

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.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Weekly Bulletin #1170

October 17, 2010 – Green

Mass of Sunday GI Cr Comm. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Virgin

Preface Holy Trinity

THE POWER OF PRAYER

RICHARD GRÄF, CS.Sp.

Part 44

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Subject-Matter for Mental Prayer

Every communing with God as with a familiar Friend, alive and present to us, is prayer. The topic we treat of is of secondary importance; what is of chief moment is the fact that we actually speak with God. But for growth in prayer the subject-matter does make a difference. As speech with God in every case leads to a knowledge of Him, we get to know Him better and more quickly when we commune with Him about Himself.

Mental prayer presents difficulties enough to beginners; so it must not be made harder than necessary for them. It will not do to select matter that is not in their line, so to speak, that means little or nothing to them or requires a good deal of personal effort. Rather we must choose matter that is especially attractive and to their taste. The clue to this will probably most readily discovered by considering the object of their special predilection. If this be devotion to our Lady and they usually direct their prayer to her, then she should be given a central place in their mental prayer. In which case it will be best to select meditation matter from events in her life or from considerations associated with her. If they are specially attracted by the Blessed Eucharist they can converse with the Eucharistic Saviour about the mystery of the altar. If God the Father is immediately addressed they can converse with Him about Himself, His attributes, His works. If the historical or mystical Christ is the subject of their intimate conversation they can speak with Him of His life and sufferings, His teaching and miracles.

Once we have found suitable matter, devotional attraction will prompt us to adhere to it and not to be continually changing. For example if we have chosen to meditate on our Saviour and the story of the Passion, we should, if at all possible, keep meditating on this subject for months together. This does not mean a wooden adherence to the theme but keeping to its main lines. Thus on solemn feast days, or when we feel some special urge, for example in our reading, we can without more ado branch off from the main road to follow an occasional by-path. While adhering faithfully to matter once selected for our mental prayer we should never allow that matter to become an end in itself. What is important here is not so much the matter of our conversation—be it our Lord's Passion or the divine attributes or our Lady's life—this is but a method of approach to the persons we are addressing, a mere link meant to connect us with them, and especially to keep the connection fast. We do not speak with God merely for the sake of speaking, nor pray merely for the sake of praying; our sole intention is to remain united with Him so that we may learn to know and love Him better. If we can contact an intimate friend without any special matter for our conversation and remain united with him, we need no bridge, no link. Means to the end can be discarded as soon as the end is reached; we do not remain on in an airplane when we have arrived at our destination.