

# **MORNING MEDITATION**

## **Thursday, Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Want to simplify your life? Learn to be content with “enough.”  
Let enough be your abundance!**

### **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

Jeremiah says that the Lord will make a new covenant, not like the one that was broken. The Lord will write his law in the hearts of all people from the least to the greatest because the Lord will forgive the sins of his people and “remember their sins no more”.

### **Psalm 51**

A clean heart create for me, God;  
Renew in me a steadfast spirit.  
Do not drive me from your presence,  
Nor take from me your Holy Spirit.

### **Mathew 16:13-23**

Jesus changes the name of Simon to Peter. Change of name implies radical change, change of character and life-style...becoming a new person.

Jesus asked Peter, “Who do you say I am?” This is a question of relationship - not information. The question was about who Jesus had become for Peter and the other disciples. It is a question that all of us must continue to answer...

“You are the Messiah!” “You are the rock!” These are responses of commitment, of covenant, of lasting, enduring, eternal relationships...Jesus and Peter defined each other and affirmed each other in lasting relationship.

Jesus affirms that this confession and commitment are not born of reason or logic but of Grace... “flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my heavenly father...” Peter’s confession is affirmed and proclaimed as a gift of Grace. As St. Augustine would say, even our longing for God is God’s gift.

**Jesus also points out that those of us who confess and commit ourselves to him must learn to live in conflict and tension...that the Father will gift us with the power to live out our commitment... “the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail...”**

**Saint of the day, August 4 - St. John Vianney and 13 other saints are remembered this day.**

Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney (John Vianney) was born on May 8, 1786 in Dardilly, France and was baptized the same day. As his education had been disrupted by the French Revolution, he struggled in his studies, particularly with Latin, but worked hard to learn. In 1802, the Catholic Church was reestablished in France and religious freedom and peace spread throughout the country. Unfortunately, in 1809, John was drafted into Napoleon Bonaparte's armies.

Two days into his service, John fell ill and required hospitalization. As his troop continued, he stopped in at a church where he prayed. There he met a young man who volunteered to return him to his group, but instead led him deep into the mountains where military deserters met. John lived with them for one year and two months. He used the name Jerome Vincent and opened a school for the nearby village of Les Noes' children.

John remained in Les Noes and hid when gendarmes (armed force) came in search of deserters until 1810, when deserters were granted amnesty. Now free, John returned to Écully and resumed his ecclesiastic studies. He was ordained priest on August 12, 1815 and eventually appointed parish priest of the Ars parish.

When he began his priestly duties, Fr. Vianney realized many were either ignorant or indifferent to religion as a result of the French Revolution. Many danced and drank on Sundays or worked in their fields. Fr. Vianney spent much time in confession and often delivered homilies against blasphemy and dancing. He spent 11 to twelve hours each day working to reconcile people with God. In the summer months, he often worked 16-hour days and refused to retire. His fame spread until people began to travel to him in 1827. Within thirty years, it is said that he received up to 20,000 pilgrims each year.

By 1853, Fr. Vianney had attempted to run away from Ars four times, each attempt with the intention of becoming a monk but decided after the final time that it was not to be. Six years later, he passed away on August 4, 1859 at the age of 73 and was canonized on May 31, 1925.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs