

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

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 3, 2006 – Purple

Mass of Sunday; no Gl; Cr; Pref. Holy Trinity

Weekly Bulletin #964

THE HOLY SEASON OF ADVENT

The First Sunday of Advent

What have I given to my Lord for all He has given to me?



Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Friday, December 8, 2006

1. **CATECHISM CLASS:** Children 6 to 14 please meet Father Joseph in the vestibule right after the 10:00 Mass.
2. There will be NO 5:00 PM Sunday Vespers this afternoon.
3. Wednesday, December 6, 2006, is the Feast of Nicholas (Saint Nicholas Day).
4. Thursday, December 7, 2006, is the Vigil of the Immaculate Conception **and is a day of fast and abstinence.**
5. This Thursday is also the first Thursday of December, with Holy Hour and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the Abbey Church at 10:00 to 11:00 AM and 3:30 to 4:30 PM.
6. Friday, December 8, 2006, is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and is a **Holyday of Obligation. Masses in the Abbey Church on December 8 will be at 6:00 AM, 8:00 AM, and 7:00 PM. BECAUSE FRIDAY IS A HOLYDAY OF OBLIGATION, IT IS NOT A DAY OF ABSTINENCE. MEAT MAY BE EATEN DECEMBER 8.**
7. The 2007 Traditional Catholic Calendars are available only to the people who attend our Chapels. This year, the price has gone up to \$8.00 each. We ask only what we had to pay for them. At Christ the King Abbey in Cullman, see Father Francis, OSB. At Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel in Montgomery, see Mrs. Pam Olson. At Saint Pius V Chapel in Birmingham, see Mrs. Laurie Niebuhr.
8. **Early Notice:** Wednesday, December 20, Friday, December 22, and Saturday, December 23, 2006, are the Winter Ember Days, and are days of Fast and Abstinence. Meat may be eaten **ONCE (only)** on Wednesday and Saturday at the main meal.
9. **Early Notice:** December 24, 2006, the Vigil of Christmas, this year falls on Sunday. Therefore, Christmas Eve this year is **NOT** a day of fast or abstinence.
10. **Early Notice:** Monday, January 1, 2006 (New Years Day), is the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord and is a Holyday of Obligation. **Masses in the Abbey Church on January 1, 2006, will be ONLY at 6:00 AM and 10:00 AM. There will be NO Mass at Saint Pius V Chapel in Birmingham on January 1, 2006.**
11. **N.B.:** In order to avoid any confusion, those who receive Holy Communion at the 10:00 Mass on Sunday, Christmas Eve, may also receive Holy Communion at the Christmas Midnight Mass.
12. 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.**
13. **MASSES FOR THE WEEK: (Father Abbot Leonard's schedule only)**
 - SUNDAY: For the People of our Chapels
 - MONDAY: For Mattias Urbanski
 - TUESDAY: In Thanksgiving Margaret Norman
 - WEDNESDAY: Special Intention Don & Kathleen Mullan
 - THURSDAY: Welfare Derral Stanford
 - FRIDAY: Welfare of our Monks and Nuns and Oblates**
 - SATURDAY: For the Poor Souls in Purgatory

ADVENT WREATH BLESSING

First Sunday in Advent

- Priest: On that day beholding from afar I shall see the Power of God coming and covering the whole earth like a cloud. Go ye out to meet Him and say unto Him: Tell us if Thou are He Who is to reign over the people of Israel.
- People: On that day beholding from afar I shall see the Power of God coming and covering the whole earth like a cloud. Go ye out to meet Him and say unto Him: Tell us if Thou are He Who is to reign over the people of Israel.
- Priest: And, all ye dwellers upon earth, sons of men, rich and poor.
- People: Go ye out to meet Him and say unto Him: Tell us if Thou are He Who is to reign over the people of Israel.
- Priest: Hear, O Thou Shepherd of Israel: Thou Who leadest Joseph like a sheep.
- People: Behold the Lord shall come and all His saints with Him: and there shall be a great light on that day.
- Priest: All ye who thirst come to the waters: seek ye the Lord while He may be found.
- People: The mountains and the hills shall sing praise before God, and all the trees of the forest shall clap their hands, because the Lord, the Ruler, will come into His eternal kingdom.
- Priest: The Lord will come and will not delay, and He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest Himself to all nations.
- People: Let us live justly and godly, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the Lord.
- Priest: Sound the trumpet in Sion, for the day of the Lord is near. Behold, He will come to save us. Alleluia! Alleluia!
- People: The Lord will come, go forth to meet Him, and say: Great is His dominion, and His kingdom shall have no end. He is God, the Mighty, the Ruler, the Prince of Peace. Alleluia! Alleluia!
- Priest: The people shall fear Thy Name, O Lord.
- People: And all the kings of the earth Thy glory.
- Priest: **LET US PRAY:** As we Thy servants, O Lord, ask Thee for Thy blessing to descend upon this symbol of our hope and expectation, put forth Thy power, we beseech Thee, and come, that with Thee as our protector we may be rescued from the impending danger of our sins: and with Thee as our deliverer, may we obtain our salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (Priest lights first candle and sprinkles wreath and people with holy water)

JESUS OF NAZARETH

There are times when it seems very difficult to believe that anything we do with and for Christ is of value – at least in the here and now, or perhaps later. The Kingdom of God is agonizingly slow in the coming and we see that Kingdom being down-graded and losing relevance with the coming of each new day. We look and hope but grow impatient with the fact that the exact time and place and manner of the coming of Christ remain unknown to every one of us. Nevertheless, all things about Christ remain matters of belief, matters of our holy Faith. Admittedly, it is difficult to keep faith in the midst of unpromising and unimpressive and slow to come about circumstances. Nevertheless our faith in such matters must forever be strong and unflinching!

Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity could have been born in a palace, in the midst of grandeur without equal. He chose, rather, to be born in a weatherworn animal shelter! He could easily have come as a mighty potentate hurling thunderbolts to announce His coming, and swooping down in angel-winged glory, striking men dead with His lightening. He came as a tiny and helpless baby born in the dirtiness of an out-of-the-way animal shelter! He could have come surrounded by countless servants and legions of Angels, everyone at His service. He came all alone with only His girl mother and His foster father to attend to His delicate baby needs! His very first visitors were a few grubby sheep herders! He could have come as the great military leader, the one that all the people were really looking for and expecting, giving liberty to an oppressed people. He came as a weak and helpless baby! He could have come rich and well provided for. He came poor without even the lowliest comforts of life, comforts usually held by even the very poor! He could have come here well known and full of prestige. He came here unknown, and lived in poverty and as a common workman in a carpenter shop in Nazareth!

When it was time, He went forth to preach and teach. He worked tirelessly to give the nourishment of heaven to a people who were starving religiously. He strove to make the people more aware of their spiritual enslavement and give less importance to their political and material enslavement. Every box to stand on, every ledge of rock to stand under, every boat along the seashore, each was a pulpit for Him, yet, how easy it would have been for Him to simply step out on the glorious balcony of an ivory palace to make Himself heard. But what good would that have done? From such a pulpit He would have given nothing! He came to give example and service and good instruction. He gave His very first instruction from out of a lowly animal shelter. All His life on earth was a labor of example and instruction. At the last He preached His strongest instruction while hanging on a cross roughly positioned in the ground of a windy hill.

Our beloved Lord, Jesus Christ, was born in poverty! He lived a life of the common poor! He died a most shameful death. His closest companions were not men of power or prominence or intellectual abilities. They were only twelve in number, and were certainly not men sought after by anybody. He picked them up, one here and one there, seemingly without plan or direction. As looked upon by the eyes of the world, Jesus Christ was a wretched failure!

And now the important point to be noticed. Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer chose the little way! He chose a simple and obscure life because He came to show man how to live. He showed how to sanctify the life lived by men on earth. Every act of His, every word of His, served an eternal purpose. The little way – the eternal way – is the best suited way for one to reach eternal salvation and happiness!



The people who really love God know the truth of God. Truth is not known to them in the words of philosophy or theology. It is not brought to them by force of argument or proof. Truth is made known to such ones by the Word of God spoken to them in the quiet of their souls and the humility of their minds.

WHAT IS AN APOSTLE?

Soon after our Lord was conceived in the womb of His Blessed Mother, she, in her great charity, left in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who herself was with child. Our Lady was to be the bearer of salvation, bringing Jesus the Savior into her cousin's house. As soon as our Lady spoke, the infant in Elizabeth's womb leapt for joy: St. John the Baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb by the power of Christ Who was dwelling in Mary; her voice and presence being the sanctifying instruments. And so it is meant to be with us: we are meant to bring Jesus, the Prince of Peace, into the lives of others, thus aiding Him in the redemption and sanctification of souls. However, we cannot do this unless Christ is formed first within us. Yet it often happens that beginners in the spiritual life, who, perhaps, have just experienced the first taste of a little spiritual consolation, feel themselves called by God to "convert" the world and save the Church by their "inspired" words or feverish activity. And so they run around "preaching from the housetops," usually (almost always) causing more damage than any real good to souls. The great St. Paul spent three years in retreat in the desert wilderness, living a life of solitude, prayer, and contemplation alone with God, before he attempted to start his mission. He first had to completely conquer himself in Christ before he started to conquer the world for Christ. Like St. Paul, and like Mary, we too must first have Christ spiritually formed within us before we can go spreading Him around. And to the degree that we ourselves are united interiorly with Christ, to that degree will we influence others for the better. One cannot give what one does not have.

By all means, let us be on fire with a great love for souls, burning with zeal for their eternal salvation. By all means let us go out of our way for others, even at the cost of a little personal inconvenience, in acts of mercy and charity. By all means let us be generous and kind to others, but let us put first things first. The soul of the apostolate is the interior life of the soul. Zeal for the sanctification of others begins with zeal for the sanctification of ourselves, that is, the rooting up of vice and the cultivation of virtue. Unless we abide in Christ, that is, live in and with Him all day long, we cannot accomplish any true, lasting, supernatural good. Without Christ, we can do nothing. Many decades ago, Fr. Winfrid Herbst wrote what can be applied equally well today: "The heresy of our age is activism, that feverish agitation which characterizes so many of our well meaning workers in the vineyard of the Lord, but which leads to the neglect of the interior life. True fruitful activity has its deepest root in the close union of the soul with God." Is it possible that the chief longing of many of our modern-day "defenders of the Faith" is not so much that the fire of divine love be cast upon the earth, but that they get the credit for casting it? Do they want to convert souls to follow Christ, or to have a personal following and win renown as a learned person? It is curious that many want to imitate the Doctors of the Church in their learning and polemics, but few strive to imitate their holy and penitential lives of self-denial. The quickest way to save a soul is not by traveling to the uttermost ends of the earth, or by jumping on a lecture circuit and delivering a series of talks, but by a life of earnest interior prayer, mortification, and penance. If we strive to be interiorly united with God as the Curé of Ars or Padre Pio were, for example, we will, by our very presence, more than by the cacophony of our words, raise others spiritually and bring them closer to God.

Mrs. Laurie Niebuhr and Miss Celeste Olson will play the organ and sing at the Christmas Midnight Mass.

Miss Caitlin Potter will carry the Baby Jesus and place Him in the Crib at the Midnight Mass.



CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 25, 2006

Christmas Masses in the Abbey Church will be at Midnight on Christmas Eve (the Church will be open about 11:15 PM), and at 10:00 AM on Christmas Day. **There will be NO 6:00 AM Mass in the Abbey Church on Christmas Day.**

Christmas Mass at St. Pius V Chapel in Birmingham will be at 9:00 AM on Christmas Day.

NB: Anyone receiving Holy Communion at the Christmas Midnight Mass may NOT receive Holy Communion again at a later Mass on Christmas Day.

SPECIAL NOTE: There will be NO Confessions before the Midnight Mass or the 10:00 AM Mass on Christmas Day.

Season of Advent

The Great "O" Antiphons

Beginning on December 17, at Vespers of each day, the Church Liturgy introduces what are called the "O" Antiphons. These are beautiful prayers sung in Choir by the monks in a very splendid and solemn manner and tone. These antiphons, which are scriptural texts a few lines long, are so many jewels of inspired poetry. Each prayer ends on the eager cry – "Come"! There is a climactic order in these antiphons. In the first, *O Sapientia (O Wisdom)*, we take a backward flight into the recesses of eternity to address Wisdom, the Word of God. In the Second, *O Adonai (O Lord of Lords)*, we have leaped from eternity to the time of Moses and the Law of Moses (about 1400 BC). In the third, *O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse)*, we have come to the time when God was preparing the line of David (about 1100 BC). In the fourth, *O Clavis David (O Key of David)*, we have come to the year 1000 BC (the beginning of the final Millennium before the birth of the Lord). In the fifth, *O Oriens (O Rising Dawn)*, we see that the line of David is elevated so that the people may look upon a rising star in the east, and hence in the sixth, *O Rex Gentium (O King of Nations)*, we know that He is King of all the world of man. This brings us to the evening before the Vigil of Christmas (December 23), and before coming to the town limits of Bethlehem, we salute Him with the last great "O" and we sing *O Emmanuel (O God with Us)*.

Each evening at Vespers time (around 5:00 PM) the family should gather around their home altar for the recitation of the Rosary. When the Rosary is finished, one of the great "O" Antiphons should be recited as a solemn prayer. Special emphasis should be placed on the words at the end when we cry out to God in our needs and expectations. These are prayers of the highest level, and should be prayed with great solemnity and seriousness.

Are not our own days filled with anxiety, worry, concern, and expectation? Many indeed are the reasons for concern, but we must never lose hope. We too cry out "*O Emmanuel!*" and in accordance to the strength of our faith shall we be heard.

December 17



Wisdom

O Wisdom who camest out of the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end ordering all things mightily and sweetly: come and teach us the way of prudence!

December 18



Adonai

O Adonai and Leader of the house of Israel, who didst appear to Moses in the flame of the burning bush, and didst give unto him the law on Sinai: come, and with an outstretched arm redeem us!

December 19



Root of Jesse

O Root of Jesse who standest for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall keep silence, and unto whom the gentiles shall make their supplication: come to deliver us and tarry not!

December 20



Key of David

O Key of David and Scepter of the house of Israel, who openest and no man shutteth, who shutteth and no man openeth: come and bring forth from his prison-house the captive that sitteth in darkness and in the shadow of death.

December 21



Dawn

O Dawn of the East, brightness of the light eternal, and Sun of Justice, come and enlighten them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

December 22



King

O King of the Gentiles and the desired of them, Thou cornerstone that makest both one, come and deliver man, whom Thou didst form out of the dust of the earth.

December 23



Emmanuel

O Emmanuel our King and Lawgiver, the expected of the nations and their Savior, come to save us, O Lord our God.

