

Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)

(Formerly St Francis of Assisi Chapel)

www.christthekingabbey.org

Cullman, Alabama

Every Sunday: 6:00 AM and 10:00 AM

Daily: 6:00 AM

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

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Weekly Bulletin #949

August 20, 2006 – Green

Mass of Sunday; Gl; Cr; Pref. Holy Trinity; comm. St. Bernard

Whether we care to admit it or not, whether we shy away from it or not, there is something that we cannot ignore. It is a dreadful thing to have to think about, but think about it we must, and no justifiable reason can be given that excuses us from the obligation of thinking about it.

Each of us has either heaven or hell within us. Each of us has either God or Lucifer within us. Each of us has either the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Lucifer within us. **There is no intermediate state.** The very essence of hell is the absence of God! As we go about life ignoring the hell of it, we give little consideration to the importance of the possibility that God may be absent within us. The thought of the existence of God within us is regarded as something entertained by little old ladies who have nothing else to think about. The thought of God's absence within us is not quite so provocative as the thought of the beauty of the "apple" that we are constantly seeking after! The yearning after the eating of that juicy "apple" stretches our reasoning powers to the breaking point and literally devastates our willpower. Sadly, there are those, most of mankind, actually, who studiously avoid facing up to this reality and who proceed with determination to live according to the "freedom" they seek after and pursue. In truth it can be said that most people realize that there is a principle of good and a principle of evil, yet they casually think that there is some kind of easy commingling of the two within us, nothing to be alarmed about. Like foolish Adam and Eve, such ones feel that they can "be like God" and at the same time eat the apple and enjoy the gratifications of the Garden of Paradise. NOT SO!

Last Sunday, the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, we heard the story of the two men who went up to the temple to pray. Perhaps we should call it "Pharisee Sunday." Surprisingly, there are those who do not want to hear talk about the Pharisee. They do not feel comfortable while the story of that poor man is being explained. They say they have heard it once, and that is enough. For some reason this episode is discomfiting to them. One wonders why this parable should be upsetting. Without any doubt, this parable of the two men, even though it is "just a parable," is one of the most stinging and incisive object lessons ever given by our Divine Savior, and the concluding words are razor sharp, cutting deeply into the motivations of everyone. In order to lessen the pain of the story, many play the game of reducing the spontaneous overflow of the powerful feelings experienced in its telling as something rather commonplace. But the experience of that scene is anything but commonplace. It follows us about like our shadow. It keeps us reminded of the silent but fearful struggle within us between honest sincerity and gnawing hypocrisy!

It is perfectly understandable that we be tempted not to submit our judgment to the demands of right order – the right order that should give proper direction to every step of life. Nobody is free from temptation. Our strongest temptations are in most cases against the Commandments of God, and the guiding rules and principles of our Holy Religion. In the reaction that follows, all things which confront us in any of the exigencies of daily living are placed before a tribunal – a tribunal which we ourselves have set up and which allows us to freely live by our own analytical judgment. Can we truthfully say that our self evaluation is guided by the principles of sincere honesty? Can we truthfully say that our self evaluation is guided by the principles of objective truth? Or is our self evaluation guided by the decisions of our own "do-it-yourself" court of appeals, the purpose of which is to find excusing factors and of developing ways of reasoning things away? This is inflated nonsense!

If we are at all concerned about the salvation of our souls, the practice of channeling every obstacle to self-will through the machinery of our mind in order to find out whether it coincides with what we, in the conceit of our own wisdom, judge to be the right and proper thing to do, must come to an immediate halt. If we are at all concerned about our salvation, we must put a complete stop to the practice of making judgments concerning ourselves which are clouded by prejudice and passion and pride and selfishness and self-seeking! If we are at all concerned about our salvation, we must put a bridle on our inordinate concern for our own comfort and pleasures. **If we are at all concerned about our salvation, we must discontinue living by our own standards.** If we are at all concerned about our salvation, we are bound to seek out reality and turn away from the unrealities which keep our way of life all cluttered up and questionable.

Perhaps a few specific examples will be of help to us in better understanding what is being said here. Let us turn our attention to the thinking processes of an average individual of the world – may we call him EVERYMAN? And as we study the following list, let us ask ourselves: "How well does this list describe ME?" (Continued on page two)