

MORNING MEDITATION

Wednesday, Fifth Week of Lent

**O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive,
so full of steadfast love for all who ask for your help.**

(Psalm 86:5)

Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95

King Nebuchadnezzar built a golden statue and commanded all men to worship it. Three young men who disobeyed the King's orders and remained faithful to their faith traditions were thrown into a furnace of extreme heat. They walked unharmed in the midst of fire. The king saw a fourth person, who looked "like a son of God", in the furnace with the three young men whom he had condemned. The King experienced a change of heart and praised the God of Israel.

Be faithful. Be strong. Stand strong in face of challenges, difficulties and struggles which life brings!

Daniel 3:52-56

**Bless are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers,
Praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.
And blessed is your holy and glorious name,
Praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.**

John 8:31-42

Jesus said: "If you remain in my word, you will be my disciples". There is much about "remaining in me" and "abiding in me" in the Gospel of John. There is also much about "sonship" in the Gospel of John. Today's Gospel passage reminds us that our conduct must reflect our "sonship" in God. Sons of God are sons of life and love. The disciples of Jesus must live the way Jesus lived and reflect the character of Jesus.

Being a disciple of Jesus means staying in touch with him, remaining in him, abiding in him – close, personal intimate relationship with Jesus. It is from the master that the disciple draws inspiration and strength and it is from the master that the disciple goes forth to fulfill his mission. The mission of the disciple is the mission of the master and it is the truth of the master that the disciple must proclaim.

So the disciple of Jesus must constantly learn from Jesus, the master and be

strengthened and graced by Jesus, the master. This is what gives the disciple the freedom to proclaim the good news he is sent to proclaim.

Saint of the Day, March 29 – St. Ludovico of Casoria and 13 other saints are remembered this day.

Ludovico was born Arcangelo Palmentieri in Casoria, near Naples, on March 11, 1814. He apprenticed as a cabinet maker in his youth. He entered the novitiate of the Order of Friars Minor on July 1, 1832, taking the name Ludovico. He was ordained a priest five years later and was appointed to teach philosophy, mathematics, and chemistry to the younger members of the Order at the Franciscan priory of San Pietro in Naples.

In 1847, he had a mystical experience which he later described as a cleansing. After that, he dedicated his life to the poor and the infirm, establishing a dispensary for the poor, two schools for African children, an institute for the children of nobility, as well as an institution for orphans, the deaf, and the speechless, and other institutes for the blind, elderly, and for travelers. In addition to an infirmary for friars of his province, he began charitable institutes in Naples, Florence, and Assisi.

To help continue these works of mercy, in 1859 he established the Gray Brothers, a religious community composed of men who formerly belonged to the Secular Franciscan Order. Three years later, he founded the Gray Sisters of St. Elizabeth for the same purpose.

Toward the beginning of his final, nine-year illness, Ludovico wrote a spiritual testament which described faith as “light in the darkness, help in sickness, blessing in tribulations, paradise in the crucifixion, and life amid death.” The local work for his beatification began within five months of Ludovico’s death. He was beatified in 1993 and canonized in 2014.

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