



## SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



### **Solemnity of the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church**

**Abbot Thomas Frerking**

**Saint Louis Abbey**

**September 7, 2009**

### **Homily**

What are we celebrating in celebrating this 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this church?

Certainly we are celebrating God's giving us this beautiful church building as the place in which we of this community can worship him. It is a beautiful church building indeed, of exceptional architectural merit. Moreover, it is in one of the two great traditions of church architecture coming to us from the time when Christians were first permitted to build churches, the tradition of the basilican church and the tradition of the round church. Its ancestor may well be thought to be the earliest circular church in Rome, Sant' Stefano Rotondo, just recently restored. If you see that church, you will see how wonderfully our church, in form, in appearance of material, in color, in placement of the liturgical furnishings, expresses in a contemporary mode the sublime and austere spirit of that ancient church. We are blessed indeed to have this church as the place in which we worship.

Yet God's giving us a building could not in itself be what we are celebrating in a liturgical celebration with the rank of a solemnity, nor indeed could it be what we are celebrating in any liturgical celebration at all. What we are celebrating in any and every liturgical celebration is the mystery of Christ: some action of Christ in his own earthly or glorified life, in his blessed mother, in his angels and martyrs and saints. What then are we celebrating in this celebration?

The readings for the Mass intimate to us the answer. What we are celebrating is this, that on this day 47 years ago Christ both as Head of the Church and in his Body the Church extended to this place enclosed by this building his unceasing worship in the Spirit of his Father and, by his love and mercy, has continued his worship here ever since. For yes, the truth is that it is Christ who worships here; our worship here is true only when we worship as members of his Body. This is why the liturgy is so sublime, so incomprehensibly sublime: Christ is the one who worships here, he is the great leitourgos, the worker of the celebration for the people. Here in his proclaiming of his Word, he gives glory to his Father and revelation to us. Here in the Eucharist he offers himself to the Father for our redemption, and we join our offering of ourselves with his offering. Here in the Eucharist he gives us his Body to eat and his Blood to drink, and thus he abides in us and we in him. Here in the other Sacraments he conforms us to each of the aspects of the mystery of his life and death and resurrection. Here in the Divine Office he sings praise to the Father, and we sing praise to the Father as members of his



## SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Body. Here in the Divine Office he makes intercession for all our needs, and we make intercession as members of his Body for our needs and the needs of all our brothers and sisters. Here in the personal prayer of everyone who prays in this church as a member of his Body, he is praying, praising and thanking the Father, interceding with and petitioning and supplicating the Father, yes, groaning and weeping before the Father, here in the prayer of each member of his Body he is one with the Father in the Vision of God with which his human soul has been beatified since the first moment of its creation. And all this worship of his in this church, given as Head of the Church and through the members of his Body the Church, all this worship is given in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and from him, the Spirit who animates his Body the Church, the Spirit who is the other Paraclete, the Advocate, the Consoler.

We can see, then, why this is a great feast day. For here on this day 47 years ago, and ever since to this day, Christ in his love and mercy has been making us to be what he calls us ultimately to be, members of his Body, animated by his Spirit, praising and worshiping his Father, who permits us too, in Christ, to call him, not just Lord and Master, but Father; here Christ in his love and mercy makes us to be what he ultimately calls us to be, sharers in the life of the Most Holy Trinity; here Christ in his love and mercy gives us the source and summit of our Christian life in this world, and the beginning of that eternal life, now known by us only in darkness, but to be enjoyed by us in the brilliance and ecstasy of vision in the age to come.