

MORNING MEDITATION

Friday, Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Simplicity reveals the pure beauty of life.

Ezekiel 16:1-15 & 59-63

One of the major themes of Ezekiel's prophecies was the Holiness and faithfulness of God as constant, unchanging, everlasting. In this excerpt, Ezekiel uses a lengthy allegory in which the nation of Israel is described as a lone young girl, ignored and abandoned. God rescues from her abandonment. God chooses to love her and save her.

Ezekiel saw faithfulness as an integral part of holiness. God will reestablish the covenant so that the people may know His holiness and faithfulness.

Response: Isaiah 12:2-6

**God indeed is my savior;
I am confident and unafraid.
My strength and my courage is the Lord
And he has been my savior.**

Mathew 19:3-12

Ezekiel's message, "love is everlasting" (reflected in the first reading), is at the center of the teaching of Jesus in today's Gospel incident. God's love is everlasting. We are called to share that love which God has for us and learn to love the way God loves. Jesus taught, "Love one another as I have loved you". Jesus' comments on divorce must be understood in light of the call to love. Choices and commitments must be made in light of enduring love and not convenience.

Fidelity to the commitment to love is an awesome responsibility.

Saint of the day, August 12 - St. Jane Frances de Chantal and 18 other saints are remembered this day.

Jane Frances de Chantal was born in Dijon, France, on January 28, 1572. She was the daughter of the royalist president of the Parliament of Burgundy. Her mother died when Jane was 18 months old. Her father became the main influence on her education. She developed into a woman of beauty and refinement, lively and cheerful in temperament. She married the Baron de Chantal when she was 21 and then lived in the feudal castle of Bourbilly. Baron de Chantal was accidentally killed while hunting in 1601. Left a widow at 28, with four children, the broken-hearted baroness Jane Frances took a vow of

chastity. She gained a reputation as an excellent manager of the estates of her husband, as well as of her difficult father-in-law, while also providing alms and nursing care to needy neighbors.

Jane could not bring herself to forgive the individual who had accidentally caused her husband's death, until in 1604 she heard a Lenten sermon of the bishop of Geneva Francis de Sales, who preached on the subject of the love of God. They became close friends and de Sales became her spiritual director.

With the help of her spiritual director and friend Francis de Sales, she founded a contemplative religious order, "Sisters of the Visitation", when her children were grown. The order accepted women who were rejected by other orders because of poor health or age. The order had 86 houses before Chantal herself died at the age of 69 on December 13, 1641. She was canonized in 1767.

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