



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Father Laurence Kriegshauser
Homily for Divine Mercy Sunday, 2010 (Year C)

My dear brothers and sisters, we are here today because we want life. We want a life that never ends. We want a life that endures beyond the grave. Only Jesus has offered that life. On the very day of his own resurrection from the dead he visits his apostles to breathe on them the Spirit of his Father who is also his own Spirit. This is the Spirit that takes away the sin of the world. As sin was not able to destroy Jesus but rather was destroyed by him in his resurrection, so those who believe in his name have their sins forgiven by the power of the Holy Spirit given to the apostles, and through this forgiveness they have the eternal life they seek.

As the Father sent Jesus into the world, so Jesus sends the apostles into the world to bring his everlasting life to all men and women down the ages. We have accepted this good news because we want to live forever. We come here each week so that the risen Lord may touch us and feed us with his risen life. When we come to church we come to the celebration by which he becomes tangibly present in the world of our time and place. We say, Lord Jesus, I thank you for your gift of life. I need this life. I need to have your life living in me. I want to surrender myself to this divine life. I ask that you may destroy sin in me, my backsliding, my flirtation with the values of this world, my failure to live as a Spirit-filled adopted child of the Father. I present my body and heart and mind to be filled with you so that I can live as a member of your body, loving my brothers and sisters as you love them, washing their feet, laying down my life for them. This is how I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead. But you alone can create in me that new heart and new spirit by which I will be pleasing to God.

That is why, dear brothers and sisters, we must renew our attachment to Jesus in the Eucharist. That is why we must be convinced that the Eucharist of the Lord Jesus is life. Why we must tell the world about this offer of eternal life. We must pray for those Catholics who have forgotten the point of the Eucharist, who have forgotten that they are being called into the body of Christ wherein alone eternal life circulates. We must help our brothers and sisters rediscover that the only source of the life that they and every human being deep down seek is in the risen body of the Lord Jesus Christ made available to us regularly in the sacrament of his body and blood.

Our world encourages us to live on surface stimulation and to forget the deeper desires of our life. What we want is eternal life and that life is in Jesus. He does not promise us an easy way, exactly the opposite. To be his disciple is to carry his cross, to die to the gods of this world, wealth, pleasure and power—all good things except when they set themselves up as gods. As a monk I am joined to the risen Lord in the Eucharist every day. I live with his life. Yet I haven't washed my brothers' feet, haven't fed the hungry or clothed the naked, don't easily let go of grudges. I block the life of Christ in me. So I come back the next day to receive his life again which he ceaselessly offers in his mercy. Slowly I learn that the Church is not about perfection but about this mercy ceaselessly poured out for sinners. I am being weaned away from sin by the mercy of my Lord, but my conversion is painfully slow. By recognizing how unholy I still am, I come



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to appreciate more deeply the extent of his mercy, its bottomless depth. He continues to give me mercy. And I will need to rely on that mercy till the day I die.

Today is mercy Sunday, the celebration of the forgiveness of sins which Jesus gave to his apostles on Easter night. Let us resolve to live by that mercy, which the world does not understand. “If the world hates you,” said Jesus, “remember that it hated me before you.” The world hates itself and so doesn’t come to Jesus for life. We must pray for the world, the world that does not know its deepest desires, pray for its conversion to life, the true and genuine life that is only in the mercy of our risen Lord Jesus Christ and given to us as our daily bread.