

Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)

(St Francis of Assisi Chapel)

Cullman, Alabama

Every Sunday:

6:00 AM and 10:00 AM

6:00 AM Daily

Holy Days of Obligation:

6:00 AM - 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel

Montgomery, Alabama

10:45 AM

Only on first Sunday
of each month

St Pius V Chapel
Birmingham, Alabama

9:30 AM

Every Sunday except
first Sunday of each month

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Weekly Bulletin #890

July 3, 2005 – Green

Mass of Sunday; Gl; Cr; Pref. Trinity

OF MONASTICS

(Part 3)

The young man who knocks at the door of the monastery seeks reality – he seeks that which truly is. He seeks God! He is questioned about his desire to seek God. He must seek God alone! You young man must be a man of faith, of love, and of hope. Adoration of his God must be uppermost in his mind. He must desire to be a man of prayer. At first these qualities may not be clearly in evidence, for it is the work of a lifetime, but he must have the good will to strive after these qualities with all his heart. For him the monastery is a Tabernacle in the desert, because the monk is one who lives “in the secret of God’s Face.” The monk is one who is always absorbed in the Divine Presence. He is always occupied with the Divine Presence all about him. Guided – always guided – by his Abbot and Father (who speaks as the representative of God in the monastery), the monks pray to God; he works for God; he plants for God; he gathers for God; he builds for God; he sleeps for God; he cooks for God; he recreates for God; he does all things for God. And for this reason, the monk constantly struggles to reach perfection in whatever he does. He performs for God, not for the acclaim of the eyes of the world. He is, for that reason, anonymous. It is for God alone to know what the monk does.

Because of God, the monks live in a monastic family. The monastery is never merely a house, a dwelling where men live. The monastery is not a dormitory where strangers eat, sleep, and do whatever they want to do. Strangers have no genuine concern or interest in the welfare of the common good of all. Strangers are individuals who remain individuals, interested only in their own self interests and welfare. The monastery is a family’s home, and the genuine concern and interest of all of its inhabitants is the common good of each and every member of his monastic family. It is obvious that the building in which the monks live and in which they make their offerings of prayer and sacrifice to their God is just a building built of cold stones. A monastery must be more than just a cold building. The stone building is merely the outward symbol of the more perfect building, the one built out of living stones, formed out of the monks themselves, who are being tried by the fire of love and humility and obedience. As was said above, the foundation of the monastery is sacred because its stones are sacred. Only by building on stones carved in truth and humility and faith and obedience, can the “temple of God” be solidly and permanently built. It is not the gold that makes the temple holy. It is the humble but glorious life of the monks that makes it so.

St. Bernard once said:

“Holy are your souls because the Holy Spirit dwells in them,
holy are your bodies because of your souls, and holy is the
house because of your bodies.”

The members of the monastic community build the spiritual monastery, of which they themselves are the stones, by that greatest of virtues, Charity. Charity consists greatly in the labor of bearing one another’s burdens. Monks do not wear hair shirts because monks are hair shirts unto each other, and this requires true Charity. It is this kind of Charity, indeed, that keeps everybody from derailing off the spiritual tract. There is no question about monks being men of strong character. Strong characters exert strong opinions. When opinions become overly strong in a monastery, the Abbot steps in and the matter is settled for once and for all, for the common good of all – for which the Abbot is always responsible. The strong characters then in humility and obedience accept the Abbot’s decision. Besides, a monastery would indeed be an abnormal place if all its members were in constant and total agreement with each other on all issues.

Dictatorship has no place in a monastery. The monk enjoys a freedom that is not understood elsewhere. The monastic community exists, not merely in order that each individual may find support, compassion, exhortation, correction, encouragement, and protection, but also and above all else, that all may more easily attain to their common end, which is union with God in silence and solitude.

The monks help one another not only to grow grain, raise chickens, milk cows, or build barns. The monks help one another up the spiritual heights of silence and solitude where the sound of God’s voice is more easily heard. It is in silence and solitude that the Word of God comes into their midst and dwells with them. *(Continued on next page)*