

MORNING MEDITATION

Monday, Fourth Week of Easter

Stillness is where we find our true essence.

(Eckhart Tolle)

Acts 11:1-18

As the Church continued to grow, new problems and issues began to surface. The Gentiles welcomed the word of God and were accepted into the Church. This set off a major controversy about the obligations of the Mosaic Law. In this passage from Acts, we read about the reasons that Peter gave for accepting the Gentiles into the Church without imposing the obligations of the Mosaic Law. The main thought was, "if God has gifted the Gentiles with the life-giving spirit, who are we to impose restrictions?"

This is a good question for all of us, "who are we to impose restrictions on God's gift of Grace?"

Psalm 42

**As the hind longs for the running waters,
So my soul longs for you, O God.
Athirst is my soul for God, the living God,
When shall I go and behold the face of God.**

John 10:11-18

Jesus speaks of himself as a caring, listening, sensitive and self-sacrificing shepherd, who has an intimate and very personal knowledge of the sheep. This is the real, good shepherd who is born to his task. The sheep became his friends and companions and he thought of the sheep before he thought of himself. The false shepherd came to the job as a way of making money, for the pay he could get, with no sense of responsibility to the sheep.

The good shepherd worked and sacrificed himself for the sheep and the false one worked mainly for the money, for himself. The person who works only for a reward thinks only of the rewards, the person who works for love, thinks of the people he loves. Jesus was the good shepherd who so loved his sheep that he risked his life and gave his life totally for the sheep that he loved.

Look to Jesus as your good shepherd, leader and friend! And like the good shepherd, be a caring, sensitive and self-sacrificing leader! Learn to make these qualities yours in your ministry as a parent or educator or pastor or political or social leader.

Saint of the Day, April 27 - St. Zita of Lucca and 17 other saints are remembered this day.

Zita was born into a poor family in Tuscany in the village of Monsagrati around the year 1212. At the age of 12, she became a servant in the Fatinelli household. For a long time, she was unjustly despised, overburdened, reviled, and often beaten by her employers and fellow servants for her hard work and obvious goodness. The constant abuse was powerless to deprive her of her inward peace, her love of those who wronged her, and her respect for her employers. By this meek and humble self-restraint, Zita at last succeeded in overcoming the malice of her fellow-servants and her employers, so much so that she was placed in charge of all the affairs of the house. Her faith had enabled her to persevere against their abuse, and her constant piety gradually moved the family to a religious awakening.

Zita considered her work as an employment assigned to her by God, and as part of her penance, and obeyed her master and mistress in all things as being placed over her by God. She always rose several hours before the rest of the family to pray and to attend mass every morning with great devotion before beginning the work of the day. Throughout her life, Zita found a source of strength and consolation in the Mass and Holy Communion, which frequently moved her to tears. Despite her many responsibilities, she frequently set aside time to recall God's presence through contemplative prayer. After foretelling her own death and spiritually preparing for it, Saint Zita died in Lucca on April 27, 1271.

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