



Father Laurence Kriegshauser
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, 2009

We go to bed and sleep and wake to a new day dawning. We know the routine, get breakfast, check the day's schedule, off to school or work, deal with traffic, do the household chores, come home to dinner, family time, some television or reading and to bed. We take for granted that the earth will be there the next morning, the sun will rise, our daily needs will be met, jobs will be done. How often does it occur to us that all of this could be swallowed up in a minute, vanish? How often do we realize that every moment is a gift, to be received with wonder and gratitude and obedience? That's why this time at the end of the Church year is so valuable: it reminds us that our world will come to an end in an instant and we have no idea when that instant will be. All is gift. Each breath I take is a wonderful gift. We have to live in the awareness of that gift.

People are Christian because Christ offers a bridge from this world which is passing away to the eternal world. He the risen one is already with us, deep within us, uniting us to the Father and to himself by his Holy Spirit. At a deep level we are being prepared to survive the cataclysm that will swallow up this world as we know it. It is our faith which survives the disaster. It is by faith that we have laid a foundation in the world that transcends this world and that lasts forever. By faith we already live with Christ in heaven, although struggling still in the painful circumstances of this life. Our friend John Wight, who attended this Mass regularly until very recently, moved on yesterday from this world to the next, leaving us a reminder that we are all one day to follow from this vale of tears to a world where every tear will be wiped away.

The Book of Daniel says that when the prince Michael comes many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to live forever, some to be in everlasting horror and disgrace. There will be a reckoning of how we have lived our lives. Those who have put their trust in Christ, submitting to his lordship, allowing him to produce in them the fruits of good works, obedience to the commandments of God, will rise to everlasting life. If they have been a light to others in this life, they will shine like the stars of heaven, replacing, as it were, the natural stars that have fallen from the sky. Those who have closed their hearts to the call of God will rise to eternal frustration.

So the season calls us to put down roots more deeply into Christ, the transcendent one who reigns above the heavens and will come on the clouds of heaven to give us what we deserve. It is a time to express our longing for his coming, a longing for the coming of his kingdom, which means peace among nations and mutual love rather than mutual hatred and violence, mutual trust instead of mutual fear. In particular it is a time to remain especially close to his sacrifice by which he won eternal life for us. Through his own sacrifice of himself, says the Letter to the Hebrews, he took away all the sins that blocked our union with God. He made that sacrifice once and for all on the cross but he continues to offer his sacrificed body to the Father for all eternity and the Eucharist is our way of participating in that sacrifice. In the Eucharist we allow Christ to sweep us up into his loving worship of his father. We give ourselves to the Father along with his Beloved Son and so open ourselves to the fullness of his blessings, the fullness of eternal life.



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



The transcendent one is with us, the cause of our joy, the cause of our hope. Let us open our hearts to him and to his work in us. May he make us ambassadors of his light and goodness. May we speak of him with fervor to the folks of our day who are often wandering in darkness, looking for the light and not finding it. May we offer them the true light of Christ, not fearing ridicule or rejection, but holding out the message of Christ with love. His word alone remains forever when all else has passed away. It is a word of life, an eternal energy that renews all things perpetually. May the world accept his healing grace and live with him forever.