

MORNING MEDITATION

Thursday, Third Week of Lent

**You are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger
and abounding in steadfast love.**

(Nehemiah 9:17)

Jeremiah 7:23-28

The well-being of a nation depends on its spiritual and moral strength more than the abundance of material wealth. There can be no liberation without walking in the ways of the Lord. Our Lenten journey is a journey of self-surrender.

We are called to walk in loving obedience to God and generous service to our neighbor.

Psalm 95

**Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord;
Let us acclaim the rock of our salvation.
Let us greet him with thanksgiving;
Let us joyfully sing praise to him.**

Luke 11:14-23

Slander is a very cruel thing, may be, one of the worst things that you can do to others. Slander often sticks because of the tendency of many to think the worst of themselves and others and some prefer to hear the derogatory rather than the complimentary story.

Do you have a tendency to think the worst of yourself or others? Do you have a tendency to deliberately impute low motives to someone you dislike? Do you have a tendency to repeat unpleasant or slanderous or malicious stories and hurt the reputation of others?

One cannot follow Jesus in a half-hearted manner. One is either totally committed to the world or the Lord. We cannot have divided loyalties. There is no neutral position in the Kingdom of God. You have to take a stand. You are either on the way or in the way.

Is your commitment becoming more and more undivided, complete and whole?

Are you on the way? How is your journey progressing? Are you aware of anything on the way that seems to get in your way?

Saint of the day, March 16 - St. Clement Mary Hofbauer and 13 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Clement Hofbauer was born in Tasswitz, Moravia (now the Czech Republic) on December 26, 1751. In his early youth, after the death of his father, he worked as an apprentice baker. Having become a servant in the Norbertine Abbey at Klosterbruck, he was able to follow the call to the priesthood by completing first his secondary schooling and then his catechetical, philosophical, and theological studies in Vienna, Austria. During this time he made yearly pilgrimages to Rome, where he encountered the Redemptorists.

One day after serving Mass at the Cathedral of St. Stephen, he called a carriage for two ladies waiting there in the rain. In their conversation they learned that he could not pursue his priestly studies because of a lack of funds. They generously offered to support both John and his friend Thaddeus, in their seminary studies. The two went to Rome, where they were drawn to Saint Alphonsus' vision of religious life and to the Redemptorists. The two young men were ordained together in 1785.

Drawing candidates to the congregation, they were able to send missionaries to Poland, Germany, and Switzerland. These foundations had to be abandoned because of the political and religious tensions of the times. After 20 years of difficult work, Clement Mary himself was imprisoned and expelled from the country. He returned to Vienna, where he was to live and work the final 12 years of his life. He quickly became "the apostle of Vienna," hearing the confessions of the rich and the poor, visiting the sick, acting as a counselor to the powerful, sharing his holiness with all in the city. His crowning work was the establishment of a Catholic college in his beloved city.

Persecution followed Clement Mary, and there were those in authority who were able for a while to stop him from preaching. An attempt was made at the highest levels to have him banished. But his holiness and fame protected him and prompted the growth of the Redemptorists. Due to his efforts, the congregation was firmly established north of the Alps by the time of his death in 1820. Clement might be called the second founder of the Redemptorists, as it was he who carried the congregation of Saint Alphonsus Liguori to the people north of the Alps.

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