

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

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

March 4, 2007 – Purple

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

Weekly Bulletin #978

Lent

TEMPTATIONS – PART 2 (CONCLUSION)

Our first thoughts and emotions and TEMPTATIONS are very important, and the way we react to them must be given careful treatment. Not only our peace of mind but also the development of our inner life – our spiritual interior condition, our general attitude about almost everything – hinge largely on the manner in which we relate ourselves for all practical purposes to our first thoughts. We will either give in to self-indulgence and self-love, or we will strive to develop self-humiliation and a loving submission to the holy cross that is laid upon us.

Let us repeat, temptations are not sins (refer to Bulletin #954). Many however continue to regard them as sins that cannot be overcome and, discouraged, they give up the struggle. Others believe they can eventually rid themselves by their own efforts and with their own efforts they feel they can reach the point of perfection. These become unhappy, even angry with themselves when they see that the temptations persistently continue to bother them. Full of apprehension, such people live in a nervous state, and they go about running from whatever they think will assail them. Without knowing it, the harder they work to avoid temptation the more they run straight into it, and they sink deeper into remorse and confusion and mental torture. They become victims of a very strong self-preoccupation. This is not at all the correct way to fight temptations.

The main cause for our preoccupation is that we are disappointed in our abilities to conquer temptations. In like manner we fail to comprehend that temptations are very often sent to us by God to spur us on to greater perfection in virtue. WE DO NOT DESIRE THEM! We must never lose sight of this. The main course to follow is that we simply must submit humbly and patiently to the recognition of our failings, of our weaknesses and with all honesty acknowledge our complete unworthiness. Unfortunately, so many of us, in a spirit of self-pride, try to use force to repress them. We take pains to knock on the head everything that disturbs us. IT IS AS IF OUR PIETY DEMANDS TO BE SHIELDED AGAINST ALL SUCH ANNOYANCES, as if we had no reason to be bothered with them. Do we not feel in some way superior to such base experiences and temptations? We make a mistake when we think in this manner and when we fail to see God in it all. For temptations, like thoughts, to come to a complete halt would mean that our minds have come to a complete halt. We must not be on the defensive against these thoughts, seeking to exterminate them by force, but to accept them and turn them to our own good use. In a spirit of humble self-examination we can begin to use them for the strengthening of virtue. In a proper examination we cannot but discover our really base interior ugliness in the sight of God – how ugly are our thoughts and judgments, full of selfishness and sensuality and hypercritical deceptions. Such honest evaluation of ourselves should lead us to better understanding the degree of our personal spiritual poverty, and therefore our serious need for divine assistance and protection. We resort more to prayer – humble prayer. We come to a better understanding of our complete dependence on God, and how out of place our bravado feelings in such matters really are!

A God-informed love demands much sacrifice and effort. To the degree that we love God, to that degree will we find ourselves acting according to the way of love, and away from our grandiose feelings of self. We simply cannot love God and act in any deceitful manner! The way we treat temptations will determine in large measure the way we look upon God, and the way we look in our appraisal of Him, false in our judgments, false to self, false to any man. A false person, as such a one goes about evaluating, is false in most evaluations, and therefore should not consider special treatment from God. Far from being hindrances to spiritual progress, temptations honestly and humbly treated can become reliable sources of virtue. We must learn how to make the most of them, but always trusting in the mercy and kindness of an all loving God!