

MORNING MEDITATION

Saturday, Second Week of Advent

Our own imperfections should teach us to have a kind consideration of the faults of others and that is what forbearance means.

Sirach 48:1-4; 9-11

Sirach remembers the heroes of Jewish faith and tradition. Elijah, the prophet is remembered as a fiery, spirited person with words of power which could have come only from God himself. The Jews expected that Elijah would come again. It is Elijah's return that many were waiting for. Just as he was taken up into heaven in a chariot, he would return and usher in the messianic age in which all will see the re-establishment of Israel.

Psalm 80

O Shepherd of Israel, hearken,
From your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Rouse your power,
and come to save us.

Mathew 17:9-13

We have seen (above) how the Jews expected Elijah to return before the Messiah came and usher in the messianic age. He would return to be the herald and the forerunner of the messiah, "Behold, I will send you Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes...he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children..." (Malachi 4:5-6). Elijah would come and restore everything before the Messiah arrived and make the world fit for the Messiah to enter into. Elijah would be the reformer!

The season of Advent calls us to reform....to renew....to change...to make ourselves and our world fit for the Messiah King to enter!

They expected Elijah to come with fire and cleanse and restore everything. They expected the coming of an avenging herald and a conquering Messiah. Jesus tried to change their concept of the Messiah. He told them that the herald and the messiah had to suffer. It was through sacrificial love that the kingdom was going to be established not through conquering armies.

Let the season of Advent remind us of the sacrificial love of Jesus for us. Let it call us to give ourselves to others in love and in sacrifice.

Saint of the day, December 14 - St. John of the Cross and 15 other saints are remembered this day.

St. John of the Cross was born in Avila, Spain, in 1542. Ordained a Carmelite priest in 1567 at age 25, John met Teresa of Jesus and, like her, vowed himself to the primitive Rule of the Carmelites. As partner with Teresa and in his own right, John engaged in the work of reform, and came to experience the price of reform: increasing opposition, misunderstanding, persecution, imprisonment. He came to know the cross acutely and personally as he sat month after month in his dark, damp, narrow cell with only his God! Through his suffering, he experienced the light of Christ and wrote about his mystical experiences in prose and poems.

After nine months, John escaped from confinement and spent the next six weeks in the hospital recovering from his ordeal. In 1580, Pope Gregory formally authorized the split between the Discalced Carmelites and the other Carmelites, ending the rift within the order. During the last years of his life, John traveled and established new houses across Spain. John became ill and died at the age of 49 on December 14, 1591. He was canonized by Pope Benedict XIII in 1726.

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