and what we would like to say. He knows our needs better than we do ourselves; hence it is not a question of many words or a series of long prayers. We must not think that the efficacy of prayer depends on such. "When you are praying speak not much, as the heathens for they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. Be not you like to them, for your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask Him" (Matt. 6, 7.). We can ask and pray for anything we wish. Just as parents often make their favors depend on the asking, so our heavenly Father's gifts and graces are often made depend on our prayer. We must approach Him simply and confidently, relying not so much on our own efforts as on His goodness and mercy.

We may ask for anything we choose. But, children of God as we are, we must not be too anxious about passing things of earth: "For all these things do the nations of the world seek" (Luke 12, 30), If we asked for a new heart and a new spirit (Ez. 11, 19) and were more solicitous rather for God's honour, His kingdom and His justice, then all these other things would be added unto us (Luke 12, 31). God must be our first care even when we pray. He will then make our anxieties His own. We can approach Him, as a child its father, with complete confidence. God has a special love for simple, straightforward souls. When Christ's disciples on one occasion tried to keep the children at a distance they were reproved: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for *of such* is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10, 14). He uses the phrase "of such as these," not "of these," signifying, according to Venerable Bede, that there is question here of one's disposition of heart rather than one's years of life.