

# 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

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 27, 2003 -- Green

Mass of Sunday; Gl; Cr; Pref. Trinity

Weekly Bulletin #787

## OF EXTREME UNCTION

### Part 3

#### Concerned Care for the Dying - Bedside Manner

Before we conclude the subject of Extreme Unction, it might be well to speak about the appropriate conduct that should be observed in the room of a dying person. In this, our "advanced" modern age, busy man has placed death and dying in the impersonal hands of paid hirelings. Too many of us, especially of the younger generations, have never been near a person at the moment of death and therefore know nothing about it, except that it must be a dreadful thing, which we fear inordinately. Death is not to be so feared. The death of a properly prepared person is a beautiful event, but it is beautiful only to those of good life who comprehend it. It is indeed a mystery, but no less beautiful.

Every care must be given to the person who is about to leave this life and enter into the next. The atmosphere of the room of the dying person should be kept as normal as possible, and should be maintained soberly, but as cheerful as good taste allows. There can certainly be conversation, but the conversation should be pleasant and about pleasant topics - especially those most favored by the dying person. The hearing, we are told, is the last faculty to go. The dying person hears and is certainly listening, even though he or she may not be able to respond in any visible way. (The same has been proven to be true of people lying in a coma.) There should be occasional laughter, which, of course, should be kept reasonably subdued - never raucous or boisterous. Carefully avoid any and all whispering. The voice tones should be completely normal, though never loud. All tears should be carefully controlled (saved for later). Children, especially those who have reached the age of reason, should be allowed into the room (they should even be encouraged to enter), and should be perhaps allowed to speak to the sick person, depending upon the circumstances. This may be helpful to the dying person and at the same time teaches the children about the realities of death. Mournful tones of voice and expressions suggesting the missing of the departing one should be avoided. Rather, words of courage should be constantly placed into the mind of the sick person, words that present the love and magnificence of God, His Blessed Mother, the Saints, and the Angels. All of this presumes that a priest has already been called and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction has been administered.

We hear tell of rare occasions when lights and happenings surround the dying person at the moment of death. No doubt these happenings actually take place, but these are the rewards of but a few chosen souls. Most people do not experience such blessings. Most dying people fall prey to the usual feelings and thought that accompany death - the usual temptations and the dreadful feelings of fear and uncertainty. Temptations against faith and hope and purity are very strong during the last moments of life - after all, such moments are very important to the devil as they are his last chance to claim that particular soul. Therefore, the dying person should be given constant reassurance of the presence of God and of the loved ones around the sick bed. Such ones should assure the sick person that all is well and that they are there to assist in every way possible, and they should work to keep the suffering person's mind off of fear and temptation. There must be someone present in the sick room at all times, and the sick person must be made to know this all important fact - that they are not alone. Sitting in a chair tucked away in a corner of the room and reading a book is not quite a satisfactory expression of presence. Stay at the bedside; talk to the person - always in a normal tone of voice, but without making a nuisance of yourself, touch the person - hold his or her hand, constantly - gently adjust the position of the bed, ask if there is something he or she would like to have, and all such like. However, do not be a pest! Describe the comings and goings of whomever, and discuss the activities that are going on around the household. All this, but without disturbing the person's rest and comfort. (Please turn this page over for conclusion)