

# 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

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Weekly Bulletin #1163

August 29, 2010 – Green

Mass of Sunday Gl; Cr; comm. The Beheading Of St. John the Baptist; comm. St Sabina

Preface Holy Trinity

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp.  
1957

Part 39

How hard it is for a grown person to learn a foreign language, whereas we practically unconsciously acquired our mother tongue. And had it been ten times harder we should not have been conscious of any particular difficulty in acquiring it. We learnt it just by practice in speaking it. Similarly we best acquire the language of prayer by habitual practice.

To pray is to speak. Prayer does not depend on elegant or profound thoughts; what counts is the conscious union with an intimate friend, with a living person present to us. "Don't pretend, says Clugny, to air fine thoughts in God's presence; they are literature! Throw such finery into the fire!" God never repeats Himself in His works. Each tree and stalk, each leaf and blossom, each snowflake is completely different from any other of its kind. This is all the truer of men. Every individual human being is an original thought of God, unique to the pressures of His very finger tips. This individuality, this uniqueness, finds expression notably in the language and speech proper to each one. Such speech issues from hidden depths, from the heart and innermost being; and for that reason it bears, as perhaps nothing else, the stamp of one's personal individuality. As a man, so is his speech. "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man I put away the things of a child" (1 Cor. 13, 11). "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12, 34). One can imitate another's accent and gestures, use the phrases and expressions peculiar to him, but he cannot appropriate his distinctive mode of speech. If that were so he would have to appropriate his heart too, thus becoming that other person and surrendering his own selfhood and personality. Just as the speech of every straightforward, ingenuous person proceeds unaffectedly from the heart as water from a clear mountain spring, so when we turn to Christ or to the Father in heaven (the kingdom of heaven is in you) our prayer should be simple and straightforward.

The value of our prayer does not depend on talent or education but on our union with Christ, with God. "When a Christian prays it is immaterial whether he be talented or not, whether his education be of a high order or not" (Feurer). Indeed, we pray properly only when we unite ourselves with the Holy Spirit within who intercedes for us "with unspeakable groanings." This Spirit of God comes to the aid of our weakness when we do not know what we should pray for (Rom. 8, 26). "When I pray as Christian it is the Holy Spirit Himself who makes His own the secret of my power to pray" (Feurer).

Man's speech develops *pari passu* with his spirit. And as he gradually matures and is transformed into Christ his prayer language matures of itself. To expect perfection in the art of prayer from the very start would be like expecting a child to have perfect command of its mother tongue. "Everyone that is a partaker of milk is unskilful in the word of justice" (Hebr. 5, 13). At first it may be necessary to use many words in order to say what one has to say. When, however, the spirit is enlarged and deepened one can say more and say it more profoundly in a few words than with a long speech. Finally, one needs no words at all. Great and genuine love becomes mute. A look, a press of the hand, suffices; words have become superfluous. There is such a thing as mute dialogue. "Silence is a concentrated speaking; it would know God by merely listening" (Feurer). With