

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

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

March 14, 2004 – Purple

Mass of Sunday; no Gl; Cr; Pref. Quadragesima

Weekly Bulletin #821

The Holy Season of Lent

*What have I given to my Lord,
for all He has given to me?*

St. Joseph.

Patron of the Universal Church.

Pray for us!

St. Joseph.

Spouse of the Virgin Mary.

Pray for us!

Feast of St. Joseph

Friday, March 19, 2004



Frater Joseph, O.S.B.

will pronounce his **Final Vows**

as a **Benedictine Monk of Christ the King Abbey**
on the **Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady**

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Please pray for **Frater Joseph**

1. There will be Catechism class this morning after the 10:00 Mass.
2. Yesterday, March 13, 2004, the Novena in honor of St. Benedict began. Because the actual Feast Day falls on Laetare Sunday this year, the Feast is transferred to the following day – Monday, March 22, 2004. For us, and for the world, the blessing of St. Benedict is most important. We ask your special prayers on this day.
3. Wednesday, March 17, 2004, is the Feast of the great St. Patrick. Let us all plead with him to protect us from all mischief and mischief makers.
4. Friday, March 19, 2004, is the Feast of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Patron Saint of the Universal Church. He is also the Patron Saint of our Abbey Church and of St. Joseph's Convent. After the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph enjoys the highest place in heaven. Let us prepare ourselves well for this most blessed day, and let us ask him to protect and guide us all.
5. Stations of the Cross and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament are held on the Fridays of Lent at 7:00 PM in the Abbey Church.
6. Our special prayers are for Father Paul Wickens, who is gravely ill. Father Wickens is known to many people as an outspoken defender of the holy tradition of our Catholic Religion. He has suffered much persecution because of his true Catholic belief. He is a much needed priest – let us pray that God will not take him from us.
7. Frater Joseph, O.S.B., will pronounce his Final and Solemn Vows as a Benedictine Monk of Christ the King Abbey on March 25, 2004 – the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In these days, for a man or woman to make lifetime promise as a monk or nun is no small thing, indeed. Therefore we ask for your serious prayer for Frater Joseph as he steps forward out of our confused and mangled modern age to present himself totally to God. And we ask Our Lady to keep him and all of us ever under her mantle.
8. Sunday, April 4, 2004, begins Daylight Savings Time. Be sure to set all clocks FORWARD one hour.
9. Sunday, April 4 is also Palm Sunday, and the first Sunday of April. **There will be NO Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel in Montgomery, nor at St. Pius V Chapel in Birmingham.**
10. PALM SUNDAY (April 4, 2004): Masses in the Abbey Church are at 6:00 AM and 10:00 AM. The people will assemble (weather permitting) in front of the Monastery for the Ceremony of the Blessing of the Palms before the 10:00 Mass.
11. Once again, since our monastic community of monks remains too small to carry out the magnificent ceremonies of Holy Week with the dignity and perfection they must have for the edification of all and the greater honor and glory of God, the usual Holy Week Ceremonies will be omitted. This is a real sacrifice, and we offer it to God as a solemn prayer for vocations. Nevertheless, everyone is urged to spend these most holy days as prayerfully as possible, using the Home Chapels according to their intended purposes.
12. HOLY THURSDAY (April 8, 2004): As is the usual custom, the Abbey Church will be open all night from 8:00 PM until 7:00 AM Good Friday morning. Each one is asked to make the small sacrifice of one hour's adoration watch during that most sacred night – in silent but solemn prayer, in penance, mortification, and reparation: all for the sins of our poor world.
13. GOOD FRIDAY (April 9, 2004): From 12:00 Noon until 3:00 PM we will have our usual Good Friday services and the Stations of the Cross. **There will be NO stations of the cross Good Friday evening.**
14. THERE WILL BE NO MASSES IN THE ABBEY CHURCH ON HOLY THURSDAY, GOOD FRIDAY, OR HOLY SATURDAY.
15. **EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR EASTER SUNDAY:**
 - + Masses in the Abbey Church are at the usual times of 6:00 AM and 10:00 AM.
 - + **N.B.:** Mass at St. Pius Chapel in Birmingham is at **9:00 AM.** *(Since the Fathers will be rushed to meet the Montgomery Mission, there will be no blessing of religious objects or any visiting with the people on that day.)*
 - + Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel in Montgomery is at **11:00 AM.** *(N.B.: The Fathers may be several minutes late in arriving.)*
16. The Annual Spring "Picnic" at Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel will take place after Mass on the first Sunday of May (May 2, 2004). For any information please contact Mrs. Alan (Pam) Olson: (334) 361-7030.
17. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-ins of our Chapels, especially remembering Manny Gomez (whose sickness is truly grave at this point), Edward Sautner (our Father Michael's father), Diane Calandra (our Frater Joseph's mother), 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.

Gibson's Passion forced to find sanctuary

"ECCE homo." The words of Pontius Pilate – "Behold the man" – with which he exhibited Jesus, scourged and crowned with thorns, to the hostile crowd have inspired many devout works of art down the centuries. Yet only now has the cinema, the popular art form of our time, met the challenge of portraying what Christians acknowledge to be the defining moment of human history, with the release of Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ*.

Since it is not due for release in this country (Scotland) until March 26, it would not be possible to offer a conventional critique of this production – the actors' performances, quality of direction, photography and all the other elements by which a film is normally assessed. The need to suspend judgment on such technicalities, however, should not inhibit believers from taking a stand on the issues with which the enemies of the faith are assailing Gibson and – by extension – the entire Christian canon.

The first point of controversy that must be addressed is the distraction – for that is what it is – of the claim that the film is anti-Semitic. There could be no better way of dismissing this canard than by invoking responsible Jewish opinion, as voiced by Rabbi Daniel Lapin, president of *Toward Tradition*, an American organization that exists to build bridges between Jewish and Christian communities. Rabbi Lapin has excoriated the activists persecuting Gibson with a robustness that few Gentiles would have dared to exhibit.

Two weeks ago, Lapin predicted that the film "will become famous as the most serious and substantive Biblical movie ever made" and that "the faith of millions of Christians will become more fervent as *Passion* uplifts and inspires them". Pity no Catholic bishop has gone on record in equally enthusiastic vein. Lapin went on to denounce "Jewish organizations insisting that belief in the New Testament is *de facto* evidence of anti-Semitism". With heroic objectivity, he also condemned the offence given to Christians because "Jewish groups are presuming to teach them what Christian scripture 'really means'".

The rabbi's remarks follow upon an even more devastating broadside he delivered five months ago, on the same theme, when he insisted that protests against Gibson's film "lack moral legitimacy". He cited the exhibition of blasphemous art shown in 1999 at the Brooklyn Museum, when Arnold Lehman was director, including a Madonna smeared with elephant dung. He also pointed out, with a directness that no Christian could contemplate, that Martin Scorsese's blasphemous film *The Last Temptation of Christ* was distributed by Universal Pictures, run by Lew Wasserman, and posed the question "why Mel Gibson is not entitled to the same artistic freedom we accorded Lew Wasserman?"

Rabbi Lapin's moral integrity and plain speaking have done more for Christian-Jewish relations than a thousand futile ecumenical symposia and weasel-worded scriptural trade-offs brokered by pressure groups and Vatican appeasement. It seems reasonable to hope that he speaks for a majority of his co-religionists, rather than the strident protesters. That said, the most vitriolic enemies of the film and its message are not the Jews: they are drawn from the forces of militant secularism and the Fifth Column within the Catholic Church.

For, make no mistake, this is an intensely Catholic film. Mel Gibson is a traditional Catholic who rejects the humbug and chaos of the Second Vatican Catastrophe – as do an increasing number of the disillusioned survivors stumbling around in the ruins of the once-mighty Roman Catholic Church. The faithful translation on to film of the scriptural narrative of Christ's passion and resurrection would, 50 years ago, have presented Catholics with an image that was totally familiar. Bishop Joseph Devine, bishop of Motherwell, is one of the few in Britain to have seen the film and has described it as "stunningly successful... a profoundly religious film."

Yet, today, the Easter People, the dancers in sanctuaries, those who claim *They Are Church* and all the assorted Lollards and Fifth Monarchy Men who have converted Catholicism into a crankfest regard the *Passion* with as much alienation as any atheist.

Religion should be nice. It should have no doctrines, since that would create division. There are no moral absolutes, no objective truths. In an ideal world, you should not be able to put a cigarette-paper between a Catholic and a Buddhist. Since we are all going to Heaven, regardless of our conduct on earth, what is the point of all this violence on Calvary? Of course, we need some ritual and collective spirituality: so, let's go and hang some cuddly toys on the railings of Kensington Palace. What we need is a one-size-fits-all, syncretic religion, centered on the United Nations; an ethical code that does not restrict us from the perpetual gratification of all appetites.

You will find little dissent from those propositions among the smirking, blue-rinse nuns of the post-Conciliar Church, or their ecumaniac male counterparts. To them, the crack of the centurion's whip and the thud of the hammer on nails are distant, alien sounds – a disturbing echo of Holy Week long ago, of Gregorian plainsong, of *ferias* in Seville. In a word – ecumenically unhelpful; best washed away by a few more cups of tea at Scottish Churches House.

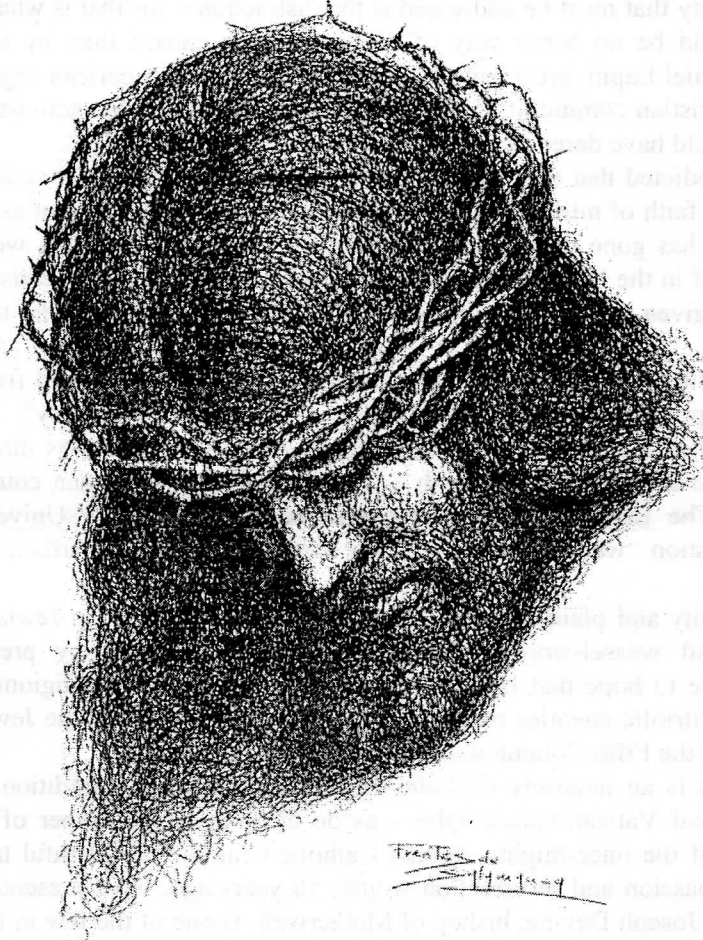
The militantly secular world is also keenly alert to the challenge of the *Passion*. In responding to Gibson's initiative, no double-standard is too blatant, no inversion of truth too shameless. Critics are queuing up to denounce "pornographic violence" (the now favourite weasel phrase) in the literal portrayal of the crucifixion.

These are the self-same people who acclaimed every sadistic and pornographic obscenity with which Hollywood

has poisoned the world over the past three decades, who vigorously denounced “censorship” and promoted the “pushing of boundaries”. Now, suddenly, they are alarmed about pornographic violence.

Yet, amid all the sound and fury, the most contemptible phenomenon is the trahison des clercs. The Catholic Church will not embrace this film, despite the Pope’s verdict on it (“It is as it was!”), because it expresses a faith it now finds embarrassing. The Passion was made with as much religious dedication as the crafting of an Orthodox icon. The Tridentine Mass was celebrated on the set every morning and there was at least one conversion to Catholicism during the making of the film. Small wonder that modernist Roman theologians are galled by the fact that Tradition has produced the most triumphant artistic articulation of faith and that evangelical Protestants are flocking to experience it.

The Mass, as the bloodless continuation of the sacrifice of Calvary, was the perfect complement to this artistic tribute to God. At the elevation of the host, the Catholic believer knows – although he can scarcely comprehend the fact – that he is as close to Christ as were Our Lady and St John at the foot of the cross. That is the cosmic drama of redemption that is re-enacted on the altar: “Behold the man”.



What have I given to my Lord, for all He has given to me?

— Remember —

— Prayer — Penance — Mortification —

— Reparation — Daily Holy Rosary —

MASSES FOR THE WEEK: (Father Abbot Leonard’s schedule only)

SUNDAY:	For the People of our Chapels
MONDAY:	Deceased Isaac Soileau
TUESDAY:	For Luca Lombardi
WEDNESDAY:	Special intention Marguerite McGill
THURSDAY:	Special intention John Ward
*** FRIDAY:	Welfare of St. Joseph’s Monastery
SATURDAY:	Thanksgiving Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Holup
