

MORNING MEDITATION

Friday, Fourth Week of Easter

**Forbearance is patience towards those who anger us,
hurt us and disappoint us.**

Acts 13:26-33

In this excerpt from Acts, we read about Paul speaking to the Jews settled in the cities of the Roman Empire. He spoke in their Synagogue about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and how this was in fulfillment of God's plan.

Psalm 2

**I myself have set up my king,
On Zion, my holy mountain.....
Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice before him;
With trembling pay homage to him.**

John 14:1-6

"Do not let your hearts be troubled..... there are many dwelling places in my father's house....."

This is one of the most encouraging passages in the Gospels. It is comforting and freeing to know that there is abundance in heaven, that there is room for all in the Father's house. We are used to overcrowded buses, trains, streets, hotels, and houses. We are used to accommodations being limited. In the heavenly Father's house, there is room for all, there is room for all in the heart of God.

I am the way, the truth and the life.....

There is a story of a missionary who was lost in the African jungle. When, finally, he reached a primitive village, he asked one of the villagers to lead him out. After more than an hour of hacking their way through thick jungle growth, the missionary said to his guide: "Are you sure, this is the way? Where is the path? His guide responded, "Sir, in this place there is no path. I am the path." This story takes us to the words of Christ: "I am the way, the truth and the life".

Turn to Jesus as your way, your truth and your life.

Saint of the Day, April 26 - St. Pedro de San José de Betancur and 11 others are remembered this day.

Betancourt was born at Vilaflor on the Island of Tenerife in 1626. As a small child, he worked as a shepherd, caring for his family's small flock, their only source of income, but also spending some time praying in a small cave in the arid region near the present-day town of El Médano. When the father's estate was seized by a moneylender in 1638 for failure to pay the family's debt, Peter was bound to his service in return for the monies still due him. During this period, his eldest brother, Mateo, migrated to Spain's colonies in the New World, possibly settling in Ecuador.

In 1649, at age 23, Betancourt was freed from his period of servitude and decided to follow his brother's example. He set sail for Guatemala, the capital of New Spain, in hopes of connecting with a relative engaged in government service there. By the time he had reached Havana, Cuba, he was out of money. He then spent a year serving a priest there who was also from Tenerife. He had to pay for his passage from that point by working on a ship which docked at Honduras from where he walked to Antigua Guatemala. When he arrived in La Antigua Guatemala, he was so destitute that he joined the bread line which the Franciscan friars had established to feed the poor. Eventually he found his uncle who then found him a job in a local textile factory.

In 1653 Betancourt enrolled in the Jesuit College of San Borgia to study for priesthood. When after three years he could not master the material, he withdrew from the school and abandoned this idea. After holding the position of sacristan for a while in a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, he rented a house in a suburb of the city called Calvary, and there taught reading and catechism to poor children.

Unable to receive holy orders, Betancourt became a Franciscan tertiary at the Franciscan friary of Costa Rica in Antigua Guatemala and adopted the religious name of Peter of Saint Joseph. He visited hospitals, jails, the unemployed and worked with the young. In 1658 Peter was given a hut which he converted into a hospital for the poor who had been discharged from the city hospital but still needed to convalesce. His zeal elicited benefactions from those around him and the bishop and governor supplied him with all the conveniences he required.

Three years later several individuals provided for the purchase of the houses surrounding the one Peter then occupied and on their site was erected a hospital in which he could better work. He himself worked with the masons. The hospital was thoroughly equipped and stocked. The institution, a hospital for the convalescent poor, was placed under the patronage of Our Lady of Bethlehem. Soon after there was a shelter for the homeless, a school for the poor, an oratory, and an inn for priests.

Not wanting to neglect the rich of Guatemala City, Pedro began walking through their part of town ringing a bell and inviting them to repent. Other men came to share in Pedro's work. Out of this group came the Bethlehemite Congregation, which won papal approval after Pedro's death. A Bethlehemite sisters' community, similarly, founded after Pedro's death, was inspired by his life of prayer and compassion.

He is sometimes credited with originating the Christmas Eve posadas procession in which people representing Mary and Joseph seek a night's lodging from their neighbors. The custom soon spread to Mexico and other Central American countries. Pedro died in 1667, and was canonized by Pope John Paul II in Guatemala City on July 30, 2002.

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