



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Abbot Thomas Frerking
Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion
March 28, 2010

Saint Louis Abbey
10:00 a.m. Mass

Homily

Dear friends in Christ, we come now to the beginning of Holy Week and the Easter Triduum, the holiest days of the Church's year, the celebration of the Paschal Mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the perfect, and only, way of salvation given by God to the human race. By his Passion and Death the Lord won for us the forgiveness of sin and the destruction of its consequences, suffering and death; by his Resurrection, he gained for us the new life of grace for our souls already in this age, and the life of glory for both soul and body in the age to come. But to receive these perfect blessings, we must be united to the Lord in his Passion, Death and Resurrection. Our supreme opportunity for being so united is the celebration with faith and devotion of the Paschal Mystery in Holy Week and the Triduum, and the extension of its celebration in the liturgies, in personal prayer and in authentic Christian living throughout the rest of the year. With regard to Holy Week and the Triduum, because of the Sunday obligation we are obliged to participate in the Mass of Palm Sunday and in one of the Easter Masses. To the extent that we are at all able, how good it would be to participate as well in the great liturgies of Holy Thursday, of Good Friday, and of the Easter Vigil (itself one of the Easter Masses). In these liturgies, we are to participate with faith and devotion, that is, with full belief in Our Lord Jesus Christ, and with love for him with all our mind and soul and heart and strength, and with love for others as he has loved them. What does this mean concretely?

First, if we have not already done so, we will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so that we may approach the great Mystery of Holy Week with our sins forgiven. Then, secondly, if we love him, we will give our whole self to him, holding nothing back: all our hopes and all our fears, all our joys and all our sorrows. And thirdly, if we love him and love others as he loves them, we will bring to him all the hopes and fears, all the joys and sorrows, of our neighbors, of all those whom we love in a special way, of all those for whom we are responsible, of all those of the Church, of all those in our world. We will bring all this great community of human life, marked as it is in this world by sin and suffering, to him, for him to carry that sin and suffering to his Cross. In this context, we will especially in Holy Week of this year bring to the Lord all the sufferings of his Holy Church. For the Church, as we know, has begun to be, in these past few days, subjected to a renewed attack, launched this time against some of those with the greatest responsibilities in the Church, including the Holy Father himself. I believe it would be right for me to say something to you about this matter. First, I should like to say that, even if the



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allegations being made were true, this would in no way affect the revealed truth of the indefectibility of the faith of the holder of the papal office, and of his infallibility when pronouncing in strictly defined circumstances on matters of faith and morals. But secondly, I add immediately that from what I have seen of the putative facts which have been publicized by the secular media themselves, it is clear that, it being supposed that these putative facts are true, the accusations made by the media against the Holy Father and based by them on these facts, are manifestly unwarranted by the facts, grossly unjust and objectively malicious. Nevertheless, thirdly – and this is what I would most like to say to you – , this attack and these allegations are, at least for many of us, deeply disturbing, and in that deep disturbance the demons of discouragement, of dispiritedness, of weakening of faith, and even worse, are eagerly waiting to attack us. May I suggest that we allow ourselves to feel this deep disturbance, allow ourselves to recognize these temptations, by the power of the Lord look the demons directly in the face and say “Begone, Satan!”, and in this coming week join all this suffering with the suffering of our Lord Jesus, with whom we are united, and allow him to carry it for us and to deliver us from it. And as we do so, may we pray, pray, pray – pray for the Church, pray for all those who have been the victims of the terrible sin of the sexual abuse of children by clergy and religious, pray for their abusers, pray for those leaders of the Church and of religious life who have been guilty of the terrible sin of negligence with regard to abusers, pray for all those clergy and religious, leaders of the Church and of religious life who have been and are being falsely accused or falsely judged guilty by association, and pray for ourselves, that in our own thoughts, decisions, actions and lives we do everything we can, by the grace of the Lord, to allow ourselves to be part of the Lord’s bringing his Holy Church beyond this time of terrible anguish and suffering.

Dear friends, these are hard words to speak, and hard words for you to listen to. But I believe that if, by the grace of the Lord, we allow ourselves to feel fully all the suffering of the Holy Church, and all the suffering and darkness and, yes, sin that is upon us individually and upon our sorrowful world, and give it all, all, to the Lord in union with him in his Paschal Mystery, then he will bring to us great healing, great purification, great liberation, and in abundant measure the new life of faith and grace flowering unto glory, and the Easter of this year 2010 will indeed be the day which the Lord has made, in which we shall rejoice and be glad.