



"LET EASY ADMISSION NOT BE GIVEN TO ONE WHO NEWLY COMES TO CHANGE HIS LIFE; BUT, AS THE APOSTLE SAYS, 'TRY THE SPIRITS, WHETHER THEY BE OF GOD'"

—RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT, CHAPTER LVII

By our participation in the Paschal Mystery, we seek to follow Christ in a radical way, through our monastic profession. This is a rare calling and a demanding way of life, requiring years of study and practice.

THE STAGES OF FORMATION

The Postulancy: For several months, the aspirant lives among the brethren. If he is found acceptable, the community allows him to assume the habit — but without the hood.

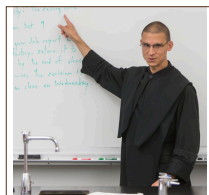
The Novitiate: A two year period of limited seclusion marks the candidate's true entry into the monastic life. During this time, he undertakes the full regimen of prayer as well as in-house studies of our history and discipline. Every four months he must ask permission to stay.

Simple Profession: Having completed his first year, the novice asks to make Simple Vows which bind him to the monastery for three years.

Solemn Profession: After three years, the community votes on whether the simply professed monk is ready to make lifetime vows to the community.



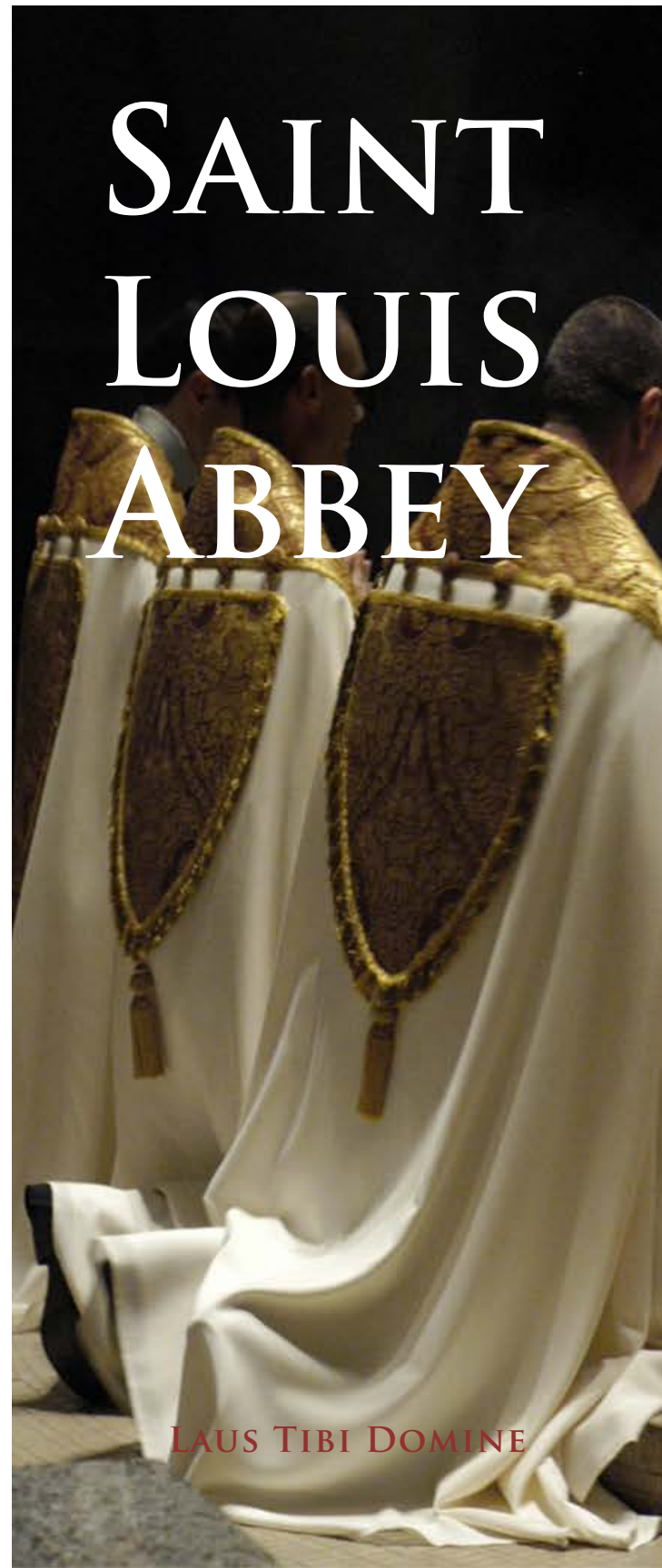
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SAINT LOUIS ABBAY



LAUS TIBI DOMINE



VITA CONSECRATA



Although Benedictines do abide by the evangelical counsels, we predate the oldest orders by over five hundred years. Thus, our vows are different from those of other religious communities.

OBEDIENCE

"TAKE UP THE STRONG WEAPONS OF OBEDIENCE, TO DO BATTLE FOR CHRIST THE LORD, THE TRUE KING."

—RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT, PROLOGUE

As monks, we submit ourselves to the Will of God by our obedience to one another, to our abbot, to our bishop, and above all, by our absolute and uncompromising fidelity to the magisterium of the Catholic Church.

STABILITY

"BUT THE WORKSHOP IN WHICH WE PERFORM ALL THESE WORKS WITH DILIGENCE IS THE ENCLOSURE OF THE MONASTERY, AND STABILITY IN THE COMMUNITY."

—RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT, CHAPTER IV

By this uniquely Benedictine vow, we endeavor to create a sacred space and a strong community where the Work of God may be accomplished in peace and fraternal charity.

CONVERSION

"LET THEM PREFER NOTHING WHATEVER TO CHRIST, AND MAY HE LEAD US ALL TOGETHER TO LIFE EVERLASTING."

—RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT, CHAPTER LXXII

By this second uniquely Benedictine vow, monks endeavor to lead lives of constant conversion, seeking ever more faithfully to conform their lives to the Holy Rule and to the evangelical counsels of poverty and chastity.



QUAERERE DEUM



SEEKING GOD

"LISTEN, O MY SON, TO THE PRECEPTS OF YOUR MASTER, AND INCLINE THE EAR OF YOUR HEART. CHEERFULLY RECEIVE AND FAITHFULLY EXECUTE THE ADMONITIONS OF A LOVING FATHER, THAT BY THE TOIL OF OBEDIENCE YOU MAY RETURN TO HIM FROM WHOM BY THE SLOTH OF DISOBEDIENCE YOU HAVE GONE AWAY."

—RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT, CHAPTER LVII

OUR CONGREGATION

Saint Louis Abbey was founded in 1954, but its lineage goes back much, much further. In fact, ours is the oldest congregation of the oldest order in the world. Many of our traditions, including of course our rule, our liturgy, and our chant, go back to the fifth century and earlier. It is in this context that the monks carry out their first work of seeking God in community.

OUR COMMUNITY

In 1954, Saint Louis Abbey comprised two monks and their superior. Today, we number more than thirty, of whom more than a third are in formation. We pray that with your help and by the grace of God, our monks will continue to grow in numbers and holiness and that our students, alumni, and parishioners will serve God humbly and faithfully.

ORA ET LABORA



OUR PRAYER

"NOTHING IS TO BE PREFERRED TO THE WORK OF GOD."

—RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT, CHAPTER LXIII

Along with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Divine Office (Opus Dei) is the monks' most important work. Bearing in mind the Apostle's exhortation to "pray without ceasing" (1 Th 5:17) the monastic community assembles five times a day, for the Work of God - the Opus Dei: Matins, Lauds, Sext, Vespers, and Compline. In addition, we take part of our day to practice mental prayer and to meditate on the scriptures.

OUR WORK

IDLENESS IS THE ENEMY OF THE SOUL; AND THEREFORE THE BRETHREN OUGHT TO BE EMPLOYED IN MANUAL LABOR AT CERTAIN TIMES, AT OTHERS, IN DEVOUT READING.

—RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT, CHAPTER XLVII

The apostolates of teaching and ministering have also been a major part of English Benedictine monasticism for centuries. In line with this ancient tradition, the monks of Saint Louis Abbey run a preparatory school of the very highest excellence. Approximately one quarter of the teaching and administrative staff are monks.