



April 13

Venerable Innocent of Berzo

Good day, good people. May the Lord give you peace!

We welcome today a most gracious friar: Venerable Innocent of Berzo. Innocent was ordained a secular priest as a young man. Longing for a deeper spirituality Innocent left the secular priesthood and joined the Capuchin friars. He was already 30 years old, so he was ready to set aside any youthful distractions and live a meaningful life of grace. Early on in his Franciscan vocation he was recognized

for his clear insights and reasoned approach to a life of penance. It was very clear to him that in the spiritual life, one size does not fit all. For some, external mortifications were a necessity, for others, not so much. Whatever the case, it was the *interior* mortifications that were most important. One needed to be fully disposed to the will of God. It was not in some heroic external mortification – minus the interior mortification – that would lead to holiness. This was a waste. In the end, God wants mercy, not sacrifice.

How these words of Innocent resonate with us today. We are all aware of the zealots of our age. They subscribe to the adage: "Rigor with Vigor!" We have seen over and over again where this ends up. Innocent challenges every one of us to engage in a real, sincere self-examination. We are engaged in a very important process of self-knowledge in our movement in holiness. Any self-deception will be a blind alley taking you nowhere. May we have the courage, strength and insight to lead honest and true lives that bring us closer to our loving God. As we move toward Easter may this be true for all of us.

Let us pray.

God, we know it is you who help us along the journey of life to see ourselves for who we truly are. We are able to acknowledge and accept ourselves because of your infinite grace. May this grace manifest itself in our lives during these last days of Lent, so that we can harvest a wealth of Easter joy

and live in the true spirit of the Resurrection. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Venerable Innocent of Berzo is a friend of God we welcome today.