

MORNING MEDITATION

Saturday, Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

**Every breath we take, every step we take, can be filled
with peace, joy, and serenity.**

(Thich Nhat Hanh)

1 Kings 3:4-13

God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, “Ask something of me and I will give it to you.” Solomon prayed for wisdom...an understanding heart and the gift to know right from wrong. Because he did not ask anything for himself, for his personal gain, for wealth or for long life, God promised him, “a heart so wise and understanding that there has never been anyone like you...and riches and glory...”

Pray for the wisdom of God. Pray that God will help you make wise choices.

Psalm 119

**With all my heart I seek you;
let me not stray from your commands.
Within my heart I treasure your promise,
that I may not sin against you.**

Mark 6:30-34

On their return from their first mission, the apostles reported to Jesus what they had done and taught. Jesus invited them to a quiet place to rest and be with him. It is important to do the work of the Lord. It is just as important to take time to be with him in silence and in prayer, to rest with him and be empowered by his presence. Cultivate a habit of being in touch with the Lord.

Jesus and his disciples went to a deserted place to be by themselves. People came to know about it and reached the place ahead of them. Jesus saw people in need and reached out to them. He and his disciples had gone to the place for rest. Seeing people in need, Jesus was moved with compassion and ministered to them.

It is important and urgent to take time to rest, to pray, to spend time with family and friends and to spend time with the Lord. It is just as important to reach beyond our needs to the greater and more urgent needs of others. It is important to maintain a healthy balance between prayer and work, between work and relationships, between taking care of personal needs and the needs of others.

Saint of the Day, February 7 - Pope Pius IX and 20 other saints are remembered this day.

Giovanni Maria Mastai Ferretti was born on May 13, 1792 in Senigallia, Italy. He was the ninth child born into the noble family of Girolamo dei conti Ferretti and was baptized on the same day of his birth with the name of Giovanni Maria Battista Pietro Pellegrino Isidoro. He was educated at the Piarist College in Volterra and in Rome. As a young man, he was engaged to be married to an Irishwoman, Miss Foster (the daughter of the Bishop of Kilmore), and arrangements were made for the wedding. His parents opposed the marriage and he did not appear at the church on the appointed day.

As a theology student in his hometown Sinigaglia in 1814, he met Pope Pius VII, who had returned from French captivity. In 1815, he entered the Papal Noble Guard but was soon dismissed after an epileptic seizure. He threw himself at the feet of Pius VII, who elevated him and supported his continued theological studies. He was ordained a priest on April 10, 1819. He initially worked as the rector of the Tata Giovanni Institute in Rome. Shortly before his death, Pius VII sent him as Auditor to Chile and Peru in 1823 and 1825 to assist the Apostolic Nuncio. When he returned to Rome, the successor of Pius VII, Pope Leo XII appointed him head of the hospital of San Michele in Rome (1825–1827) and canon of Santa Maria in Via Lata.

Pope Leo XII appointed him Archbishop of Spoleto in 1827 at the age of 35 and cardinal in 1839. His episcopal priorities were the formation of priests through improved education and charities. He became known for visiting prisoners in jail, and for programs for street children. He was chosen the 255th pope in the conclave of 1846. He was the last pope to hold temporal power, that is, to rule a secular state. His election raised the hopes of patriotic and liberal circles of Catholics. One of his first acts was an amnesty for all political prisoners. He defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on December 8, 1854. Celebrated the First Vatican Council from 1869 to 1870, which was interrupted by the Franco-Prussian War. This council defined the dogma of papal infallibility. He supported several reforms in the Papal States. He created 123 cardinals. Gained a reputation for being a patriotic, and reforming Pope.

He died on February 7, 1878 in Vatican City of natural causes. Pius IX's cause for beatification was one of the longest and most difficult in Church history. Begun under Pius X on February 11, 1907, re-launched by Benedict XV without much success, later by Pius XI, and then by Pius XII on December 7, 1954. The decree on the heroic exercise of theological and cardinal virtues was finally promulgated by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on July 6, 1985, allowing his proclamation as Venerable. Among Pius IX's most outstanding virtues were his unconditional love for the Church, his charity, and his high regard for the priesthood and for missionaries.

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