

Homily for the Class Mount Michael Benedictine Class of 2022 Graduation By Bro. August Schaefer OSB

I'm going to begin by talking about a word that has just recently entered into the English lexicon—doxing. Most dictionaries record its first known usage as happening between the years 2005 and 2009. If you don't know, doxing or to dox means--according to Merriam Webster's dictionary "to publicly identify or publish private information about (someone) especially as a form of punishment or revenge." Doxing is usually done via some form of electronic media—especially social media. Doxing can be done to individuals or even organizations and businesses. It's usually always associated with a negative connotation—first the act itself is seen as a violation of privacy, but secondly, what is revealed is usually some form of hypocrisy in the life or actions of the victim of doxing. Social media sleuths will uncover information about a corporation making campaign donations to politicians that seem to support policies that are not in line with the company's public image. And very recently, we've seen the doxing of members of the Supreme Court of the United States—encouraging people to protest at their private homes.

You may be asking yourself—is Br. August really going to dox the graduating class? As much fun as that may be, no I'm not going to dox the graduates—yet. I was reminded of doxing when I did a deep dive into the gospel

reading for today. This is a very short reading; and there's not much of a story going on here. So it was a little bit hard at first to know exactly what to say in response.

Essentially this passage has three distinct parts—an introductory phrase stating that Judas had just left—basically to go reveal some private information about Jesus, so somewhat close to doxing Jesus. Then it moves into two sentences about glorifying God and the son of man. Then a transition to the great commandment to love. The word used for love is the Greek word agape—and it appears four times, so it's important. Agape as the Greeks understood it was a very unique type of loving another person—not in a sexual or even romantic sense but in deeper giving of one's whole self to another.

An interesting thing to me, however, is that while agape/love is used four times in this passage. Glorify and glorified is used five times. So numerically at least, it's given a little bit more importance. Now if you know your New Testament Greek you'll know that the word for glorify used here is doxa—delta omicron chi---d – o – x. It was a common word in usage long before the New Testament was written basically meaning self-evidently worthy of praise. Universally it always had a positive connotation. It was a condition of being so worthy of praise that everyone would universally agree upon it. So in reference to our graduates, it would be something like—oh, they've been offered over 10

million dollars in scholarships—apparently they’re smart and capable. You simply can’t be offered that much without being talented, and capable and deserving of respect. One important thing we all have to remember is, though, the graduating class is not the subject of the gospel—God is. It’s the glorification of God that is important.

The church demonstrates this throughout the mass—we open with the Gloria—glory to God in the highest—throughout the Eucharistic prayer you will hear glory said more than love. St. Benedict knew this---behind this backdrop there’s a large banner on the wall with the letters UIOGD—that stand for the Latin phrase in his rule--Ut in Omnibus Glorificetur Deus—that in all things God may be Glorified. One of the church’s earliest writers, St. Irenaeus—recently declared a doctor of the church by Pope Francis—has a very interesting quote—perhaps his most famous---The glory of God is living man. Man in the sense of all human beings. That a living human is the glory of God. Created in the image of God, simply by existing we show each other some aspect of the divine image that God feels is important. That is why the church proclaims the sacred nature of life from conception to natural death.

But here at Mt. Michael, a Catholic, Benedictine institution, we are called to more than simply existing. That is where the last part of this gospel passage is so important. We are called to love as Jesus has loved us. We are called to show not

just the image of God, but God's love for all of creation. The question you need to answer is how has God loved you—Jesus says to his disciples, “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” Getting back to our graduations we could point to the gifts and talents and skills that they displayed throughout high school that produced that ten million dollars in offers as the way God loved them, but we would be wrong. All your gifts and talents and skills, are not God's love for you, but God's love for the world. God loved you by placing in the presence of all the people out there. God loved you by giving you adults—parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, guardians who fed and clothed and housed you when you couldn't do it yourself. God loved you by giving you siblings and cousins and friends who played with you so you wouldn't be alone. Who annoyed you so you would be forced by those adults to learn how to forgive. God loved you by giving you teachers and coaches---some super talented others not—who caused you to adapt and change and learn new ways of showing the world your gifts. And God gave you each other—brothers from different mothers—who forgave you, helped you, who annoyed you, who laughed with you—especially when none of the adults were laughing with you...

The point of this Gospel passage is realize that God's glory lies in the fact that each human being we encounter is a sign of His unique love for us in that

moment. As we heard in the reading from the book of Revelation—“Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people

and God himself will always be with them as their God.”

God is with us through the people we encounter who offer us a glimpse of the divine image they were created to specifically show us.

And so, at the end of today’s ceremony, as the deacon, I get the option for the dismissal right—to tell you –Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your lives. Your mission at the end of every mass is to go out into the world and live lives that make God’s glory sooooo self-evident to everyone. “Huh!? God really must be a great! Look who he created!”