

MORNING MEDITATION

Wednesday, Seventh Week of Easter

Great tranquility of heart is his who cares for neither praise nor blame.

(Thomas A. Kempis)

Acts 20:28-38

Paul entrusted the care of the Church at Ephesus to the elders and called them to “keep careful watch....and shepherd the church! He warned them about those who would distort the truth. He prayed for them and with them and expressed deep felt affection for them before he bid farewell to them, knowing that he would never see them again...

Psalm 68

**You kingdoms of the earth sing to God,
Chant praise to the Lord,
Who rides on the heights of the ancient heavens,
Behold his voice resounds, the voice of power:
“Confess the power of God!”**

John 17:11-19

Jesus prayed for the safety and protection of his disciples. He knew that he was leaving them in the world. He knew that they didn't belong to the world's standards, that they had to live a different life style and that they would face difficult situations.

Be safe! Pray for those who are unsafe to be with and pray for those living in unsafe conditions! Pray for those who are exposed to difficult situations!

Jesus prayed that the disciples would be happy... have joy to its fullness. He said to them that all he said and did was to bring them joy to its fullness.

Remember those who do not experience joy in life. Pray with those who are sad, lonely, depressed, unhappy.....

Jesus prayed that the disciples may be consecrated in truth. To “consecrate” means to empower a person with the necessary qualities of mind and heart and character to fulfill his/her mission in life.

Pray that you will be empowered with the necessary qualities of character to fulfill the mission God has given you!

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

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

