

MORNING MEDITATION

Saturday, Twelfth week in Ordinary Time

**A key to serenity in less than perfect times is
joy in experiencing whatever is now.**

Lamentations 2:2, 10-14, 18-19

This excerpt bemoans the fall of Jerusalem. It speaks of the Babylonians destroying the fortress towns of the Judean Province while besieging Jerusalem. Serious disaster follows violations of God's law....life without the Lord brings sorrow, pain, hardships...the author of this excerpt calls his people to lift up their hands to the Lord in prayer.

Psalm 74

**Look to your covenant,
for the hiding places in the land,
and the plains are full of violence.
May the humble not retire in confusion;
May the afflicted and poor praise your name.**

Mathew 8:5-17

The centurion had a quality of faith that we need to grow into. He had humility. He had faith. He was a down-to-earth-believer. He could say "I know what it means to command and I know what it means to obey. So just speak a word and it will happen".

Be humble. Be faithful. Be obedient.

Jesus is The WORD that annihilates distance. The word of Jesus heals at a distance. Jesus is the WORD that closes the gap, breaks down barriers, bring us into fellowship and communion.

Be gracious and do what you can to heal brokenness, to come nearer to God and to people, to close the gap between you and others.....

Faith is our word...hope is our word...love is our word.....Reflect on your word that closes the gap, that brings healing, that annihilates distances, that bring us into fellowship, into communion.....

Saint of the Day, June 27 - St. Cyril of Alexandria and 14 other saints are remembered this day

Little is known for certain of Cyril's early life. He was most likely born in Alexandria, the metropolis of ancient Egypt, between 370 and 380. A few years after his birth, his maternal uncle Theophilus rose to the powerful position of Patriarch of Alexandria. His mother remained close to her brother and under his guidance, Cyril was educated. From his writings, it appears that he received a solid literary and theological education. When Theophilus died in 412, Cyril was chosen to succeed him at the head of the Egyptian Church. He continued his uncle's policy of insisting on Alexandria's preeminence within the Church over Constantinople, despite the political prominence of the imperial capital. The two Eastern churches eventually re-established communion in approximately 418.

Ten years later, however, a theological dispute caused a new break between Alexandria and Constantinople. Cyril's reputation as a theologian, and later as Doctor of the Church, arose from his defense of Catholic orthodoxy during this time. In 428, a monk named Nestorius became the new Patriarch of Constantinople. It became clear that Nestorius was not willing to use the term "Mother of God" ("Theotokos") to describe the Virgin Mary. Instead, he insisted on the term "Mother of Christ" ("Christotokos").

During the fourth century, the Greek Church had already held two ecumenical councils to confirm Christ's eternal preexistence as God prior to his incarnation as a man. From this perennial belief, it followed logically that Mary was the mother of God. Veneration of Mary as "Theotokos" confirmed the doctrine of the incarnation, and Christ's status as equal to the God the Father.

Nestorius insisted that he, too, held these doctrines. But to Cyril, and many others, his refusal to acknowledge Mary as the Mother of God seemed to reveal a heretical view of Christ which would split him into two united but distinct persons: one fully human and born of Mary, the other fully divine and not subject to birth or death. Cyril responded to this heretical tendency first through a series of letters to Nestorius (which are still in existence and studied today), then through an appeal to the Pope, and finally through the summoning of an ecumenical council in 431. Cyril presided over this council, stating that he was "filling the place of the most holy and blessed Archbishop of the Roman Church," Pope Celestine, who had authorized it.

The council was a tumultuous affair. Patriarch John of Antioch, a friend of Nestorius, came to the city and convened a rival council which sought to condemn and depose Cyril. Tension between the advocates of Cyril and Nestorius erupted into physical violence at times, and both parties sought to convince the emperor in Constantinople to back their position. During the council, which ran from June 22 to July 31, 431, Cyril brilliantly defended the orthodox belief in Christ as a single eternally divine person who also became incarnate as a man. The council condemned Nestorius, who was deposed

as patriarch and later suffered exile. St. Cyril of Alexandria died on June 27, 444, having been a bishop for nearly 32 years. Long celebrated as a saint, particularly in the Eastern Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, he was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1883.

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