

Ryan, it was January 11th of this year, having first expressed your desire to become a member of this community, that you came to the door of the monastery seeking entrance. Just a few short hours after your arrival you joined with all of us at Vespers in the Abbey Church. The very first line of Scripture read that evening was from Psalm 15 inquiring: "Lord, who shall be admitted to your tent, and dwell on your holy mountain?" The answer to that most vital of questions followed immediately: "He who walks without fault...who acts with justice...who speaks the truth from his heart...and does not slander with his tongue...who does no wrong to his brother...and casts no slur on his neighbor...who holds the godless in disdain...and honors those who fear the Lord...who keeps his pledge, come what may...such a man will stand firm forever."

Less than one day later, as a newly blessed postulant, you joined with our monastic community for our daily celebration of the Eucharist. You heard these words in the first reading from the letter to the Hebrews: "We have become partners of Christ, if only we hold the beginning of the reality firm until the end."

Now it is six months later and you have experienced enough of this life to grasp the sacrifices demanded of the monk who truly desires to serve the Lord alone. You now know as well, that we are a group of ordinary men, each with his own failings; failings that can test the patience of the Lord, as well as of one another. You understand all this, yet you persist in expressing your desire to follow Christ in a monastic manner of life, as set out for us in the Rule, by our Holy Father Benedict. Enter without fear or trepidation, rather with an unbounded hope, for it is Christ to whom you offer yourself, and it is Christ in whom you will place your trust. Regardless of what may come, understand this as you begin each new day of your monastic life: Christ will not be outdone in generosity. Despite appearances in difficult moments, Christ will never fail you. Lean on Him, each day make stronger your love for Him, learn to live in His grace. If you do this all will be well.

Ryan, you have asked to take the name Aloysius, knowing of Gonzaga's devotion to those who were ill, his dedication to purity and innocence, his turning from the

riches of the world, and his work with young students and Christian youth. You aspire to be like Saint Aloysius. May you be worthy of such a patron.

You bring to our community the exuberance and energy of youth. This is a gift to us. I beg you to study those senior to you, especially your novice master, and observe the wisdom that comes with years, and trials, and experience. Listen with the ear of your heart to the teachings of your brother's lives, and behaviors. To do so will be for your own monastic vocation a great and valuable blessing.

St. Aloysius must have known himself well for he could bluntly assert: "I am crooked, and I am entering religious life so I can be twisted straight." I believe Saint Benedict would be pleased to find such an attitude in those who, in the Prologue to the Rule, he invites and encourages to taste the monastic life.

Whenever you are tempted to wonder if the cost of discipleship is too great, recall the words of your patron St. Aloysius: "When Christ takes away what he once lent us, His purpose is to store our treasure more safely, and bestow on us those very blessings that we ourselves would most choose to have."

Br. Aloysius, in your letter seeking admission to novitiate you wrote: "The ultimate goal of vocation is to live the life that will allow one to have the best relationship with God and with others. If we can live out our vocation, we will be truly happy." May it be so with you in your chosen vocation as a monk of Saint Anselm Abbey.

Clothed then with faith, and the performance of good works, set out on this way with the Gospel for your guide, that you may deserve to see Him who has called you to his kingdom.