

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

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Weekly Bulletin #958

October 22, 2006 – Green

Mass of Sunday; Gl; Cr; Pref. Holy Trinity

SERMON FOR THE CEREMONY OF CLOTHING FOR NUNS

“This is a solemn and significant ceremony at which we are present today: a ceremony during which these souls present themselves to God to begin their novitiate, with the ultimate hope and intention of being His in this convent for the remainder of their lives. After many months of calm consideration and earnest prayer, they have deliberately turned their backs on the garish and deceitful pleasures of the world in order to seek that which alone is worth having: the service and the love of God. They have weighed the world in the balance and have found it wanting. Praised be God for having thus enlightened them! Truly this is ‘a spectacle for men and angels,’ one that must rejoice the courts of heaven. Gladly, then, we welcome these new recruits to the army of God. Ready and eager to fight for His cause, they say with the Psalmist: ‘I am ready and am not troubled.’ (Ps. 118:60)

“And fight they will have to, for the whole of the religious life is a fight: a fight against the devil’s operations in the world by a life of prayer and labor and mortification; a fight against the temptations besetting ourselves and others; and most of all a fight against ourselves, acquiring thereby self-discipline and self-conquest, since only thus can we be profitable servants of God. You, my dear sisters, know this well, and yet you come forward today to offer yourselves for this fight. May God grant you abundantly the necessary grace to persevere in that fight to the end, for the struggle is long and hard.

“But all the necessary and valuable hardships of the religious life are sweetened and made delightful by the ever-abiding presence of God within us, by the knowledge of His love and approval, and by His habitual and actual graces lavishly bestowed on us. So it is that the Psalmist can say: ‘Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.’ (Ps. 33:9) Not till we have tasted can we realize how sweet He is, and this sweetness increases with the years of service, so that our Blessed Lord tells us: ‘My yoke is sweet and My burden light.’ (Matt. 11:30) It is made easy and delightful by the grace of God. Thus, then, does God fulfill the first half of His promise to all who leave kith and kin for His sake: ‘a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.’ (Matt. 19:29) It is, indeed, a hundredfold reward, for we are given that real happiness in this mortal life which can come only from wholehearted service of God.

“Wholehearted service: for half-and-half service brings misery to a religious. And what is the secret of giving wholehearted service? It is that we be meek and humble of heart, for if we are that, the other virtues will follow, since most sins come from pride and self-will. Therefore, when Christ wished to single out those of His qualities which we should particularly strive to emulate, He did not say: ‘Learn from Me to be heroic in mortification and endurance; learn of Me how to convert multitudes.’ No, He said something much more striking because of its contrast with what the world might expect from Him and from His soldiers. He said: ‘Learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.’ (Matt. 11:29) Set meekness before you, then, as the watchword of your religious life, meekness which implies obedience (for disobedience springs from pride), meekness before God and meekness toward your fellow men. ‘Blessed are the meek,’ said the Master, for meekness means a patient and loving bearing of the yoke, and Scripture tells us: ‘It is well for a man to have borne the yoke from his youth up.’ Happy, then, are you to have been called to this delightful yoke in the flower of your youth, and inestimable is the privilege thus bestowed on you.

“A privilege indeed. It is not of your doing that you are here today. You have been called by God, Who has whispered in the secret recesses of your heart, Who has given you an attraction to the life of religion; in other words, it is He Who has given you a vocation, and He has done this through His great love of you, even as He declares through the mouth of Jeremias: ‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee.’ (Jer. 31:3) Never forget, then, what a great debt you owe to God for having chosen you out of so many millions to draw you to Himself as specially favored servants to serve Him in privileged intimacy. But remember, too, that you will not yet be vowed to His service. That is a future privilege which He holds in reserve to bestow if you show yourselves worthy during the novitiate. You have first to win your spurs. You must have a time of severe testing, and you must steel yourselves for it, being generously prepared to do and to endure all that God sends you during it through your superiors, and never forgetting that obedience is the only thing that can bring you safely through the novitiate, for it shows you invariably the will of God. *(Continued on page two)*