

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
First Sunday of each
month only

St Pius V Chapel
Birmingham, Alabama
9:30 AM
Second, Fourth, and Fifth
Sundays of each month only.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 19, 2010 – Green

Mass of Sunday Gl; Cr; Preface Holy Trinity

Weekly Bulletin #1166

THE POWER OF PRAYER

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp.

Part 42

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INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL PRAYER

Aim of Mental Prayer:

An end comes first in concept or intention but last in realization or achievement. The means chosen in the matter of prayer must be adopted to the end in view; without an end in view no definite choice of means is possible. Now what is the purpose of mental prayer? Not to amass religious knowledge: there are other and better opportunities for this, such as catechism classes, sermons conferences, reading and study. Incidentally, of course, mental prayer will enlarge and deepen our religious knowledge and experience without our adverting particularly to its acquirement.

Nor in mental prayer is there question merely of acquiring self-knowledge. For, in the first place, rarely if ever do we really get to know ourselves; the grossest self-deception is constantly though unconsciously creeping into our efforts in that direction. And even if we did get to know ourselves we could make little substantial change in ourselves. He who seriously wishes to know himself well need only question his neighbor; in five minutes he will learn more from him than he would by spending hours in meditation. Moreover, as with religious science, we reach of our own accord through mental prayer a deeper knowledge of self than can be communicated to us from without. We can scarcely see anything in the dark; but with the increasing light of faith we get successively clearer views of our own faults and frailties. We now see what was quite imperceptible earlier on. We learn to recognize our misery and destitution in a way that deflates our self-esteem. With the woman in the gospel we have first to strike a light—the light of faith—before we begin to search (Luke 15, 8); otherwise our labour is vain.

In no case is mental prayer meant to subserve merely the purpose of elaborating resolutions. If a resolution does emerge of its own accord we accept it gratefully and try to put it into effect. Many think that mental prayer derives its real worth only from the resolutions they make during it, that it stands and falls with resolutions. As already emphasized, mental prayer is no drudge of the will; it is queen, mistress, the spiritual life itself in a sense. It is beholden or obliged to none other; it is an independent power. If it depends on anything it depends on a life lived in accordance with the divine will. He who makes no effort to carry out God's will or reach the atmosphere of supernatural light is only gazing into darkness when he prays; he has eyes to see but sees not (Mark 8, 18).