

# Christ the King Abbey

(Traditional Benedictines)  
(Formerly St Francis of Assisi Chapel)  
[www.ChristTheKingAbbey.org](http://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

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

February 18, 2007 – Purple

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

## Lent

Weekly Bulletin #976

# Ash Wednesday

Long ago, at the very dawn of human history, Adam, cringing in guilty fear, crouched in the Garden of Eden because he had offended God by his sin of disobedience. Thousands of years later, Jesus Christ lay prostrate in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and pleased God with His act of obedience whereby He undertook to die upon the Cross to atone for the sin of Adam and for all subsequent sins and negligences against God. The interval and the contrast between Adam and Christ, between Eden and Gethsemane, between the tree of death in Adam's garden and the tree of life on Calvary, are symbolized and dramatized by the holy season of Lent. Springtime is Lenten time. Lenten time is springtime. In spring is the time to prune and get things ready for summer. In Lent is also the time to prune and get things ready to fulfill God's purpose. Lent begins with the Wednesday of Ashes, ashes that are imposed on sinful man with the same words God addressed to Adam: "Remember man that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return." Lent reaches its climax with Holy Week, the re-enactment of the great events of Christ's redemptive work.

We certainly need a Lenten season during these disastrous times, during this year, because we have all fallen far from the high ideals and grand resolutions of last year's Lent. Our Lenten observances and aspirations of last year have all turned to ashes through a year of contact with a pagan and materialistic world, just as the palms of last year's Palm Sunday are burned and reduced to ashes for this year's Ash Wednesday. We have come so far down the road of spiritual decline precisely because we have imitated the sinful Adam rather than the sinless Christ. Adam was tempted; he ate the forbidden fruit and was conquered by the devil. Christ also was tempted; He fasted and overcame Satan. Adam blamed someone else for the sin he had committed; Christ took the blame for the sins He did not commit. The spirit of Lent is penance, and true penance is evidenced, not by throwing the blame elsewhere, but by self-accusation, confession, and a firm purpose of amendment.

When we receive the blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday, they will be traced on our heads in the form of a cross. That cross of ashes becomes for us an identifying brand; we will go forth into the world, marked with the cross of Christ, in order to show the world that we are resolved to follow Christ the Warrior throughout Lent. How many there are who, marked with the cross of ashes, go back to a life of sin and bad habits, back to the old business of spurning God and neglecting prayer and divine service, of drunkenness and immorality, of stealing, cheating, and lying, of hatred and anger and ill-will and greed toward their neighbor! Lent is a time of battle – of pruning. The battleground – the vineyard – is our soul. Satan wants to enslave our soul; Christ wants to rule it. Who shall win this battle? The answer lies with us. If we say we truly believe in and love Christ, then we must follow Christ and fight by His side in the horrendous battle against Satan. Lent is not so much a time for doing! Lent is a time for being – being more penitential, more pious, more mortified, more genuinely prayerful, more Christ-like!

Even amongst the best of us, there is a woeful deficiency of personal prayer – private prayer. There is lack of family prayer in the home. Prayer is the force that will bring peace, order, and righteousness into our troubled world, into the Heart of Man – INTO OUR TROUBLED CHURCH!

Self-denial, fasting, mortification, and all the rest, are not easy work, but we are told in each day's Lenten Preface to curb our vices and to elevate our minds to Heavenly things. The Preface also reminds us that for our lives of mortification and penance we will be granted the reward of eternal life in Heaven! Mortification enables us to join our bit of self-denial to Christ's great act of sacrifice and atonement. In blessed Faith, we thusly work toward a better fulfillment of PURPOSE!

May our observance of Lent this year be spiritually profitable, fortified by patience, perseverance, and humility, and enriched by prayer, mortification, and a greater degree of holiness. Let us hope to motivate our lives with a proper spirit of penance.