

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

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Weekly Bulletin #844

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

August 22, 2004 – White

Mass of Feast; Gl; Cr; Pref. Our Lady; Comm. Sunday and Ss. Timothy and Symphorian

LET NOT THE WINDS BLOW OUT THE LIGHT

(Part V)

All things considered, therefore, with Religion torn asunder, with a world riddled with war and terrorism, and with a people (generally speaking) whose spirit is no longer in sympathy with the Spirit of a Divine God, it is rather obvious that the “dawn of Aquarius” was not the beginning of a new and wondrous day. Quite the contrary. Since our interest here is the Catholic Religion, our remarks have been focused on the development of the religious crisis of our present day. We will now focus on a possible means of holding onto what little is left of the true Catholic Religion. As we have already said, we are not without hope, and it is with hope that we proceed with this work. We must stand upright against the ill winds that blow. The early Christians suffered terribly at the hands of the Romans, but their hope and faith was boundless, and because their hope to survive was never unnerved, they literally dug their way through all the dangers that confronted them – they dug the Catacombs, and for a time they lived very hard times in the underground darkness of the earth. And they survived! So will we, even though the conditions of our times are in many ways worse. The early Christians made the best of their problems. So too must we be stout-hearted enough to make the best of our problems.

ENTER BENEDICT

Nursia (Norcia) is a small town among the Sabine Hills in southern Italy, about 70 miles northeast of Rome. The people who lived there were mountaineers of very rugged and austere qualities. About the year 480 (we do not know exactly), there was born to a family descended from the Anicians (a noble Roman family), a son whom they named Benedict. Young Benedict, from his early childhood, showed an unusual piety. Pope St. Gregory the Great says that even as a young boy he showed mature understanding and strength of character far beyond his years. It is said that even as a young man he kept his heart detached from every pleasure, even the legitimate ones enjoyed by the upright young men of the day. We are also told that his parents were instrumental in the formation of his piety as they gave strong encouragement to a devout and strictly Christian way of life. When he became of age, his parents sent him, together with his nurse, a woman named Cyrilla, to Rome to further his studies, apparently at a university level. His frequent use of legal terminology in the Holy Rule gives rise to the idea that he was possibly preparing himself to be a Roman lawyer.

Benedict did not long remain in Rome, for he had soon concluded that it was a very wicked city. Immorality, licentiousness, drunkenness, and all such like made up the common life of Roman society. No doubt, as is usually the case, it was worse on the university grounds. Rome was not for him. To his dismay, even the Christianity he found there was not well practiced, was rather nominal, and was not much more than a thin veneer, for Aryanism was still quite strong at that time. The young Christian Church had not yet developed the strength it later enjoyed. For fear of persecution and ridicule, the early Roman Christians did not speak too openly about their Christian persuasions. The Roman climate was not the climate of Nursia. Without notice to anyone Benedict simply left. Someone has said of him: “He left Rome knowingly ignorant and wisely unlearned.” He took nothing with him except the most essential, possibly the only book being the Sacred Scriptures. For a while his nurse traveled along with him, but after a time he left her behind. He continued traveling in a southerly direction, keeping to the wilderness as much as possible. He at last came upon a cave which was located on an almost sheer wall of a precipice. To his delight, the cave afforded him the privacy he was looking for. It was not a very practical place, but in his youth he considered it suitable. Benedict was eventually discovered by a nearby monk named Romanus, who gave him a monastic habit and promised to supply his simple needs. The habit was doubtless only a *melota*, or sheepskin garment of the utmost simplicity, a garment such as the monks of the desert used to wear. Benedict was more than pleased, and began in earnest to live the life of a hermit, alone with himself. No doubt Romanus gave him some rudimentary instructions, and with nothing to distract him, Benedict was able to give himself up to the contemplation of the Divine. *(To be continued)*