

MORNING MEDITATION

Monday, Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Want to simplify? Establish routines.
Routines can help you keep your life simple.**

Jeremiah 28:1-17

Jeremiah tried to bring hope to his people. He encouraged his people to trust in God to free them from the “yoke” of Babylon and give them freedom. The peace that they would find is not the work of men but the gift of God.

Seek the peace that only God can give you.

Psalms 119

**Remove from me the way of falsehood,
and favor me with your law.
Take not the word of truth from my mouth,
for in your ordinance is my hope.**

Matthew 14:13-21

After feeding five thousand with five loaves and a couple of fish, Jesus withdrew to the mountain alone for prayer. He sent the disciples ahead of him to the other side of the lake and they had to face strong headwinds. Jesus came to them on the troubled waters.

The Lord reaches out to us when we are in troubled waters and are facing strong headwinds. Be confident...stand strong.... hold your heads high!

The disciples were so frightened that they did not recognize the Lord reaching out to them. Fear has a way of blinding our eyes while simple faith opens our eyes. Peter saw his master and wanted to walk across to him over the troubled waters and he did. Peter lost his focus.....he saw how headstrong the wind was.....he became frightened, lost his strength and began to sink into the deep water. Faith gives us a new vision...a vision of strength, of the presence of something and of someone far greater than ourselves in whom we can put our trust and face what must be faced.

Stay focused! Keep your eyes on the Lord and his strength!

Saint of the day, August 1 - St. Alphonsus Liguori and 33 other saints are remembered this day.

Alphonsus Maria de Liguori was born on September 27, 1696 in Marianella near Naples, Italy. His parents provided him with an exceptional education in philosophy, literature, and the arts. At the University of Naples, he received, at the age of 16, a doctorate in both canon and civil law. When he was 18, like many nobles, he joined the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mercy with whom he cared for the sick at the hospital for "incurables," washing afflicted bodies, feeding the helpless, changing bedclothes and devoting himself to works of mercy and compassion.

Following his father's will he became a lawyer and before he was 20, he was regarded as one of the most gifted lawyers working in the kingdom of Naples. After losing what was the most important court case he had ever taken on, Alphonsus left the legal profession to enter the priesthood, much to the disappointment of his father. He was ordained a priest in 1726 and concentrated his pastoral efforts on parish missions, hearing confessions, forming Christian groups.

He founded the Redemptorist congregation in 1732. It was an association of priests and brothers living a common life, dedicated to the imitation of Christ, and working mainly in popular missions for peasants in rural areas. The congregation was formally approved 17 years later. Alphonsus' great pastoral reforms were in the pulpit and confessional, replacing the pompous oratory of the time with simplicity, and the rigorism of Jansenism with kindness. He fought for the liberation of moral theology from the rigidity of Jansenism. His moral theology, which went through 60 editions in the century following him, concentrated on the practical and concrete problems of pastors and confessors.

He was made bishop at the age of 66 and at once instituted a thorough reform of his diocese. At the age of 71, he was afflicted with rheumatic pains which left incurable bending of his neck. He suffered a final 18 months of "dark night" scruples, fears, temptations against every article of faith and every virtue, interspersed with intervals of light and relief, when ecstasies were frequent. He died August 1, 1787 at Pagani, Italy

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