

# A Homily by Abbot Theodore Wolff O.S.B. on the occasion of the profession of Bro. Rick Varner O.S.B.

*August 28, 2005 – Mount Michael Abbey Chapel*

In the letter to the Romans, Novice Rick we are given a great poster line. “Don’t conform....Be transformed.”

Dietrick Bonhoeffer gives us a daunting description of the Christian life, when he writes: when Christ calls a person to follow him, Christ bids that person come and die. That description sounds more daunting in our culture where we are encompassed by promises of new life.

Bonhoeffer’s words are echoes of Jesus’ words “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” Jesus’ words still speak to our day.

The death to which we are called may not be the death of our bodies, but the death of old ways of living and coming alive to Christ’s way. It may be taking up the invitation extended by St. Paul; “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern the will of God.” (Rom. 12:2)

Novice Rick, the struggle between seeing life through the eyes of the world and seeing the world through the eyes of Christ is not easy. Jesus’ vision often seems peculiar while the world’s vision makes sense. The world says: “Be all that you can be...live to the fullest.” Many yearn to have the good things in life. Knowing well that they can neither satisfy, nor give life in all its fullness.

Christ calls us to stay with the struggle and trust that true life comes from him.

Novice Rick the world’s vision is captured in words like get, buy, shop, eat, save. However, transformed into the mind of Christ those words of acquisition are replaced with words like, offer, feed, give, share.

Life is found in giving and serving because those actions best reflect God’s image in our lives. God’s nature is amazing grace and generosity.

Novice Rick always keep in mind that you are not to be a “do gooder” rather you are being transformed by the grace of the Holy Spirit that allows you to do good. For, True Life is given to the human spirit transformed by the Holy Spirit that dwells within you.

