

MORNING MEDITATION

Monday, Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

**Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!
For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord
endures forever. Praise the Lord!**

(Psalm 117:1-2)

Hebrews 11:32-40

The author remembers the heroes and saints of the Old Testament and the sufferings and trials they endured. He sees the fulfillment of their sufferings in Christ and all of us being included in the plan of fulfillment in and through Christ.

Psalm 31

**How great is the goodness, O Lord,
Which you have in store for those who fear you,
And which, toward those who take refuge in you,
You show in the sight of the children of men.**

Mark 5:1-20

Encounter with Jesus brings freedom to a man who was demon-possessed.

Encounter with Jesus is always a freeing experience.

Jesus sends the demons into the swine. The place of demons is with the swine - not with people. The man and his neighbors who were convinced that they were under oppression of demons encountered a greater power - a power that does not oppress, but frees.

The power of God, the power of Grace, the power of love is always freeing - never oppressive.

The value of a person can not be compared with the value of a herd of swine. But people did compare. It did not matter that a man regained his good senses - all that mattered was that their pigs perished. So they were afraid - they had "some-thing" to lose and that "some-thing" was more important than the loss of people.

Stay focused on higher values. Helping people is more important than profit or gain.

Saint of the day, January 30 - Saint Hyacintha of Mariscotti and 15 other saints are remembered this day.

Hyacintha was born to a wealthy and prominent family in Vignanello, Italy on March 16, 1585. Her father was Count Antonio of Mariscotti and her mother descended from the princely Roman family of the Orsini. After her younger sister had been given in marriage, Clarice (as Hyacintha was then called), entered the convent of the Tertiaries at Viterbo as a secular Tertiary. However, she supplied herself with enough food, clothing, and other goods to live a very comfortable life amid these sisters who had pledged to mortification and self-denials. Her rooms were furnished with much worldly equipments. The spirit of mortification, penance and self-denial, that was an integral part of the life of a Tertiary, was not yet an ideal for Hyacinth.

A serious and strange illness required that her confessor bring Holy Communion to her room. When he saw the worldly and frivolous objects in her cell, the confessor advised her to live more humbly. Following her confessor's advice, she went to the common dining hall and with a rope around her neck, begged forgiveness of her fellow sisters for the scandal she had given them. She gave up her fine clothes and special foods and became very penitential in food and clothing. She was ready to do the most humble work in the convent. She developed a special devotion to the sufferings of Christ and by her penances became an inspiration to the sisters in her convent. She died on January 30, 1640 and was canonized in 1807.

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