

MORNING MEDITATION

Thursday, Fifth Week of Easter

Forbearance is giving generous interpretations of other people's unacceptable behaviors.

Acts 15:7-21

The apostles discerned that the regulations of the Old Testament were meant to be a preparation for Christ and that the Old had passed away giving way to the New. At the close of the discernment process, James encouraged them to be patient and considerate to all converts and not to make the new life difficult for them.

Be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Be open to new ways, opportunities, and possibilities.

Psalms 96

**Sing to the Lord a new song,
Sing to the Lord all you lands,
Sing to the Lord, bless his name.....**

John 15:9-11

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.....Abide in my love.....that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete.”

The secret of the life of Jesus was his contact with the Father. Again, and again, he withdrew to quiet places to be alone with the father. He knew what it meant to “abide” in the Father’s Love. His disciples must do the same.

To “abide” is to be in close contact, to be in touch, to be intimate, to live an intense and personal relationship, to surrender in fidelity, to surrender in obedience, etc.

Stay focused on developing a personal, intense, intimate relationship with the Lord. Stay close...stay connected...be in touch....

Abide in the presence of the Lord, in silence and in solitude.....Speak to the Lord from the depth of your heart.....

Saint of the Day, May 2 – St. Athanasius and 12 other saints are remembered this day

St. Athanasius was born into a Christian family in Alexandria, Egypt in 296. His parents gave him a classical education. A local priest, Alexander, later canonized as St Alexander of Alexandria, recognized his knowledge and talents and tutored Athanasius in theology. Around the age of 19, Athanasius spent a formative period in the Egyptian desert as a disciple of St. Anthony in his monastic community. Returning to Alexandria, he was ordained a deacon in 319, and resumed his assistance to Alexander who had become a bishop.

The Catholic Church, newly recognized by the Roman Empire, was already encountering a new series of dangers from within. A priest named Arius taught that Jesus could not have existed eternally as God prior to his historical incarnation as a man. According to Arius, Jesus was the highest of created beings, and could be considered “divine” only by analogy. Many Christians found it intellectually easier to believe in Jesus as a created demi-god, than to accept the mystery of a Father-Son relationship within the Godhead. By 325, the controversy was dividing the Church and unsettling the Roman Empire.

In that year, Athanasius attended the First Ecumenical Council, held at Nicea to examine and judge Arius' doctrine in light of apostolic tradition. It reaffirmed the Church's perennial teaching on Christ's full deity, and established the Nicene Creed as an authoritative statement of faith. Near the end of St. Alexander's life, he insisted that Athanasius succeed him as the Bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius took on the position just as the Emperor Constantine, despite having convoked the Council of Nicea, decided to relax its condemnation of Arius and his supporters. Athanasius continually refused to admit Arius to communion, however, despite the urgings of the emperor. Athanasius was accused of theft, murder, assault, and even of causing a famine by interfering with food shipments. Arian emperor Constantius drove Athanasius into exile at least five times for insisting on the Nicene Creed as the Church's authoritative rule of faith.

Athanasius received the support of several Popes, and spent a portion of his exile in Rome. However, the Emperor Constantius did succeed in coercing one Pope, Liberius, into condemning Athanasius by having him kidnapped, threatened with death, and sent away from Rome for two years. The Pope eventually managed to return to Rome, where he again proclaimed Athanasius' orthodoxy.

In 369, Athanasius managed to convene an assembly of 90 bishops in Alexandria, for the sake of warning the Church in Africa against the continuing threat of Arianism. He died in 373, and was vindicated by a more comprehensive rejection of Arianism at the Second Ecumenical Council, held in 381 at Constantinople.

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