



Alleluia!

Homily to Saint Anselm Parish, Easter, Week V, 2011

Fr. Augustine Wetta, O.S.B.

Now that we have entered our fifth week of Easter celebrations, you will have noticed that there has been a lot of Alleluia going on. We've been singing Alleluia during the introit and during the psalm responses, in hymns and before the gospel. For a while there, we were even singing Alleluia at the dismissal. In the monastery during Easter, the monks sing Alleluia every night before they go to bed. There's Alleluia all over the place. It's like a big truck of Alleluia overturned on Mason road and we've been up to our ears in it ever since. Yes, there's Alleluia everywhere. And that's because for fifty days, we have been celebrating the resurrection—the paramount cosmological event that put us humans at the very center and source of the life of grace. “Of all the Christian mysteries,” says Saint Leo the Great, “we know that the paschal mystery is the most important.” So we respond with the Alleluia, which is our song of triumph and joy.

There is time, of course, for meditating on the sufferings of Our Lord. After all, Saint Paul instructs us *always* to “keep our eyes fixed on Christ crucified.” And to be sure, no Christian church—no Christian home—is complete without that image.

When I was in college, I took a friend with me to mass one Sunday morning, and when we entered the church, he took one look at the crucifix and groaned “Awe, man. It is too early in the morning for that.” Which insulted me at first, until I realized that, without faith, all one sees in a crucifix is a man being tortured to death. But Christians spend their lives meditating on the holy cross...because it isn't *just* an instrument of torture. If it were merely that, then we the followers of Christ would truly be the most miserable of all creatures. No, the cross is not merely the tree upon which our savior died. Through the lens of the resurrection, we perceive that the cross itself, the crown of thorns, the whips and scourges and nails are Christ's trophies of victory. In his resurrection, Jesus has become the Lord of the Kingdom of the Living, and has revealed himself as the Author of Life—the center, cornerstone, alpha and omega of God's new plan for humanity. And so we sing Alleluia, which means “Praise God!” or, if you prefer to sound more evangelical, “Praise the Lord!”



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Adoration, thanksgiving, praise, blessing, all the basic impulses of the religious soul described by John in the Book of Revelation will be dissolved, he tells us, into this single expression religious devotion: "I heard what sounded like the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying: "Alleluia!- Salvation, glory, and might belong to our God..then a second time: "Alleluia!" ...then the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen. Alleluia." ...and a voice coming from the throne said: "Praise our God, all you his servants, (and) you who revere him, small and great." And I heard something like the sound of a great multitude or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder, as they all said: "Alleluia!"

And this is why Holy Mother Church repeats this word throughout her liturgy. She would have us all be living Alleluias—souls fundamentally ordered to God—obsessively, compulsively theocentric in everything we do, but especially in our religious faith as it is modeled on the filial devotion of God's Son who prayed: Our Father who art in heaven. Let us then repeat this Alleluia again and again throughout the Easter season. Repeat it and repeat and repeat it until our whole life becomes a hymn of praise to the glory of the Father.

So do not let your hearts be troubled. Instead, let us praise God, singing Alleluia, for we have seen the Father. Let us praise him, as Saint Augustine says, by our acts and our words and our attitudes and our conversation and our speech and our whole life. Alleluia! Let us praise God!