

MORNING MEDITATION

Saturday, Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Be still when confused and pray when you are still
and you will find peace and serenity.**

Habakkuk 1:12 – 2:4

Around 609 B.C. when Judah was being invaded, there was widespread idolatry and political turmoil. Habakkuk began reflecting on many serious questions: Why does God allow evil? Why does the innocent suffer at the hands of the wicked?

This seems to be the first time that someone questioned the ways of God and calling God to account for his government of the world. The conclusion of the dialogue was: The just may suffer - But the just shall live eternally because of his faith - Good will triumph.

Psalm 9

**The Lord is a stronghold of the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of distress.
They trust in you, who cherish your name,
For you forsake not those who seek you, O Lord.**

Mathew 17:14-20

In this excerpt, Jesus teaches us the value of faith. Our faith is God's gift to us. It is not up to us to compare our faith with those of others. We need to trust the faith we have and let that faith carry us.... let that faith grow and become fruitful in love and service.

"Faith the size of a mustard seed" - little faith or great faith, shallow faith or deep faith - trust your faith and let it grow. With faith in God and in God's gift of grace, all things become possible - "Nothing would be impossible for you", today's Gospel excerpt says.

Jesus teaches us that good intentions are not enough. We must see those good desires and intentions as God's gifts to us...they are redeeming desires, they are grace-filled desires and we must respond to them so that they become redemptive for us. St. Augustine tells us that the desire for God is itself a gift from God.

Saint of the Day, August 8 - St. Dominic and 16 other saints are remembered this day.

Dominic was born in Caleruega, in Old Castile, Spain. He was named after Saint Dominic of Silos. Dominic was educated in the schools of Palencia where he devoted six years to the arts and four to theology. In 1191, when Spain was desolated by famine, young Dominic gave away his money and sold his clothes, furniture, and even precious manuscripts to feed the hungry. In 1194, around age twenty-five, Dominic joined the Canons Regular in the Cathedral of Osma, following the rule of Saint Augustine.

On a journey through France with his bishop, Dominic came face to face with the then virulent Albigensian heresy at Languedoc. The Albigensians or Cathari, "the pure ones" held that there were two principles one good and one evil in the world. All matter is evil. Hence they denied the Incarnation and the sacraments. On the same principle, they abstained from procreation and took a minimum of food and drink.

Dominic sensed the need for the Church to combat this heresy and was commissioned to be part of the preaching crusade against it. He saw immediately why the preaching crusade was not succeeding: the ordinary people admired and followed the ascetical heroes of the Albigenses. Understandably, they were not impressed by the Catholic preachers who traveled with horse and retinues, stayed at the best inns and had servants. Dominic, therefore, with three Cistercians, began itinerant preaching according to the gospel ideal. He continued this work for 10 years, being successful with the ordinary people but not with the leaders.

His fellow preachers gradually became a community, and in 1215 Dominic founded a religious house at Toulouse, the beginning of the Order of Preachers or Dominicans. Dominic saw the need for a new type of organization to address the spiritual needs of the growing cities of the era, one that would combine dedication and systematic education, with more organizational flexibility than either monastic orders or the secular clergy. He subjected himself and his companions to the monastic rules of prayer and penance; and meanwhile Bishop Foulques gave them written authority to preach throughout the territory of Toulouse. In 1215, Dominic and Foulques went to Rome to secure the approval of the Pope, Innocent III. Dominic returned to Rome a year later, and was finally granted written authority in December 1216 and January 1217 by the new pope, Honorius III for an order to be named "The Order of Preachers" ("Ordo Praedicatorum", or "O.P.," popularly known as the Dominicans or Order of Preachers.

Although he traveled extensively to maintain contact with his growing brotherhood of friars, Dominic made his headquarters in Rome. Dominic abstained from meat, observed fasts and periods of silence, selected the worst accommodations and the meanest clothes, never allowed himself the luxury of a bed and frequently traveled barefoot. Dominic died at the age of fifty one on August 6, 1221 and was canonized in 1234.

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