

# Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)

(St Francis of Assisi Chapel)

Cullman, Alabama

Every Sunday

6:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M.

6:00 A.M. Daily

Holy Days

6:00 A.M.; 8:00 A.M.; 7:00 P.M.

Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel

Montgomery, Alabama

10:45 A.M.

Only on first Sunday  
of each month

St Pius V Chapel

Birmingham, Alabama

9:30 A.M.

Every Sunday except  
first Sunday of each month

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Weekly Bulletin # 738

August 25, 2002 -- Green

Mass of Sunday: Gl; Cr; Pref Trinity

## **T**wo men went up to the Temple to pray

### Part IV (Conclusion)

Therefore, secure in his belief that he was, indeed, “not like the rest of men”, and with unlimited confidence in himself, he began his thanksgiving to God - “O God, I give Thee thanks”, which, in simple hypocrisy, is nothing more than open indulgence in self-glorification.

The scene now changes and we go to the dark recesses of the Temple, hardly within the main entrance itself, and there we find the publican. He was a man full of shame and felt himself unworthy to go any further into the Temple. He would not so much as lift up his eyes toward Heaven, and as he was striking his breast in sorrow and confusion, he cried: “O God, be merciful to me a sinner!” That was all he said. How different was the frame of mind of this man. How different, as a result of his disposition as opposed to the disposition of the Pharisee, was the verdict he received from the Father in Heaven. How clearly do these two men bring into bold relief the awesome standards of the judgments of God! How clearly different is the evaluation of God when compared to the evaluation of man. The Pharisee was a public figure and was given public admiration. The publican was a public figure also, but because of his position was given public hatred and condemnation. And it all came to its logical conclusion. The Pharisee, even though he had everything in the eyes of man - he received nothing from God! The publican, even though he had nothing in the eyes of man - he received everything from God!

He was “standing afar off.” Here we begin to observe the basic difference between these two individuals. Here we begin to observe the **external** marks of **inward** penance and humility. The publican had the self same right as the Pharisee to come near and step all the way up to the front, but a profound consciousness of his unworthiness before God compelled him to take the lowest place - **EVEN AMONG HIS FELLOWMEN**. So profound was his humility that he thought everybody **better than himself**. The prayer of the publican was simple; it was direct; it was brief; it was genuine; it expressed need - **REAL NEED**; it expressed dependency - **REAL DEPENDENCY**; it expressed sorrow; it was personal; it was private; it was spiritual; there was no pretence in it; and, **IT WAS POWERFUL** - powerful enough to move the awesome majesty of God! He could find in his heart and mind no good works to encourage him, or even to move him to thanksgiving. Rather, his prevailing thought was that his good deeds - such as they were - were outnumbered and overshadowed by the evil in him, and in the Presence of God his good deeds seemed altogether unworthy of mention. It never occurred to him that he could approach the spot where the self-righteous Pharisee had taken his stand. So great did he think his faults to be that he could not even lift his eyes to Heaven; rather, all that he felt were the pangs of his “unprofitable” condition. He could not but bow his head before the just Presence of God, and so he struck his breast as a sign of deep repentance. Almost breathlessly he begged for pity and forgiveness! His eyes could not bear at that moment to look, as it were, into the pure eyes of the sinless God. He did not really know it, but at that moment - **THAT VERY PRECISE MOMENT** - his soul, bowed in true humility and sorrow, was being made ready for the Master’s embrace.

There was no fanfare around the person of the publican. In no way did he stand out. Rather he hid himself in the shadows of the temple - removed from everyone, not so much ashamed to be standing before the eyes of men, as he was ashamed to be standing before the eyes of God; yet, unknown to him, he stood tall and strong before that **PRESENCE**. His prayer was private and he said it privately. His prayer was meant for the ear of God, and God alone.

The contrast continues to the very last. As the Pharisee had compared himself with all mankind and concluded that he alone was good, that he alone was right, that he alone was properly worthy, the publican, on the other hand, in the