

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

SCHEDULE OF MASSES

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)

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT
March 8, 1998 - - - Purple

Weekly Bulletin # 499

Mass of Sunday, Or. of Sun. No Gl. Cr. Pref Lent

LENT

The man of prayer, like the man of art, like the man of music, can bury his head in a desert of formula. Such a man, should he be so unfortunate as to find himself under the "spell" or the influence of the wrong kind of "teacher" usually ends up with the most un-spiritual or un-catholic tendencies - - (or un-artistic art or unimaginative music). Carved in granite, as it were, once formed, these tendencies are most often very difficult to change and re-shape, and when there is no spirit of humility or obedience, they are impossible to change. A token effort to conform to change is sometimes witnessed, but such a one usually centers his attention on secondary and unimportant characteristics - never touching the center of the problem. There is in fact no greater obstacle for anyone seeking religious perfection than precisely this tendency to mistake the unimportant means for the all important end. LITERALISM is usually found in the debris of such a soul, and literalism has caused many a devout soul to take all the wrong turns. The history of both mysticism and asceticism is witness to the tragedy of false emphasis, and the heavy hand of literalism. The letter of the law, wrongly applied does not merely waste an energy which might otherwise relate directly to God - - IT KILLS IT!

The way to God has been so carefully and elaborately charted that we sit spell-bound before the chart, but if the wrong teacher pounds the way to God into our heads we are in double trouble for we will then become hypnotized by the very force of the teaching. Set in a bad pattern we sit un-movable. It is not even that we are afraid to explore the pure country of God; it is simply that, seduced or overcome, we are kept on our sore knees by the chart or by the presence of the teacher. Consequently it is the chart that we are looking at, or the teacher that stands before us that we see, and either or both stand between us and the clear vision of God. The only thing that will uproot us and send us on our way to perfection is the conviction that union with God is the ONE SOLE REASON why we are confronted with the chart - or dominated by a teacher - at all. The chart - or the teacher - points only to the way, which we explore with the freedom that can come only from the God we seek. But even this conviction, which no sane person would disown if he gave the thing one moment's thought - is not enough to uproot the stubborn conviction of some of us.

Fear, precision, fear-inspiring threats, forceful argument, and all of hell's terror tactics will end up bringing us to a BAD LOVE of God, rather than a Love that perfects all things.

Reading plays a great part in the spiritual life. But just as carefully supervised reading is the food of good spiritual living, unsupervised or badly advised reading can distort the soul and blockade all progress to God. The soul must understand that what looks so good in the book, or however lovely the scene which is presented in the book, - - without proper and experienced advice, can in fact and in real life stand between the soul and God. Besides the book must be taken in the context of its entirety, and not reduced to a series of out of context quotations. Such is unfair to the author as well as the reader.

If the artist - or the musician - has to shake himself free of the egotism which will always TRY to dominate his work, or if he must turn away from the sentimentality which will cheapen his work, or if he must disentangle himself of his preoccupation with slogans and quotations and every literalistic dogmatic principle which will knock down his spontaneity, SO ALSO has the man of prayer to renounce and work himself out of the same attachments if he is to aim at gospel perfection. The interior soul will never be rid of this selfishness unless it be with genuine humility and obedience and confidence in God and a strong willingness to be born again in spirit and in truth. Unless the soul is born again in Christ - - unless the soul is willing to put aside all pre-conceived and faulty ideas about life in Christ, the soul will finally wither away and die

*Shall evil be recompensed for good? For they have dug a
pit for my soul*