

go to work in the performance of solid and genuine VIRTUE.

PRAYER, even the most earnest of prayer, for the Virtue of Purity, remains fruitless so long as we continue to frequent forbidden places and continue to look at forbidden pictures, etc. The search for sanctity remains absurd so long as we continue our search for "whatever," sloshing about in the swampy wastes of the television, the internet, etc. If we know that the brackish swampy wastes are infested with poisonous snakes, then it makes sense that we should keep out – why pause even briefly? A momentary glance is enough to poison us for an entire lifetime.

PRAYER, even the most earnest of prayer, for the Virtue of Meekness, remains fruitless so long as we refuse to put a restraint on our lightning-quick flashes of irrational temper and our white-hot explosions when met with even the slightest contradiction or opposition. Do we resent constructive and instructive criticism and reject its corrective suggestions – or – do we accept constructive and instructive criticism and permit it to change our character defects and personality flaws? Does constructive and instructive criticism offend and insult us?

PRAYER, even the most earnest of prayer, for the Virtue of Contemplation, remains quite fruitless so long as we keep feeding our imagination with trashy novels and rubbish magazines. When we go "browsing" in the bookstores, in the libraries, or on the internet, do we resist the almost magnetic pull toward the seamy sections? And when we read, do we read to satisfy our insatiable curiosity or is our reading the Voice of God speaking to us?

PRAYER, even the most earnest of prayer, for the Virtue of Poverty, remains fruitless so long as we continue to frequent the most fashionable and expensive shops around, or visit the most elegant places of entertainment, or purchase the most expensive automobiles and "play toys".

PRAYER, even the most earnest of prayer, for the Virtue of Temperance remains fruitless so long as we continue to keep our pantries well stocked with the finest and most expensive of food and drink.

PRAYER, even the most earnest of prayer, for the Virtue of Charity, remains fruitless so long as we have little or no heart-felt compassion for the needs of others. Do we really CARE for those we are responsible for? What is the quality of the service we give to those who need our help, our presence, our generosity? Is assistance given promptly and lovingly and responsibly and generously, regardless of the inconvenience, when others call upon us unexpectedly?

These are but some of the areas that call for genuine, honest, and careful examination. As time goes on we will present more and more of that which gives refinement to the spiritual art. *(To be continued)*

1. There will be Catechism class after the 10:00 AM Mass today.
2. Next Sunday, February 1, 2004, is the first Sunday of February. Therefore there will be NO Mass at St. Pius V Chapel in Birmingham next Sunday.
3. There will be NO Catechism class next Sunday.
4. *** ANYONE WISHING TO HAVE CANDLES BLESSED ON CANDLEMAS DAY (FEBRUARY 2, 2004) SHOULD LEAVE THEM IN THE ABBEY CHURCH VESTIBULE NO LATER THAN NEXT SUNDAY (FEBRUARY 1, 2004), IN CLEAN AND NEAT CONTAINERS – WITH YOUR PRINTED NAME NEATLY AND SECURELY ATTACHED. ***
5. **NOTE WELL:** *It is not enough to simply read these Sunday Bulletins. The welfare of our interior spiritual life demands that we STUDY each Sunday's spiritual instruction, and then struggle to apply the given admonitions, to the best of our abilities, to our daily conduct.*
6. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-ins of our Chapels, especially remembering Manny Gomez, Edward Sautner (our Father Michael's father), and Salvatore Riccardi (Maria Morin's father). LET US ALSO PRAY FOR EVERYONE. Let us pray for ALL the priests and religious men and women of the world. NO MAN, WOMAN, OR CHILD SHOULD BE LEFT OUT OF OUR PRAYER. God made all men to be with Him in heaven for all eternity, and this includes every human being on earth, regardless of station or condition or place. Weak human nature and erroneous persuasions will prevent some from achieving the purpose intended for them by God, but that matter remains entirely between all such and God. We must make no judgments concerning such matters. If there is any sifting to be done, it is to be done by God, Himself alone. We are NOT the ones to do the sifting.
7. MASSES FOR THE WEEK: (Father Abbot Leonard's schedule only)
SUNDAY: For the People of our Chapels
MONDAY: Special intention Rose Mary Brauch
TUESDAY: Special intention Ida Owen
WEDNESDAY: For the Poor Souls in Purgatory
THURSDAY: Welfare of Elsie Nadler
FRIDAY: Welfare of Leslie Herweg
SATURDAY: Deceased Joespha Vollmer