



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Homily for Final School Mass, 2006

Father Michael Brunner, O.S.B.

The readings today really take us back to the basics.

The background to the reading from the Acts of the Apostles is

That Paul and the non-Jewish Christians are upset –

Their peace of mind and spirit has been disturbed

By a false teaching,

That says they must become Jews – and follow Jewish laws –

As well as follow Jesus Christ,

And so the Apostles remaining in Jerusalem

Are asked to provide the definitive and correct teaching.

If you're like I was in high school (& college for that matter),

Every summer I would totally forget how to calculate a square root.

No problem today because you have calculators – but not then.

Every fall I would have to learn all over like it was the first time,

And none of it seemed at all familiar,

Which you think it would have after a few years.

Jesus tells us in the Gospel what is most important,

Copyright © 2006 The Saint Louis Abbey



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



What we must never forget, no matter what,
No matter how long we are away
from school, our families, theology class.
And in the Acts of the Apostles,
The Apostles themselves write about it.

Love.

Love never takes a vacation.

And everything we do should be ordered to love of God,
And love of neighbor.
And neighbor first of all is all of us here around you today.
You don't get more neighborly than us.

Love should never be taken for granted.

That's why Jesus says

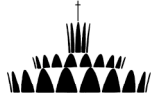
You are my friends, you can tell for yourself
and have faith that you are indeed a friend of mine
if you keep my commandments.

Those commandments are all about love...

Love and worship God, don't abuse or insult His name

And treat your neighbors – Jesus' other friends –

Copyright © 2006 The Saint Louis Abbey



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



With love.

Obviously don't kill them,

And don't lie to them,

Cheat them,

Steal from them,

Lust after or envy them.

Don't treat them as objects for your gratification,

Because they are indeed his friends just like you.

It sounds so simple. All the commandments reduce to one ...Love,

Because God is love.

If you really & truly love,

Then you can do whatever you want, Saint Augustine tells us.

Why ?

Because if you truly love, you'll only want to do those good things

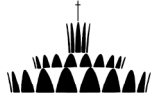
which are in harmony with Jesus' commandments.

Truly simple, but not at all easy.

You have no doubt noticed

that love in many forms makes the human world go round.

Everybody badly wants to love and be loved.



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Everybody loves something.

So what's the problem ?

Everybody wants to be loved, but we all have very unlovable things about us...

Faults, like me –

I'm moody and my temper's not so great and my patience thin.

I smoke too much.

I've got too much of some things and not enough of others.

Yet I, like you, don't see as much a problem with my own unloveability

as I do with others' unloveability.

It would be great if everybody else would get their act together

so I could love them,

and they of course would love me as I am.

But because of my faults, I don't love perfectly

and so it's not safe or healthy for me –or you-

to love and do whatever I want.

With all of us in the same condition,

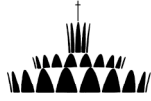
we are all prone to love the wrong things

or love people for the wrong reasons.

Our love tends to be disordered,

focused on ourselves and not on our neighbor or God.

Copyright © 2006 The Saint Louis Abbey



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



And so the lives of us people in the world
can and do so easily revolve around false loves –
love of self first and foremost.

We do have to love ourselves, but that's only half of the teaching;
Because the other half is that we must loves others
JUST AS MUCH as we love ourselves.

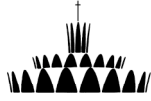
And then there are the other false loves of pleasure, sex, money, power,...

The list goes on and on.

But just as surely as this day,
the end of the school year, has arrived
So too will the day each of us will be judged by God
on how well we loved.

Jesus tells us that he HAS chosen us
To bear fruit that will remain,
And what remains after all is said and done,
When faith and hope are no more,
Is love.

Fruit that will remain.



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



After exams next week, you too will probably forget some things...

Whether it is how to find a square root,

the articles of the Treaty of Versailles,

The reforms of the Council of Trent,

the principle parts of irregular Latin verbs...

The fruit of some things you learned this year may not last.

That's not a disaster; you can look those things up.

And you can learn those things again pretty quickly next September.

But you cannot look up love or how to love.

Among all the things you learn here,

love is the most important.

You are not slaves,

so you too know what God and we are doing here.

And while your final exam on love is postponed for a long time –

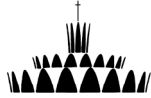
There will be none next week –

I can tell you that if your are not learning how to love here,

If you are not willing to learn how to love here,

Then you are in the wrong place

And you are getting in the way of what we are all about.



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



So as you prepare for your exams,
Take Jesus at his word
And make prayer part of your preparation.
I will certainly be praying for you.

And as you begin your summer vacation,
Don't forget and don't lose what is most important.

In the words of Jesus & the Apostles

*It is the decision of the Holy Spirit & us
not to place any burden on you beyond this necessity...*

This I command you;

Love one another.