

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

SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

(Formerly, *Sunday within the Octave*)

May 20, 2007 – White

Mass of Sunday; Gl; Cr; Pref. Ascension

Weekly Bulletin #989

CONCERNING SAINT ATHANASIUS

For the Catholic remnant, struggling to remain faithful to the traditional teaching, discipline, and liturgy of the Church, the great St. Athanasius has become both an inspiration and a model in the fight for tradition and orthodoxy. Born in Egypt in 295 and dying in 373, this saint lived during the height of the Arian heresy, considered to be the greatest crisis ever to befall the Catholic Church. This heresy, which denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, was so widespread that the vast majority of the clergy were Arian heretics. As St. Jerome wrote: "The whole world groaned and was amazed to find itself Arian." But strong in the true Catholic Faith that Jesus, the Word Incarnate, is truly God, a Divine Person, equal with the Eternal Father in all things, Athanasius courageously spent his whole life in defense of the truth, virtually alone. "Even if the whole world," he said, "were to become Arian, then it would be Athanasius against the world." In spite of all danger, suffering, and threats, he stood unmoved against four Roman emperors, and was therefore banished five times. Indeed, he himself had to bear the lion's share of the heretic's insults, calumnies, and persecutions, living in constant peril of death. By his zeal for the truth, which he defended and explained by preaching and writing, he preserved for the Church, and therefore for us, the ancient Catholic Faith, whole and undefiled. Cardinal Newman described Athanasius as a "principal instrument, after the Apostles, by which the sacred truths of Christianity have been conveyed and secured to the world." He is honored as one of the greatest Doctors of the Church and one of the greatest defenders of the Faith in the entire history of the Church. But great as the Arian heresy was, it was perhaps not so great as the present crisis and apostasy afflicting the Church today, namely, that of modernism, false ecumenism, and liberalism. We should pray to St. Athanasius that he obtain for us the grace to remain strong and full of Faith in the present trials that are afflicting Christ's Church. We owe so much to the labors and sufferings of this one man, who preserved for us the very foundations of our whole religion – the divinity of Jesus Christ. For this we must be grateful, both to God, and to St. Athanasius.

If, on the one hand, the story and example of St. Athanasius has inspired and strengthened many of the Faithful, it has also led others to imagine themselves to be other "Athanasiuses." Roaming about the world, or surfing about the Internet, there are some who believe that they are on a special mission from God to convert the world by their preaching and writing. They act as though they are prophets, and infallible prophets at that. As if they alone understand and have the truth, they treat everyone else as heretics, destined for eternal perdition, who do not entirely accept *their* skewed understanding of theology, *their* particular cause and crusade – *their* twisted brand of Catholicism. Filled with the spirit of Athanasius, or so they think, they boldly exclaim, although perhaps not in so many words: "Even if the whole world were to reject my words, then it would be me against the whole heretic world!" And thus we have chaos and confusion, for each one claims to have the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and yet each has a different answer, each one condemning all others to hell. Will the real Athanasius, please stand up!

Everyone, it seems, wants to imitate Athanasius in his apologetic preaching and writing, but few seem to want to imitate his holiness of life. If Athanasius was firm in the defense of the Faith, he was also meek and humble, pleasant and amiable in his relations with others. He was a man of deep prayer and personal penance. And it is this, the reformation of our own lives after the pattern of Christ, which will more effectively help to reform the lives of others. It is this which separates the true apostle, the true reformer, from the false. The true reformer starts out first to reform himself. He reads, not so much to become learned, but to nourish his own interior life, so that he may give to others the fruits of his contemplation. He studies, not so much to defend the Faith, as to first live the Faith, and then his living example spreads out to others. The false reformer, on the other hand, wants to impose his own ideas on everyone else, even though his own life is far from what it ought to be. He tends to be most hard on others, but quite soft on himself. It is rather easy to conquer and rule others, but not so easy to conquer and rule oneself. It is quite easy to argue and denounce an opponent, but it is not so easy to be patient, meek, and humble.

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