

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	6:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M. Every Sunday	9:10 A.M. - Rosary
10:45 A.M. - Mass		9:30 A.M. - Mass
(ONLY on First Sunday of each month)	6:00 A.M. - 8:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M. Holy Days	(EXCEPT on first Sunday of each month)

THE TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Weekly Bulletin # 587

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY - - Green

November 7, 1999

Mass of Fifth Sunday Gl. Cr. Pref Trin.

Anyone who reads the Gospel, even in a superficial way, cannot help noticing the very great importance which Jesus attaches to the practice of charity. He intimately associates the command to love our neighbor with the command to love God. When a Scribe questioned Him as to which was the greatest Commandment, He immediately followed up His answer by giving the Second Commandment, so that He might make it quite clear that if you violate the one, you cannot observe the other.

We do not here speak of worldly charity which worldly people do for worldly reasons - the numerous causes - the multitude of social works. These are all good in themselves, but are almost always not the result of the dictates of the Second Commandment. The sentiment behind such works is likely to be the offspring of self love, and the attitude of mind which prompts such works is often quite superficial. Such attitude fails to take into consideration the Love of God which must be the inspiration of all things good. Our Lord teaches that the attitude we adopt towards our neighbor must be our attitude we have toward God, Himself. He tells us, moreover, that at the last Judgement there will be an inexorable condemnation for those who have not practised true charity. We must make a clear distinction between the charity which flows from social concern and the charity which flows from the love of God.

All the precepts and all the prayers of our Blessed Lord clearly manifest the supreme desire of His Heart, and, of all the people who walk the streets of life, should we not give indication that we have reserved the best of our love for Him? The prayers we recite; the sacrifices we make; the efforts we make to reach Him where the Holy Sacrifice is true, and all the rest, clearly indicate that we have more or less pledged to live our lives according to the doctrine of Jesus. Our circle may be small, but within that circle there are others, and our attitude toward those within that circle determines - it demonstrates - the degree of the perfection of the charity we maintain. Let us not deceive ourselves. It is not the prayers we say, not the penances we impose upon ourselves, neither are the beautiful and kind words we express to each other in greeting, which make us true disciples of Christ. What makes us true disciples of Jesus Christ is the true and profound charity we have for our neighbor - those within the circle we find ourselves in: those who are at our side - those in our own family. Charity demands that we knock down EVERY wall that stands between ourselves and others. Perhaps there remain some wall space between our own way and the way of the other ones in our lives. The truth is in the answer we give to the question: Do we really love our neighbor as we love ourselves, or do we hold our neighbor at arms length just to protect our own interests in life?

God does not live in a soul which is without charity. In a soul that has little charity - delicacy of manner - generosity - compassion - acceptance - simplicity of thought, the love of God cannot reach its perfection. In such a soul the love of God remains ungentle - there is something counterfeit about it. There is something synthetic about it - even a forced mental disposition. It is not part of the very being of that soul. And since it is not part of the very being of that soul, that soul resorts to all manner of external acts to show love, and that is when that which is synthetic about it shows through, to man and God! No circumstances, no atmosphere, no external activity is more favorable for the development of the love of God than that in which charity reigns. There is no greater or more impossible obstacle than an atmosphere from which charity has been banished. In a house or in a place in which charity flourishes, souls are carried on the wings of grace towards the love of God, but in those places in which failings in charity are the order of the day, or where people are "standoffish" to each other, and where arrogance keeps the house all smoked up because the inhabitants are committing culpable faults against charity habitually, progress in the love of God is hindered, and will soon be fully extinguished.