



### **Father Linus' First Homily as a Priest -- Friday 18 June 2010**

“Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven.” When I hear the word “treasure,” I think of a chest filled with gold coins and gem stones, cut and polished.

King David speaks of precisely this sort of treasure. Let me read to you from Chronicles. He is talking to Solomon and a whole assembly. King David says: “I have provided for the house of my God, so far as I was able, the gold for the things of gold, the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, the wood for the things of wood, besides great quantities of onyx and stones for setting, antimony, colored stones, all sorts of precious stones, and marble. Moreover, in addition to all that I have provided for the holy house, I have a treasure of my own gold and silver, and because of my devotion to the house of my God I give it [also] to the house of my God: three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for overlaying the walls of the house, and for all the work to be done by craftsmen, gold for the things of gold and silver for the things of silver. Who then will offer willingly, consecrating himself today to the Lord?” (1 Chron 29:2-5) This opulent Temple that David’s son Solomon would build would be the dwelling place of God in Israel. It is a grand shadow of Heaven.

But when Jesus says: “Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven,” he teaches that Heaven is more than just the dwelling place of God. Jesus promises Heaven as a reward, a reward to those who live a life of prayer and penance. A life consecrated to God. Such a way of life only makes sense in light of the goal; and can only be lived out with sight set upon the goal. Heaven is not only a place, as it were, but a goal. It is something to look forward to. Heaven is so utterly spectacular that it is worth consecrating all our gold and silver, all our talents, yes, even our very selves, to God – not so much for the reward, as for the glory of God. This is what David models for us; this is what Jesus commands us. “Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven.”

Today, the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, the command is timely. Today is both a Friday and also a day that stands between two great celebrations: an ordination and a solemn profession.

Friday. On Fridays we meditate upon our Lord’s Passion and look forward to Sunday. We recall that Good Friday in which Jesus Christ sacrificed himself so as to merit for us the Kingdom of Heaven. He consecrated his whole earthly life to this goal. By virtue of his divine life with the Father, Jesus knew the awesomeness of Heaven: so awesome as to be worth total obedience to the Father, utter humility before men, torture on the Cross. Let us re-focus our sight upon Heaven, the most precious goal, because the way to the goal entails the Cross, a path paved with drudgery and discouragement. If we only see the Cross this way, some other goal, an earthly goal, will mislead us. And that would be bad.

Sometimes in this life, we are blessed to see a glimmer of the treasure in Heaven... and then perseverance becomes a little easier. These days in this monastic life we are twice



## SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



blessed with encouragement. We have celebrated an ordination and stand on the eve of a solemn profession. Each one of us is only too aware of the many crosses that lead up to these mini-treasures. Forming a new monk is hard work, both on the part of the individual and on the part of the community. A work made possible by the sheer grace of God. I, for one, am intensely aware of the many crosses that I have piled upon others, most especially you, my brothers. Sometimes, I am overwhelmed by the love that so many have shown to me. On one brother's part, a relentless and unfailing love. A love that comes, ultimately, from God the Father. How can I ever repay that? How can I ever repay the Lord for his goodness to me? How can any of us repay the Lord? We can of course share the love of God with others. Ultimately, the very best that we can do is to offer God our praise, the praise contained in the most perfect prayer of praise, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and to unite with it all our thanksgiving and all our token offerings, indeed, our very selves.

God, we thank you again and again and again for the many little treasures that we have received and continue to receive. They show to us the abundance of your love for us. They show us the extraordinary things that you do in us by your grace. The extraordinary things that you do in us individually and collectively. All these good things come from you. Thank you for the gift of your Son become man. Thank you for this monastic way of life. So many treasures: grant that we never lose sight of their true value. May we not hoard our treasures but use them selflessly – that you may be glorified in all things. We look forward to that day when we will spend eternity with you in Heaven.