



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Father Michael Brunner
December 7, 2009

“Great minds have purposes”

Gospel *Lk 5:17-26*

*One day as Jesus was teaching,
Pharisees and teachers of the law,
who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem,
were sitting there,
and the power of the Lord was with him for healing.*

*And some men brought on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed;
they were trying to bring him in and set him in his presence.*

*But not finding a way to bring him in because of the crowd,
they went up on the roof
and lowered him on the stretcher through the tiles
into the middle in front of Jesus.*

*When Jesus saw their faith, he said,
“As for you, your sins are forgiven.”*

*Then the scribes and Pharisees began to ask themselves,
“Who is this who speaks blasphemies?
Who but God alone can forgive sins?”*

*Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them in reply,
“What are you thinking in your hearts?
Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’
or to say, ‘Rise and walk’?
But that you may know
that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—
he said to the one who was paralyzed,
“I say to you, rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home.”*

*He stood up immediately before them,
picked up what he had been lying on,
and went home, glorifying God.*

*Then astonishment seized them all and they glorified God,
and, struck with awe, they said,
“We have seen incredible things today.”*



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“We have seen incredible things today.”

We have seen incredible things this fall. I felt very proud of our football team for their advancement to the State Semi-finals. Every game was a testament to their individual skill, their coordination as a team, their persistence, fortitude, toughness and guts. I was surprised by how few penalties they were all around. It was obvious the best were playing the best. And our team received great compliments from their opponents and from the refs for their sportsmanship.

But I must say that what made me proudest of all was the fact that you, the students and fans in the stands, your parents, our alums, also received these compliments and high praise from opponents, refs and the fans of the opposing teams.

Let me read to you an e-mail I received, just one of the many comments that you elicited.

I just wanted to tell you what a fine job your school did of hosting the semifinal football game. I am a parent of two of the players for Bowling Green High School, and I can tell you that the people and staff were the most welcoming and friendly of any school we have played at. My three sons attended Catholic school at St. Clement outside of Bowling Green until they graduated from 8th grade and moved into Bowling Green. I wish we had a Catholic high school closer, so they could have finished their high school years there. Again, thanks for making us feel welcome. You can be proud of your staff, parents, and players.

You have made a difference.

I can tell you that in the fall of 2003, when Fr. Gregory was headmaster, he received several blistering e-mails about our fans, and I and the Senior Student Council had to drive an hour and a half to make personal apologies for the school. In February of 2005 I had to apologize to the basketball team and one of the players of one our ABC league schools for the anti-Muslim taunts of our fans against a Muslim player.

I thank you and commend you, all of you, players and fans, that you now make Priory stand out and be recognized for excellence and virtue.

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In doing some research the other day, I came across this quote, from the great New Yorker and American author Washington Irving, and when I read it I thought of you.

Washington Irving said: *Great minds have purposes, others have wishes.*

Which reminded me of a southern proverb, the title of a song from the 1970's off-Broadway play *Inner City*...”If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.”



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There's a big difference between wishes and purposes.

Great minds have purposes. You were invited to come to Priory because we recognized the potential greatness of your mind. You are still here because we believe that you are working sincerely at actualizing that potential.

Have you read our mission statement lately? It says we provide a Catholic, college preparatory education of the highest excellence, to help talented and motivated young men develop their full human potential as children of God.

You are those talented and motivated young men with so much potential. What are you going to do with it? What purpose does it serve?

Now when we speak of great minds, we should think of the greatest mind there is, that is God.

What was God's purpose in creation? What was God's purpose in sending Jesus Christ to live among us as a man? What was God's purpose in creating you?

Love and happiness first of all.

God the Trinity needed to share, because God is love and love must share and build and grow,
and so he created a universe of truth, beauty and goodness crowned by a loveable and loving being made in God's own likeness, the human being.

We were made for love and happiness. But true love requires mutuality and the free choice and response of the lovers to each other. So God created us free so we could freely love.

Unfortunately as a species we so saw the goodness of God in ourselves, that we preferred to love the reflected image of goodness in our selves rather than the source, the fullness of that goodness in God.

We sinned in selfishness, beginning with that first human being, the original sin which cracked the mirror of creation and distorted our vision & perception of everything. Human beings settled for idle wishes instead of our great purpose.

And so to restore all the possibilities of that first creation, to reveal and make possible the choice of true love, God had to become man to show the way; so that a true man could make the true and right choice with his love and his life.

A perfect man had to perfectly live, love and give his life for God and for the human images of God. Jesus Christ was born and died for us.



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He became man so that man could become like God. So that we, you and I, could become like God, The loving Creator of the Universe. Our Western theology dodges around this. The Eastern Church Does bluntly speak of it as Theosis, the process of becoming a being like God.

It boggles the mind the God would share His very being and perfection with us so intimately.

But that is God's purpose, That God may become all in all

What is your purpose ? What will you do with your great mind ? What purpose have you set for your life ? ...or if it's too early to have it set, in what direction are you looking ? Are you cooperating with God's purpose of your finding perfect happiness in being like God ? Or are you working at cross purposes with God ?

The world around you...through movies, music, tv, games and all kinds of ways...invites you to lose yourself in any number of purposes that are self-serving and profit driven, counterfeit copies of true goodness. The world around you invites you to indulge yourself in all the beauty and pleasure you can grab now. But in this cracked world beauty fades and pleasure dulls to boredom over time, and great minds misdirected turn into fools.

But love never fails.

Advent is above all a time of waiting and preparation for God becoming man. It is a time for all of us to look at our own lives carefully, to identify and remove what hinders God's purpose of our becoming like God, like Jesus Christ the God-man.

The paralyzed man in today's Gospel had a purpose...to see Jesus, to be in his presence ...because the power of the Lord was with Jesus for healing. How easy...and sensible it would have been for him and his friends to give up and say...

There's no way. The house is packed to overflowing and the crowds are lined up at the windows and out doors. We'll never get near Him or even close enough to hear him. Some other time, maybe.

But no. They had a purpose and no man made obstacle would deter them. They literally went over the heads of the crowd. No wall or roof or partition would separate them from the Lord; They just broke through it. They knew what they were there for.

Stir up your great mind. Pursue your purpose with passion.

In the words of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, a people prone to misdirect their love...



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*If we have hoped in Christ only for this life, we are the most pitiable people of all.
But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.*

For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead also has come through a human being: for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet."

But when it says, "All things are put in subjection," it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him,

so that God may be all in all.

1 Cor 15: 19-28