

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Peace and serenity comes from not wanting to be somewhere else,
doing something else and being someone else.**

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

The ancient author of this book tells us that God governs us with much “lenience” and judges us with “clemency” and that God patiently allows us time to realize our mistakes, repent, change and grow. He affirms this as the ground of our hope. God is a God of compassion and patience and a God who gives another chance and the gift of more time for conversion. Now it is through us that this patience and compassion of God must be revealed to the world. It is up to us now to offer the gift of Hope grounded in the forgiving and compassionate presence of God in the world.

God is ever faithful to himself and his compassionate nature. Fidelity shows itself in patience, in forgiveness and in giving the gift of more time and another chance. Be faithful...be patient...be forgiving.

Psalms 86

This Psalm is in four parts: (1) prayer for deliverance from difficult moments; (2) An affirmation of finding the kind and forgiving and most loving God; (3) Desire to know and walk in God’s truth; (4) Prayer for deliverance from enemies.

As you pray this Psalm, remember those facing difficult moments and hostile situations; those searching for God’s truth; those searching for the kindness and compassion of a loving God.

**You, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.
Hearken, O Lord, to my prayer,
and attend to the sound of my pleading.**

Romans 8:26-27

Paul tells the Christians in Rome that God knows all our weaknesses, even how difficult it is for us to pray. So, he gives us his spirit to help us in our weakness. Since we do not know how to pray as we should, the spirit prays in us, expresses our innermost longings.

So, listen to the spirit and move with the spirit as the spirit moves.

Mathew 13:24-43

Jesus told his listeners a parable about a man sowing good seed in his field. While he slept, an enemy sowed darnel or tares in the middle of his field. Both the good and the bad seeds sprouted, and the servants came forward to pull up the tares. But the man asked them to let them grow together to maturity for fear of destroying the good seed in the process of removing the bad. At harvest time, the good and the bad will be separated by those who know how to sort them out.

This parable teaches us many things: there are negative forces in the field and so be cautious; it is often difficult to distinguish between good and bad and so turn to those who have knowledge and wisdom for direction; don't be too quick to draw conclusions or make judgments; only God can and will make the final judgment. Pray for wisdom and prayerfully discern your choices. Trust in God and leave judgments in his hands.

Jesus spoke another parable 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...

Be content with small beginnings. 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...be patient...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 spoke 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....be strong, only the strong can change.....be transformed by the Grace poured into heart by the Holy Spirit.....Trust in the power of God's grace to transform you....

The disciples asked Jesus to explain to them the parable of the weeds in the field. Jesus used the parable to reveal to them many important truths about God and God's ways. Among them the following are important for us to reflect and pray about.

Take a moment.... prayerfully reflect over the following:

- **there are negative forces in the field and so be cautious.**
- **it is often difficult to distinguish between good and bad and so turn to those who have knowledge and wisdom for guidance and direction.**

- **don't be too quick to draw conclusions or make judgments; only God can and will make the final judgment, so leave the judgment to God....pray for the gift of discernment**

Saint of the day, July 19 - Saint Mary MacKillop and 12 other saints are remembered this day

Mary Helen MacKillop was born on January 15, 1842 in Melbourne. She was educated at private schools and by her father. She started to work at the age of 16 as a clerk in a stationery store in Melbourne. To provide for her needy family, she took a job as governess at the estate of her aunt and uncle in South Australia where she was to look after their children and teach them. Mary grew up in a family that faced constant financial struggles. As a young woman she was drawn to religious life but could not find an existing order of Sisters that met her needs. In 1860, she met Father Julian Woods, who became her spiritual director. Together they founded a new community of women, the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, also known as the Josephite Sisters. Its members were to staff schools especially for poor children, as well as orphanages, and do other works of charity.

As the congregation grew, so did Mary MacKillop's problems. Her priest-friend proved unreliable in many ways and his responsibilities for direction of the Sisters were removed. Meanwhile, Mary had the support of some local bishops as she and her Sisters went about their work. But the bishop in South Australia, aging and relying on others for advice, briefly excommunicated Mary, charging her with disobedience and dispensed 50 of her Sisters from their vows. He ultimately rescinded his order of excommunication.

Mary insisted that her congregation should be governed by an elected mother general answerable to Rome, not to the local bishop. There also were disputes about whether or not the congregation could own property. In the end, Rome proved to be Mary's best source of support. After a long wait, official approval of the congregation and on how it was to be governed came from Pope Leo XIII.

Despite her struggles with Church authorities, Mary MacKillop and her Sisters were able to offer social services that few, if any, government agencies in Australia could provide. They served Protestants and Catholics alike. They worked among the aborigines. They taught in schools and orphanages and served unmarried mothers.

By the time Mary was approaching the end of her life, the congregation was thriving. She died in 1909 at the age of 67. Pope John Paul II beatified her in 1995 and in 2010, Pope Benedict XVI canonized her. She became Australia's first saint.

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