



## SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Father Laurence Kriegshauser  
Friday of the 29<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time  
10/23/2009  
All School Mass

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Father Laurence and I retired from teaching in the school four years ago but hope I can still say something relevant to you.

We heard this morning one of the great readings of all time, one which goes a long way to making sense of human experience on earth. Saint Paul says, "I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want." He says we have the ability to know what is good and to want to do it but often find ourselves doing the opposite. It's the classic human conflict, and it's a theme in much literature. If you read the novel *A Separate Peace* in sophomore year you remember how the main character ends up doing irreparable harm to the person he most admires. Shakespeare's Othello murders the beautiful creature whom he loved more than anything else. These are extreme cases, but they highlight a problem in the human heart. We are good creatures but don't always follow through on the good and so hurt others.

Scripture explains the situation by showing how man and woman chose not to accept the will of their maker and to go their own way. They turned their back not only on God but on the help he wanted to give them to live good lives. Our nature is now damaged, and we can't fix it by ourselves. All our efforts, all our good will cannot eradicate the tendency to do the wrong thing that sometimes overpowers us. Paul can only cry out, "Who will save me from this body doomed to death?" He can only turn his life back to God if God comes to turn him back. That's what happened in Jesus Christ. That's why people are Christian.

Jesus repaired the damage done by our first parents. How did he do it? By becoming a man like us and adhering to his Father's will for him even at the cost of his life. He came to show divine love to the world, and when it was rejected by men, he did not turn away but suffered their rejection of him, praying for them as he died. Thus one human being had now done the Father's will without sin. Jesus not only knew what God wanted and wanted to do it, but he actually carried through in doing it to his great personal cost. Now God looks at humanity and is pleased with us, because one of us, Jesus, who was man and God, obeyed him. Now when God looks at humanity he sees Jesus, and because of Jesus he pardons all of us. As we say to God in one of the prefaces of the Mass: "You sent your Son as one like us so that you might see and love in us what you see and love in Christ." So because of Jesus we can become the kind of people we want to be, the people who not only love what is right but do it. Jesus repairs our damaged nature and makes us capable of living as images of God, his holy and beloved children. That is why we are Christians.

What do you have to do take advantage of what Christ did for you? It's very simple: accept the gift of his life-changing love. Say, Lord, I need your help to make a success of my life. I believe that you died for me. I come to receive a share in your life, the life of one risen from the dead, so that I can demonstrate to the world something of



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the love with which you loved me. That is my vocation, that is my full maturity as a human being.

I hope that you can all make this choice for Christ, this recognition of your need for him and your commitment to receiving his strength in this Eucharist. Think about this at a deep level. Do you need Christ? Do you intend to stay close to him? Determine now to come to him every Sunday of your life, whether you feel like it on a particular day or not, whether it's convenient or not, even when you're on your own with nobody there to make you come. This is the kind of intelligent and loving commitment to Christ this school wants to promote among you. That's why we offer the experience of lectio divina, the support of tutoria, attendance at weekly Mass and the possibility of daily Mass, instruction in theology on a level of the instruction in your other courses, opportunities to serve others, the good example of your teachers and even of some of the monks. You will do a lot of things in your life because it's the thing to do, it's expected of you. But this matter must be a personal choice, a choice to accept the life that will bring you to the fullness of manhood.