

1. Tomorrow, May 3, 1999 is the Feast of the Finding of the Cross, truly a great event. Tomorrow, also, because it is the Feast of the Cross, the THIRD and FINAL blessing is placed upon the little Palm Crosses, which will be distributed at the Masses next Sunday.
2. Friday, May 7, 1999 is the First Friday of May. Mass in the Abbey Church at 8:00 A.M.
3. Next Sunday, May 9, 1999 is MOTHER'S DAY - truly an important day. It is, for us, May Crowning Day - another important day. Miss Lydia Olson will place the Crown on the Head of our Most Blessed Lady. The significance of giving honor to Mary--ESPECIALLY DURING THESE DAYS OF NIGHTMARE HORRORS--is important indeed. We had best give heed to the words of our Blessed Mother, and give heed with alacrity and genuine sincerity. The nightmare is at our very doors, but most people remain nonchalant about it. It is punishment and most people remain nonchalant about that, too.
4. Next Sunday, because it is Mother's Day and May Crowning Day, there will be no 9:30 A.M. Mass at St. Pius Chapel in Birmingham.
5. Please pray for all of our Sick and Shut-Ins of our Chapels, especially remembering Al Sachs, and Christopher Hand.
6. MASSES FOR THE WEEK - (Abbot Leonard's Schedule Only)
 - SUNDAY: For the People of the Chapels
 - MONDAY: Special Int. Marguerite McGill
 - TUESDAY: Special Int. Sister Mary Monica, O.S.B. (Feast Day)
 - WEDNESDAY: Special Int. Mrs. Wendell Pang
 - THURSDAY: Welfare Harlin & Marlys Sautner
 - FRIDAY: In Honor of St. Joseph
 - SATURDAY: Welfare Loretta O'Donnell

It is safe to say that only saints will enter heaven. It is also safe to say that we would like to be saints in order to achieve heaven. So we look at the saints. We read their lives and we try to come to an understanding of what it was that made them saints. The lives of the saints, as a rule, present nothing remarkable in the way of external spiritual achievement. Many of us, when comparing our lives with the lives of many of the saints we know, may easily find that we are called upon to face greater trials, accomplish harder work, and all the rest. The lives of many of the saints were outwardly very ordinary, frequently much more ordinary than our own. And yet, when we read the stories of these saints we quickly realize with profound sadness of heart that they are different from us. There remains an emptiness in our lives when we contemplate the lives of saints. We know that we live reasonably good lives. We try! But we are not exceptionally good as the saints are. We know that the saints are "exceptional" and we leave them to live their exceptional way. We somehow keep them apart from us. And as we keep ourselves separate from the saints and their exceptional qualities, is this not a vain subterfuge of our self-love? And do we not argue in favor of our ordinary good qualities and consider them to be, after all, acceptable to God? Our self-love prevents us from examining ourselves as we ought, and it stops us short of looking at the ROOT CAUSE of our good but mediocre existence. It frightens us to think on what really constitutes the difference between the saints and ourselves. We shut down our understanding, and our knowledge remains foggy about what sets saints apart from us and the ordinary throng of good souls. We shy away from making God the pivot on which our whole existence on earth revolves. The more we make God the pivot, it is inevitable that we must become less and less the pivot in our lives, and this hurts. Our importance is diminished. The saints never identify themselves with their own good lives or their own lives' good works. They never think on themselves.

On our part, and on the part of the throng of good souls, we continue to think on ourselves, and we leave sanctity remain an exercise of the mind and not of the heart. Like it or not, such souls are not saints, regardless of their ordinary and good lives, and only saints can enter heaven.

As long as we are mentally aware that we are acting charitably, and as long as charity is the forced result of an exercise of the mind, the act is weak and without merit, even though it is a good act. As long as we think we are acting humbly, our humility continues to reside only in the mind. As long as we have to remind ourselves to yield, yielding is not really a part of us, and since it is an operation of the mind, the mind can from time to time work us up into asserting ourselves. As long as we are mentally aware that our actions are kind, or genuine, or pure or humble, we are not yet really kind or genuine or pure or humble. As long as we continue to feel that we are acting with a pure love for God, the effort remains no more than an exercise of the mind, it has not yet become part of our being. Our tasks and our sufferings - all good - are not God's tasks, but OUR tasks, and therefore we remain the beneficiaries of our activities. The revenue of the works of a saint goes DIRECTLY to God, not to the saint himself. He keeps nothing for himself, he has not even given himself the slightest thought. When charity, or humility or whatever reaches the heart of man, then it is that he loses his awareness of his charity or goodness of life. His virtue becomes such a part of his very being, it is no longer an activity of his mind. It is genuine and not forced into shape by some mental exercise.

The saints do the same things we do, but they do them differently from us in that they do all things for God. We do them because we wish benefit from them; we build up our lives; we work to build up our security and safety. We remain the center of our concern. As a consequence we stand the chance of losing the best of both worlds. Forgetful of self altogether, God is the center of the saint's concern. That is what makes him a saint!