

MORNING MEDITATION

Friday, First Week of Lent

Want to find serenity? Move from self-reliance to God-reliance.

Ezekiel 18:21-28

The prophet says, repent and all will be well! Virtue means strength and life. Absence of virtue means weakness and eventual death. Ezekiel says, the Lord remembers virtuous life and forgets crimes of the past. You are called to live virtuous lives!

Psalm 130

**Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice;
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication!**

Mathew 5:20-26

In this excerpt, Mathew offers us very challenging messages of Jesus:

- Your holiness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees! You are called to live higher standards of life. You are called to live virtuous lives!
- All forms of prayer and worship call forth reconciliation. Sacrifice and worship assume genuine confession of sin, true penitence and forgiveness from the heart. Be reconciled with others! Be reconciled now!
- Be aware of the words you speak. Be sensitive and speak affirming, encouraging, healing, supporting, empowering words!
- Be aware of words that may insult or hurt others. Words could alienate you from the community - they break down relationship. Speak words that bring life and not death.
- Make peace in time and make it now! Now is the time for reconciliation and peace!

Genuine Forgiveness is Unconditional. Learn to forgive from the heart!

Saint of the Day, February 27 - St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows and 11 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Gabriel was born into a large family in Italy in 1838 and was baptized Francesco Possenti. He lost his mother when he was only four years old. He was educated by the Jesuits. St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows wasn't always a saint. He was nicknamed "the dancer" before embracing the religious life. While attending the Jesuit College at Spoleto, he embraced whatever kind of entertainment he could find. He especially enjoyed the dancing scene and was nicknamed "the dancer." His friends also called him "il damerino" (the ladies' man) for his popularity among women.

Having been cured twice of serious illnesses, he came to believe that God was calling him to the religious life. Young Francis wished to join the Jesuits but was turned down, probably because of his age, not yet 17. Following the death of a sister to cholera, his resolve to enter religious life became even stronger and he was accepted by the Passionists. Upon entering the novitiate, he was given the name Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Ever popular and cheerful, Gabriel quickly was successful in his effort to be faithful in little things. His spirit of prayer, love for the poor, consideration of the feelings of others, exact observance of the Passionist Rule as well as his bodily penances—always subject to the will of his wise superiors—made a deep impression on everyone.

His superiors had great expectations of Gabriel as he prepared for the priesthood, but after only four years of religious life symptoms of tuberculosis appeared. Ever obedient, he patiently bore the painful effects of the disease and the restrictions it required, seeking no special notice. He died peacefully on February 27, 1862, at age 24, having been an example to both young and old.

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