

MORNING MEDITATION

Tuesday, Twenty Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

**Serenity is not the absence or avoidance of noise, though it helps.
It is peacefulness even in the midst of noise.**

Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13

This excerpt contains several disconnected wise sayings. At the center of it, the wise man teaches us that doing what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

Psalms 119

**Blessed are they whose way is blameless,
Who walk in the law of the Lord.
Make me understand the way of your precepts,
And I will meditate on your wondrous deeds.**

Luke 8:19-21

Jesus was addressing the crowd and his mother and relatives came to speak with him. When someone told Jesus about it, he said, "who is my mother and who are my brothers.....whoever does the will of my Father is brother and sister and mother to me".

Jesus spoke of a new kind of relationship...one that goes far beyond blood relationships. Nothing can break the "blood connection" and yet we know that "blood ties" don't necessarily create a bond of love or dedication or affection. History has shown that often a man's enemies were those with whom he had "blood ties".

Real relationships, true connections, bonds of love are established around shared goals, shared ideals, shared conflicts and pains, shared cause, shared obedience/fidelity, etc.

Jesus calls us to enter into a relationship of love and obedience....an obedience that binds us together as brothers and sisters of Jesus, sons and daughters of the heavenly Father. Our common obedience makes us true brothers and sisters.

Saint of the Day, September 22 - St. Lorenzo Ruiz and 16 companion martyrs are remembered this day.

Lorenzo Ruiz was born in Binondo, Manila, on November 28, 1594 to a Chinese father and a Filipino mother who were both Catholic. His father taught him Chinese while his mother taught

him Tagalog. Lorenzo served as an altar boy at the Binondo Church. After being educated by the Dominican friars for a few years, Lorenzo became a professional calligrapher, transcribing documents in beautiful penmanship. He became a member of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary. He married Rosario, a native, and they had two sons and a daughter. The Ruiz family led a peaceful and devout religious life.

In 1636, while working as a clerk for the Binondo Church, Lorenzo was falsely accused of killing a Spaniard. At that time, three Dominican priests, Antonio Gonzalez, Guillermo Courtet, and Miguel de Aozaraza, were about to sail to Japan in spite of a violent persecution there. With them was a Japanese priest, Vicente Shiwozuka de la Cruz, and a layman named Lazaro, a leper. Lorenzo, having taken asylum with them, was allowed to accompany them. But only when they were at sea, he learned that they were going to Japan.

The Tokugawa Shogunate was persecuting Christians by the time Lorenzo had arrived in Japan. The missionaries were arrested and thrown into prison, and after two years, they were transferred to Nagasaki to face trial by torture. They were subjected to an unspeakable kind of torture: After huge quantities of water were forced down their throats, they were made to lie down. Long boards were placed on their stomachs and guards then stepped on the ends of the boards, forcing the water to spurt violently from mouth, nose and ears.

The group endured many and various cruel methods of torture. On September 27, 1637, Lorenzo and his companions were taken to Nishizaka Hill, where they were tortured by being hung upside-down over a pit. Despite his suffering, Lorenzo refused to renounce Christianity. He died two days later on September 29, 1637, aged 42. His body was cremated, with the ashes thrown into the sea. Lorenzo was canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 18, 1987. He was among the 16 Martyrs of Japan, making him the first Filipino saint.

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