

# **MORNING MEDITATION**

## **Tuesday, Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Forbearance is not retaliating even when we are treated mean and ugly.**

### **Ephesians 5:21-32**

This is one of the often misunderstood and misinterpreted excerpts from the letter to the Ephesians. The exhortation in this excerpt seems to contradict common understanding about women and their role in family and society. I know many who take offense at the ideas expressed in this excerpt. However, I believe, we will have better insights into the meaning and value of the letter, if we see verse 21 as the basis of the whole chapter. Verse 21 says, "Defer to one another out of reverence for Christ."

To defer means to submit or yield out of respect/reverence. We are called to yield to one another in service out of reverence for Christ. We are the body of Christ and every member in the Body is special and important in the Body. One member is not more important or significant than the other. In a body each member submits to other members out of respect. Members are at the service of one another.

### **Psalm 128**

**Blessed are you who fear the Lord,  
Who walk in his ways!  
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;  
Blessed shall you be and favored.**

### **Luke 13:18-21**

Jesus speaks about a tiny mustard seed which when planted sprouts and grows into a shrub, yields more seeds and becomes a shelter for the birds of the air...He says, the Kingdom of God grows in similar ways...Great things happen from small beginnings.

**Let your life grow and become fruitful...it has the power within it to become fruitful! Give your life a chance, tenderly care for it, nurture it...let the Lord make it fruitful in his time! Let the birds of the air find shelter, a home...be approachable, be available, be hospitable, be welcoming and non-threatening...let people find you safe to be with...**

Jesus also speaks about a little yeast in the flour which has the power to change, transform the whole dough and give it a chance to be bread for others...

**Be open to change and be transformed by the Grace poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit.....Trust in the power of God's grace to transform you....**

## **Saint of the Day, October 29 - St. Narcissus of Jerusalem and 180 other saints are remembered this day.**

St. Narcissus was born towards the end of the first century around the year 99. He was almost 80-years-old when he was placed at the head of the church of Jerusalem, making him the 30th bishop of that see. In the year 195, he and Theophilus, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, presided together in a council of the bishops of Palestine held at Caesarea regarding the time Easter is celebrated. It was then decreed that the feast of Easter is to be kept always on a Sunday.

Three persistent sinners, fearing Narcissus' severity in the observance of religious discipline, accused him of an unimaginable crime. The sinners maintained they were telling the truth by adding additional security into their claims. If they were not speaking the truth, one wished he might perish by fire, another, that he might be struck with a leprosy, and the third, that he might lose his sight.

Nevertheless, their accusations were found to be false and Divine Retribution was called upon them. The first was burnt in his house, along with his whole family, by an accidental fire in the night. The second was struck with a universal leprosy; and the third, terrified by these examples, confessed the conspiracy and slander, and by the abundance of tears which he continually shed for his sins, lost his sight before his death.

Soon after, Narcissus decided to leave Jerusalem for a life of solitude. His reasons for doing so weren't clear. Some believed he left because he could not bear the shock of the bold slander, and others believed leaving had always been a wish of his. He spent several years undiscovered in his retreat, where he enjoyed all the happiness and advantage which a close conversation with God can bestow. After he departed, the neighboring bishops chose a new pastor for Narcissus' church until he decided to return.

Once Narcissus returned, years later, the faithful rejoiced and convinced Narcissus to once again assume the administration of the diocese. He accepted. As Narcissus started to reach an extreme old age, he made St. Alexander his coadjutor. A coadjutor is a bishop appointed to assist a diocesan bishop, and often also designated as his successor. St. Narcissus continued to serve his flock, and even other churches, by his diligent prayers and his earnest exhortations to unity and concord, as St. Alexander testifies in his letter to the Arsinoites in Egypt, where he says that Narcissus was at that time about 116 years old. St. Narcissus passed away soon after in AD 216, at the age of 117.

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