

Nor is it only a question of the form which our fastidiousness takes in matters of religion – such as a flair for certain schools of spirituality, a cult of certain aspects of the liturgy, an observance of certain ascetical practices – but, and perhaps more generally, **there is the danger of our being smothered by legalism. The light of the spirit can be extinguished by the very laws of the spirit.** Laws are designed to bring light and life. It is we who turn them inside out so that they bring darkness and death.

The man of prayer, like the man of art, can bury his head in a desert of formula. He can make it his whole business to perfect himself in things that are secondary. There is in fact no greater obstacle for the religious man than precisely this tendency to mistake the means for the end. The history of both mysticism and asceticism is witness to the tragedy of false emphasis.

**The letter of the law, wrongly applied, does not merely waste an energy which might otherwise relate directly to God: it kills it. Life comes from the spirit, and if the spirit is stifled by the letter which is intended to minister to the spirit, the fruit of the spirit is stillborn.**

The way to God has been so carefully and elaborately charted that we sit spellbound before the chart. Not before God but before the chart. It is not even that we are afraid to explore the country of God: it is simply that, hypnotized, we are kept in our seats by the chart. The only thing that will uproot us and send us on our way is the conviction that union with God is the one sole reason why we are confronted with a chart at all. But even this conviction, which no sane person would disown if he gave the thing a moment's thought, is not enough to uproot some of us.

We become saints, not by picking our way delicately between the prohibitions of the law, but by stretching out boldly in the direction of love. **Just as the only way to love is to keep the law, so the only way to keep the law is to love.**

**Fear, precision, knowledge of the commentaries will not perfect us in the law. Love will perfect us in the law. Prayer will perfect us in the law. The law without love is a dead thing. It is as dead a thing as prayer would be without God.**

Just as the rules and tricks of the art-school can be the most cramping influence when the painter goes out on his own to paint, so the system can be cramping when the soul sets out to love. Nothing so hinders the soul in prayer as the misgiving that the method which looked so good in the book is not being followed. Distractions about food and work are trivial compared with the distraction of remembering and applying the rules for the avoidance of distractions.

If the artist has to shake himself free of the egotism which will always try to dominate his work, of the sentimentality which will cheapen it, of the preoccupation with slogans and doctrinaire principles which will impinge upon his spontaneity, so also has the man of prayer to expose and renounce the same attachments if he is to aim at gospel perfection. The interior soul will never be rid of this selfishness unless he be born again in spirit and in truth – unless he be born again in Christ. □

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1. There will be **NO** Catechism class today.
  2. There will be **NO** 5:00 PM Sunday Vespers and Benediction today.
  3. Next Sunday, November 13, 2005, is the Feast of all the Benedictine Saints, and next Monday, November 14, 2005, is the Commemoration of all the Benedictine Poor Souls.
  4. November is the Month of the Poor Souls in Purgatory. Please remember them in your prayers and good works.
  5. The very beautiful 2006 Calendars are now available at the usual price of \$6.00 each. At Christ the King Abbey in Cullman, see either Father Abbot, OSB or Father Francis, OSB. At Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel in Montgomery, see Mrs. Pam Olson. At Saint Pius V Chapel in Birmingham, see Father Sebastian, OSB.
  6. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-ins of our Chapels. **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. While Our Blessed Lord was hanging on the Cross He did not look around and pick and choose those for whom He was dying. He did not exclude a single member of the Human Race – even His enemies – from the wounded Love that came forth from Him during those momentous moments. 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. Our only duty is to pray for **souls**. We 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 Victoria Krawczak
TUESDAY:	For the Poor Souls in Purgatory
WEDNESDAY:	Special intention Peggy Rosenberg
THURSDAY:	Special intention Virginia Nash
FRIDAY:	Deceased Angelo Del Vescovo
SATURDAY:	Special intention Peggy Wink