



## SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



**Mass of Solemn Profession of Brother Ambrose**  
**Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God -- Saint Louis Abbey**  
**9:00 a.m. Mass**  
**January 1, 2002**

### Homily

“Perseverance . . . all the days of my life.”

That is what you have just asked God and his Church for, Brother Ambrose. Why would you ask for such a thing? “All the days of your life.” Forsaking and excluding then, all else, till the day you die. Why would you ask for this? Doing so could make sense only if, by persevering in the monastic life in this community all the days of your life, you could attain some supreme good, a good such that attaining it would be worth renouncing every other good, and the possibility of every other good. But such a supreme good is precisely what you do attain by lifelong perseverance in the monastic life, according to the faith of the Church. And what is this good? We name it in the very first question I shall ask you after these words to you, in the examination of your resolution to make your vows. “Are you resolved, Brother Ambrose,” I shall ask you, “*to unite yourself to God* by the bond of life-long profession?” *Union with God* -- that is the supreme good you are seeking by perseverance in the monastic life in this community all the days of your life.

And supreme good union with God is, the one and only supreme good. For, by union with God, Brother Ambrose, you are united to that which contains every good, every truth, every beauty, every joy, every loveliness in the whole of creation, but in an infinitely higher, and infinitely richer, and infinitely more ravishing, and eternal form. By union with God, you give yourself to the one being to whom you can give the whole of yourself, every thought, every choice, every love, every joy, and who can give the whole of himself to you. By union with God, you find perfect freedom at last, for your every will becomes one with his will, and so you love, and do what you will.

Go on, then, Brother Ambrose, and carry out the holy purpose which he has implanted in you; go on, Brother Ambrose, and carry it out now -- this is why we have all gathered together to be with you this morning, to say, with all our love and all our joy for you, “Yes, by the grace of God, which will be given you this morning, go on and carry out your purpose. Give up every other good, Brother Ambrose, for the sake of this one good; give up every other love for the sake of this one love; give up all your will for the sake of this one will.”

You know who your patrons will be as you make your solemn profession: Saint Benedict, who taught this holy way, and who, at his death, left a sign for his sons: the vision of a path, strewn with rich coverings and flashing with innumerable lamps, stretching from his monastery into the sky, and a voice saying, ‘This is the path by which Benedict, the beloved of the Lord, ascended into heaven.’ Saint Benedict will be your patron as you make your profession, and, on this special day which is her great feast day, Mary, the Mother of God, will be your patron. For, when you give yourself wholly to God, forever, and



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receive his gift of his whole self to you, forever, you become one with her Son, who gave himself to his Father, "Abba, Father!", and to whom his Father gave himself, his very being, all forever, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. One with the Son, in the love of the Father, in the communion of the Holy Spirit: words fail. Yet this privilege, too: she becomes your Mother. Mary, the Mother of God, and Mary, under the precious title by which it has been given us monks to know her, Mary, the Mother of monks. So we see you, son, this day, as you make your vows, you her son, wrapped in the folds of her garment, she, the Tower of David, terrible as an army in array, she the Mystic Rose, the Mother most lovable, the Virgin most pure.

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