

# 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

TWENTY THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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Mass of Sunday; Gl; Cr; Pref. Trinity

## Development of Virtue

### (Part 2)

For Virtue to have any true and genuine virtuousness about it; if it is to have any value about it; if it is to have the worth demanded by the entire process of *CONVERSIO*; if it is to have any quality about it – the quality looked for by God in His infinite justice, it has to be forged in the heart and it must be brought into shape by the fires of Love, Charity, and Humility that burn only in the furnace which is fixed in the center of the heart of man. The materials needed for the structure of Virtue cannot be produced in the mind. If Virtue is the doing of the mind, it will remain no more than a determination set in motion by a mental resolution, and goes no farther than the agreement mentioned above (in Part 1). The best that can be derived from this agreement is the consoling feeling that results from the awareness that the terms of the agreement are obediently adhered to. Unfortunately, such an arrangement arrived at by man and his God gives poor proof of the worth of his desire for sanctity. As already noted, Virtue does not reside in the performance of calculated virtuous acts. Real Virtue resides only in the heart and receives its life-giving breath from the fire that burns within the heart.

It is important to keep in mind also that Virtue is not the end result acquired by a meticulous following of a set of rules – rules guiding one's every step on the road through life. As has been said before, **CATHOLICITY IS NOT A SET OF RULES**. Good Catholic life, if it is based on love, if it is formed by love, if it is sustained by love, if it is believed in because of love, will unavoidably generate freedom. True love generates freedom. When true love is absent, then it is that everything – absolutely everything in life – becomes bound with the heavy chains of slavery. If love is not free and freely given, then it is not love – **IT IS SLAVERY**. At the same time, however, the development of Virtue, for it to be of any lasting profit, must be guided by gentle hands and be the result of wise, compassionate, and consistent discipline, which, when once learned will never be forgotten or put away as unnecessary. It is the disciplined and virtuous soul who, whenever confronted with temptation or any other contrary problem, is best able to arrive at the correct solution. At such events, it becomes unnecessary for the soul to consult the "RULE BOOK" to find out what to do. The disciplined and virtuous soul will know best what to do.

If we truly want to become Saints of God, we have to work for sanctity, and it is up to us to go a-seeking after the avenues that lead to sanctity. We are the ones that have to do the work of learning. It is not up to God to go chasing after us, removing dangerous obstacles along the way of life. The work is not God's to do. it is for us to do! And we are the ones who must learn how to avoid the dangerous obstacles along the way of our life. God desires sanctity for us, but sanctity is not a free gift from God given willy-nilly simply for the asking.

Let us learn from the workings of an ordinary high school Biology laboratory. In the laboratory, if one wishes to give growth to a certain culture, then that one must see to it that the medium (environment) conducive to the proper and healthy growth of the desired culture is provided. If the medium is defective, the culture will be defective also and will most probably die. The same – the very same – is true with Virtue. Virtue is, after all, a gift, but in order for Virtue to flourish in us, **IT IS UP TO US TO PROVIDE A MEDIUM CONDUCIVE TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF VIRTUE!** And this means work – hard, conscientious work!

Let us also look at the alcoholic. This poor man has much to teach us, and only he knows how horrendous the task is for alcoholism to be brought under control (it is never conquered)! Before anything and before everything, the alcoholic **MUST FALL ON HIS KNEES**, and in the honest privacy of his heart, ACKNOWLEDGE TO HIMSELF that he **IS A DRUNK!** And this is an admission of the most profound proportion. Until this take place, there can be no hope for a cure. After admission comes prayer – his prayer – and all the rest that demonstrates total dependence on God. It is understood that there must be someone to stand by him, and with watchful eyes give him guidance and support when