

MORNING MEDITATION

Wednesday, Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Do your work, then step back. The only path to serenity.
(Lao Tzu)

1 Kings 10:1-10

The queen of Sheba heard about the Wisdom of Solomon and came to test him with subtle questions on every subject that she was interested in. She was amazed, impressed and inspired by the Wisdom of Solomon far beyond her expectations. She gifted the king with the best from her country as a sign of her respect and gratitude.

Pray for God's wisdom for guidance, direction, and discernment in making choices.

Psalm 37

**Commit to the Lord your way;
Trust in him and he will act,
He will make justice dawn for you like the light;
Bright as the noonday shall be your vindication.**

Mark 7:14-23

Jesus had talked about how they had made an art of observing details of the law while ignoring the very purpose of the law...how they depended on clever arguments and debates, ingenious interpretations of legal experts for their guidance and failed to depend on listening to God and God's ways. They nullified God's law in favor of their traditions and practices.

They had considered many things and events and situations that could defile a person and make him impure or unclean. In this excerpt, Jesus addressed these sources of defilement. Things are neither clean nor unclean in a religious or spiritual sense of the term. What defiles a person is his evil design. Jesus invited his listeners to go beyond what is done to the motivation or the intent behind what is done. Jesus even gives us a list of things that come from within that makes a person unclean. They all refer to inner designs from which evil actions proceed.

Jesus calls his listeners to self-examination, a soul searching – not just what is done, but the motivation behind whatever is done.

Saint of the Day, February 11 - Our Lady of Lourdes and 8 other saints are remembered this day.

On February 11, 1858, Mary appeared to 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous. This was the first of 18 visits. When Bernadette asked the Lady's identity, she replied, "I am the Immaculate Conception." On December 8, 1854, just four years earlier, Pope Pius IX had proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in the apostolic constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*. The Blessed Virgin, through Bernadette, had come to call sinners to a change of heart. Her message was a request for prayer and penance. She also instructed Bernadette to tell the priests that a chapel was to be built on the site and processions held.

Bernadette was a sickly child of poor parents. Their practice of the Catholic faith was scarcely more than lukewarm. Bernadette could pray the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Creed. She also knew the prayer of the Miraculous Medal: "O Mary conceived without sin."

During interrogations Bernadette gave an account of what she saw. It was "something white in the shape of a girl." It was "a pretty young girl with a rosary over her arm." Her white robe was encircled by a blue girdle. She wore a white veil. There was a yellow rose on each foot. A rosary was in her hand. Bernadette was also impressed by the fact that the lady did not use the informal form of address (*tu*), but the polite form (*vous*). The humble virgin appeared to a humble girl and treated her with dignity.

Through that humble girl, Mary revitalized and continues to revitalize the faith of millions of people. People began to flock to Lourdes from other parts of France and from all over the world. In 1862 Church authorities confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions and authorized the devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes. The Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes became worldwide in 1907.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs