

MORNING MEDITATION

Friday, Fifth Week of Easter

**Simplicity and hospitality make your house
a welcoming place for your guests.**

Acts 15:22-31

The apostles and the elders came to the following decision regarding the Mosaic Law, “It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and ours too, not to lay on you any burden beyond that which is strictly necessary.....” They sent representatives to the different communities with a letter announcing the decision and the people accepted it with delight. Great respect was paid to the apostles and the elders and their decisions.

Be docile to the Holy Spirit! Listen and be obedient to the Spirit’s promptings! Do not let your standards, plans and projects get in the way of the movement of the Holy Spirit!

Psalm 57

**My heart is steadfast, O Lord, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and chant praise.
Awake, O my soul; awake, lyre and harp!
I will awake the dawn.**

John 15:12-17 Love one another as I have loved you.

It is a challenge to reach out to others in love - “not to withhold” our love from others. We are called to give what we have received as gifts from the Lord. Jesus calls us his friends, not slaves....it was his choice, not ours. Now it is up to us to respond. It is never sufficient to abstain from wrong-doing or sin or evil. We are called to be good and to do good - a good word and a good deed proclaim who we are. We have many opportunities to share God’s gift of Love and life.

The standard of love is NOT an eye for an eye or love others as they love us or love others as we love ourselves...it is “Love one another as I have loved you”. The standard is to love as God loves us, as Jesus loves us....it is joyful, unconditional, unconquerable, invincible, non-possessive, self-sacrificing, enduring, steadfast love! May your love transcend competition and control...May your love transcend ill feelings, jealousies, hatred, etc....May you reach out in selfless and generous service!

Saint of the Day, May 20 - St. Bernadine of Siena and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

Bernardine was born on September 8, 1380 in a noble family in Massa Marittima, Italy. He was orphaned at six and was raised by a pious aunt. In 1397, after a course of civil and canon law, he joined the Confraternity of Our Lady attached to the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala church. When he was 20, the plague was at its height in his hometown of Siena. Sometimes as many as 20 people died in one day at the hospital. Bernardine offered to run the hospital and, with the help of other young men, nursed patients there for four months. He escaped the plague but was so exhausted that a fever confined him for several months. He spent another year caring for a beloved aunt whose parents had died when he was a child, and at her death began to fast and pray to know God's will for him.

At the age of 22, he entered the Franciscan Order. He was ordained a priest in 1404 and was commissioned as a preacher the next year. He always traveled on foot, sometimes speaking for hours in one place, then doing the same in another town. Most preachers of the time either read a prepared speech or recited a rhetorical oration. Instead of remaining cloistered and preaching only during the liturgy, Bernardine preached directly to the public. For more than 30 years, he preached all over Italy and played a great part in the religious revival of the early fifteenth century. Although he had a weak and hoarse voice, he is said to have been one of the greatest preachers of his time. His style was simple, familiar, and abounding in imagery.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Bernardine chose his themes not from the daily liturgy, but from the ordinary lives of the people of Siena. He selected biblical themes to focus on the immediate interests of his audience. He travelled from place to place, remaining nowhere more than a few weeks. These journeys were all made on foot. In the towns, the crowds assembled to hear him were at times so great that it became necessary to erect a pulpit in the marketplace. The sermons often lasted three or four hours.

He was especially known for his devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. He devised a symbol—IHS, the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek—in Gothic letters on a blazing sun. This was to displace the superstitious symbols of the day. The devotion spread, and the symbol began to appear in churches, homes and public buildings. Opposition arose from those who thought it a dangerous innovation. Three attempts were made to have the pope take action against him, but Bernardine's holiness, orthodoxy, and intelligence were evidence of his faithfulness. He died on May 20, 1444 at L'Aquila in the Abruzzi and is buried in the Basilica of San Bernardino. He was canonized on May 24, 1450 by Pope Nicholas V.

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