

MORNING MEDITATION

Friday, Third Week of Lent

**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.**

(Psalm 51:1)

Hosea 14:2-10

The Prophet calls his people to turn away from sinful ways and return to the Lord. He proclaims God as a God of compassion, forgiveness and healing. Hosea says to his people that God will make them a new people and bless them with prosperity. He calls them to walk in the path of the Lord in justice and “blossom like the Lilly and the Vine”.

The season of Lent continues to invite us to listen to the call of Hosea to conversion and new life and new beginnings.

Psalm 81

Sing joyfully to God our strength, acclaim the God of Jacob.....

Take up a melody and sound the timbrel...the pleasant harp and the lyre.....

Mark 12:28-34

Jesus sums up the law and the prophets into “LOVE” - love with our whole being. As St. Augustine puts it, it is only in loving God with our whole being that we come to love our life, self and others in the proper way.

By loving God and walking in His ways, we do not use others to meet our needs or exploit them for our purposes. By centering on God’s love, we are liberated to love everything as God’s gifts. We come to experience ourselves as loved and gifted. We no longer need to prove our worth.

We are loved by “LOVE”. We are accepted by Total, Unconditional Acceptance.

Lent calls us to reflect on our commitments and loyalties. We don’t have to choose between loving God and others. We are to love God, ourselves and others. Commitment and loyalty to God include love of self and others. Love of God does not divide. Love heals, unifies, integrates, brings Wholeness and Holiness.

Love of God does not turn us away from the world - love opens our eyes to see the world as God’s gift to us. Love gives us a new, clearer and true vision of the world.

Saint of the day, March 17 - Saint Patrick and six other saints are remembered this day.

Details of Patrick's life are uncertain. His birth may have been around the year 384 C.E. in Roman Britain to Christian parents. He called himself both a Roman and a Briton. His birth name was Maewyn. At the age of 16, he and a large number of his father's slaves and vassals were captured by Irish raiders and sold as slaves in Ireland. Forced to work as a shepherd, he suffered greatly from hunger and cold. Ireland was a pagan land, and during his time as a slave, Maewyn prayed often, and his Christian faith grew stronger.

When he was 20 years old, he had a dream that God instructed him to go to the coast and escape from Ireland. Maewyn went to the coast where he found sailors who would take him home. A few years later, he had a vision of a man coming from Ireland and giving him a letter from "Voice of the Irish" appealing to him "to come and walk among us." This vision prompted him to become a priest. Later he was ordained a bishop, and Pope Celestine I renamed him Patrick. As a bishop, he returned to Ireland to preach God's Word. He first converted the clan chieftains and by their influence the rest of the clansmen. St. Patrick converted thousands to Christianity, and he began building churches across Ireland. He converted all of Ireland in the 40 years he was there. He died in 461A.D. He is the Patron Saint of Ireland.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs