

TRADITIONAL CHAPELS IN ALABAMA

Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Chapel Montgomery, Alabama	St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Chapel Cullman, Alabama	St. Pius V Roman Catholic Chapel Birmingham, Alabama
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S C H E D U L E O F M A S S E S

10:30 A.M. - Rosary 10:45 A.M. - Mass (ONLY on First Sunday of each month)	6:00 A.M. 10:00 A.M. Every Sunday 6:00 A.M. 7:00 P.M. Holy Days	9:10 A.M. - Rosary 9:30 A.M. - Mass (EXCEPT on first Sunday of each month)
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THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Weekly Bulletin # 474

September 21, 1997 - - Red

St. Matthew, Apostle

Mass: St. Matthew: Gl; Or: St. Matt, Sun, A Domo; Cr. Pref Apostle.

We should not begin our prayer, however brief and spontaneous it may be, without some sort of desire to do so. Intention is necessary for prayer even if attention during the prayer escapes us. Desire for God is the condition of prayer. Very often - to the surprise of many, recollection, even contemplation, is nothing else but the desire to give honor and praise to God. Awareness of God's presence and the desire for God's glory is always prayer. To become a man of prayer it is necessary to extend this desire so completely that it becomes habitual. A man of prayer is not the same thing as a prayerful man. The prayerful man is not necessarily a man of prayer. A prayerful man is merely one who presents -- to the onlooker -- a manufactured, artificial appearance. Oftentimes the prayerful man becomes so busy with his prayerful appearance that he forgets all about the prayers he is supposed to be saying. Our Lord recommends that it is best for one to go into a room, shut the door, and then do his praying. A man of prayer - in the strictest meaning of the term - does not demonstrate to the world at large his awareness of the presence of God in his heart and soul. Usually this is a well kept secret.

At this point, the question of distractions during prayer is very important, and must be given proper explanation. Distractions are inevitable. When distractions appear on the scene, one might worry whether he actually has the general intention of praising God. The distraction persists and persists - out of control - on and on it goes, and one's distress increases and increases. In such a case, and this is not uncommon even amongst pious souls, even saints perhaps, it is certain that God sees the distress, and the desire to get rid of the dreadful thing. And God receives honor and glory, for He sees that even under severe attack the soul continues its prayer life UNDAUNTED! It is only when we start liking a given distraction, and liking it enough to follow it up, that the distraction becomes guiltworthy. But if one has not become aware of the fact that the distraction is in progress, but such a one, on the realization that a distraction is afflicting him, yet refuses to give the distraction freedom of operation, and that he has no intention of letting go of the thought of God, such a one is not guilty of wrong. In other words, if one has no affection for the wretched thing even though one cannot help being interested in it while it is there, then, though he may spend half an hour in thinking all around and about it, there is nothing in the least bit wrong in having had the distraction. Some people have difficulty in believing that not only is a prayer not wasted when it is distracted but that it may be, on account of the distraction, a better prayer.

The worry about being distracted can itself become a distraction, and particularly with scrupulous souls--the worry can become a serious struggle. Sometimes the effort to banish distractions can become an all-consuming preoccupation. Yet we must always be mindful that love must be the occupation of the soul, not struggle.

The same situation often arises with regard to bad thoughts. At such times it is possible for bad thoughts to become rather vile. The quiet, unintruded upon atmosphere of prayer time can be a very good medium for the cultivation of evil thoughts and distractions. Upon becoming aware of the thoughts, we very often become so obsessed with the necessity of suppressing them that we actually become more involved in the thoughts themselves. As in the case of other distractions, so it is with the case of bad thoughts, the safest thing is to turn CALMLY towards God in the depths of the soul, and to tell Him that whatever is going on near the surface of the soul (in the mind) is no concern of ours - - we despise and repudiate the disturbance, and we are not going to let ourselves get worked up about it. We must become familiar with the understanding that what goes on - without our consent in the sensitive part of the soul - is no obstacle to progress in the spiritual life. If we can obediently bring ourselves to do just that much, the spiritual life loses many of its problems.

It is unfortunate that spiritual writers have little to say about undesirable thoughts and distractions. Everyone has problems with distractions and vile thoughts - even the Saints - but the Saints learned how and what to do about them.

The only distractions which we have reason to fear are those that we have admitted to the mind by way of reading, bad movies, bad jokes, dirty conversation, improper clothes etc. etc. etc.

1. Today is the Feast of St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist. Please pray St. Matthew, and ask him for his help to us as we struggle to keep the light of Faith alive in these troubles days.
2. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-Ins of our Chapels, especially remembering Al Sachs and Johanna Roy and Kathryn Lineback.
3. Confessions are heard before MASSES on Sunday. Everyone should look to the Sacrament of Penance as truly a matter of importance.
4. Masses for the Week: (Abbot Leonard's Schedule Only)

SUNDAY: For the People of the Chapels
 MONDAY: Dec. Mary Urban
 TUESDAY: For the Poor Souls
 WEDNESDAY: Dec. Robert Brisbois
 THURSDAY: Special Int. Marian Ploeckleman
 FRIDAY: Special Int. Paul Calahan
 SATURDAY: Special Int. Marguerite McGill

Over and over it must be repeated: THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS MUST BE AND MUST REMAIN THE CENTRAL AND ONLY CONCERN OF EVERY SERIOUS MINDED TRADITIONAL ROMAN CATHOLIC. Every concern, every cause, every preference that in any way competes with the importance of the Mass must be carefully avoided. The place of the Mass should be a place of quiet and peace, and reverence and devotion. After the conclusion of the Mass everyone is encouraged to maintain a reverential silence in the Church allowing those who wish to remain to pray the opportunity to pray. A short moment of thanksgiving is very much in order.

Every Roman Catholic should carefully examine his reason for attending the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass is the most serious act of worship to God that this earth possesses. No matter how severe the persecution, nothing must be allowed to stand in the way of this awesome miracle.

Pray for the good of all genuine priests. Pray that all false priests, or priests with evil intentions be held back by the Hand of our Almighty God.

*It would be easier
 for the Earth to exist
 without the sun than
 without the Holy
 Mass.*

P. PIO da Pietrelcina