

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

Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

(Fourth Sunday after Pentecost)

June 24, 2007 – White

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

Weekly Bulletin #994

AND WHAT IS A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN?

(Part 1)

The perfection of a good Christian – of a good Catholic Christian – does not consist, as is sometimes imagined, in undertaking great things, in reciting many and long prayers, in practicing excessive austerities and mortifications, in performing heroic acts of virtue, in participating in lengthy pilgrimages, or even in daily attendance at Holy Mass. In a word, perfection does not consist in conducting one's self in any extraordinary way or distinguishing one's self by a singular mode of life. There is always the possibility that all such activities are merely superficially routine, even, perhaps, a camouflage disguising that which is hidden within. We are obliged to seek perfection, indeed, but with a flawless intention. We are to seek perfection in the faithful keeping of the Commandments of God and of our true Church, and in the strict observance of the Word of God as presented to us in the Gospels. The following points must be remarked in speaking of the conduct of a fervent Christian.

In regard to God, the fervent Christian – the fervent Catholic Christian – punctually performs all his exercises of piety with a genuine conscience and in accordance with the spirit of God. Or, to enter more into detail, he recites all his vocal prayers with attention, not mechanically or with undue haste; he is favorably disposed to spiritual reading, and does not consider the content of spiritual reading as just so much “stuff”; he receives Holy Communion with due preparation and proper reverence and demeanor, always properly dressed for the occasion; he performs all his actions ever mindful of Him Who is the center of his attention, never following the inclination to give in to the agenda of the street; his singular thought to please and serve God as best he can and with inviolable fidelity to grace; his will in perfect conformity to the divine will and under the direction of a properly informed conscience; he struggles to acquire genuine virtue – purity, meekness, mildness, temperance, humility, and all such like – and with constant fidelity to grace he seeks after intimate union of his heart with the Heart of Christ. Perhaps this will be judged as quite impossible, especially in today's world, or that a perfunctory or even a superficial effort is really all that is necessary. We might even suggest that a strict observance of all such regulation restricts our right to freedom of action. We might even look at such demeanor as effeminizing our manhood.

Was Joseph, the very model of virtue, effeminate? Did Joseph ever stand out as peculiar or strange? Did Joseph ever give a “better than thou” feeling to anybody? When in the presence of anybody, how did Joseph conduct himself? Did Mary ever betray to anybody any of the interior workings of her most pure and holy soul? As she moved about the people of her town, did she ever make anybody uncomfortable? Did she ever show a “better than thou” attitude? Did she ever look unnatural? When in the presence of anybody, how did Mary conduct herself? These two human beings knew the ways of the Law of God, and they simply exercised the effort required of anybody whose intention is to be of the family of God. Let us not expect more than was ever given to such ones as Mary and Joseph. If they could put forth the effort required for holiness, so can we! Whatever effort we make toward holiness, it must be freely performed and freely given. If God has to keep us at the end of a leash, gently pulling us along the path of virtue, what have we done worthy of reward? We must freely and consistently determine to take all the right turns along the path toward holiness. The work is ours to do.

In regard to his neighbor, such a man must be guided by the Second Commandment of God. But who is his neighbor? His neighbor is wife or husband, parent or children, associates at work or on the high-ways, his brothers and sisters at church, at school, in the grocery store, or wherever else one human being encounters another human being. Our neighbor must be met with full respect, compassion, understanding, and esteem in accordance with the divine law and with a properly informed conscience.

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