

MORNING MEDITATION

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**The body is blessed by movement and action.
The spirit is blessed by silence, stillness and serenity.**

Isaiah 25:6-10

This excerpt describes Isaiah's vision of the whole creation moving toward a final day of unending celebration, to a joyful feast where people from all over the earth gather with God and his heavenly court. Rich food and choice wine symbolize fulfillment, complete satisfaction. A loving and benevolent and gracious God will provide for all people.

The invitation we hear in this excerpt reaches out with hope to those who hunger and thirst for God and all that God has to offer. Isaiah offers his dream of God being host at a rich banquet that is ready to welcome all people, not just a few selected people. What a wonderful thought for us to contemplate: the end of it all is going to be a celebration in which God stands ready to satisfy the hunger and thirst of every guest.

This excerpt and the Gospel of this Sunday, carry another significant thought for us to reflect on. Our gracious God, who is featured as the host of the banquet, is also concerned about the moral and spiritual well-being of the guests. Our God is pictured as leaning over and wiping the tears of those who mourn, removing the veil from their faces and so on. Our God invites the guests at the banquet to let go off past hurts and disappointments and rejoice in the gift of life and love being offered.

Take a moment! Be still! Listen to the invitation to rejoice! Respond to the invitation to be fed, nourished and strengthened by the gift of all that our gracious God offers!

Psalms 23

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Beside restful waters he leads me;
He refreshes my soul.....**

David had been a shepherd and he knew how to care for the sheep and what it cost him. He became shepherd of his people. He had to figure out how he should care for them. He knew the sheep well and now he must come to know his people, their ways, their needs, and their concerns. This problem gave him a new awareness of what God, the true shepherd, is like in his relationship to his people.

Like shepherd.... God knows his people just as they are in all their need, in their stubbornness and stupidity as well as in their value and worth. Like a shepherd...God reaches out, searches out the lost and keeps them safe. Like a shepherd....God provides food, drink, safety, light in darkness, Grace, comfort and strength in “dark valley moments”. This Psalm proclaims the enduring, steadfast, loyal, unconquerable love of God, the good shepherd, who will never let us slip out of his hands!

Philippians 4:12-14; 19-20

In this excerpt, we read about Paul expressing his gratitude for the support that the Philippian community gave him because of their concern for him. This is unusual for Paul. His usual custom was not accepting gifts or wages for his services. He preferred to work and earn his living. He saw in the gift of the Philippians what he called “fragrant aroma of an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God”. What he appreciates is their concern and thoughtfulness. He tells them that he knew what it meant to be content and to be in want. While the rest of the world sought to be self-sufficient, Paul sought to be God-sufficient. Paul could face anything because he had Christ in every situation.

The person who walks with Christ can cope with anything. Learn to walk with Christ.

Mathew 22:1-14

The invitation of the Lord is to a joyful celebration, to a banquet, to a feast. It is to great joy that the Christian is invited. It is joy that he loses when he refuses the invitation.

Be joyful! Be optimistic! Be people of Hope!

Things that make us refuse the invitation are not bad in themselves. One man went to his estate another to business, etc. We just become too pre-occupied and lose touch with that which is lasting, that which is eternal. Our priorities get mixed up. Often we become so busy with the affairs of life, that we forget life itself. Often, we also get so busy with the Lord’s work that we forget the Lord of the work!

Stay focused! Embrace life in its fullness, with all its joys and limitations!

God’s invitation is a call of Grace - a pure gift. Acceptance of this pure gift calls for certain responsibility. We cannot go on wearing the same garment that we were wearing before the call of Grace. We need a new garment - We are given a new garment in Baptism and reminded that we must bring this garment unstained into everlasting life!

Be clothed in a new purity, a new holiness, a new goodness.

Saint of the Day, October 11 - Saint John XXIII and 18 other saints are remembered this day

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was the firstborn son of a farming family in northern Italy. After his ordination in 1904, Angelo returned to Rome for canon law studies. He soon worked as his bishop's secretary, Church history teacher in the seminary, and as publisher of the diocesan paper. In 1921, he was made national director in Italy of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In 1925, he became a papal diplomat, serving first in Bulgaria, then in Turkey, and finally in France. With the help of Germany's ambassador to Turkey, Archbishop Roncalli helped save an estimated 24,000 Jewish people. Named a cardinal and appointed patriarch of Venice in 1953, he was finally a residential bishop. A month short of entering his 78th year, he was elected pope, taking the name John after his father and the two patrons of Rome's Cathedral.

His most famous encyclicals were *Mother and Teacher* (1961) and *Peace on Earth* (1963). Pope John XXIII enlarged the membership in the College of Cardinals and made it more international. He opened the Second Vatican Council in 1962 for the renewal of the Church. On his deathbed, he said: "It is not that the gospel has changed; it is that we have begun to understand it better. Those who have lived as long as I have...were enabled to compare different cultures and traditions, and know that the moment has come to discern the signs of the times, to seize the opportunity and to look far ahead." "Good Pope John" died on June 3, 1963. Saint John Paul II beatified him in 2000, and Pope Francis canonized him in 2014.

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