

MORNING MEDITATION

Friday, Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Simplify your life by removing distractions
and focusing on the essential.**

Nahum 2:1, 3; 3:1-3, 6-7

Nahum calls his people to rejoice and celebrate and fulfill their vows to Yahweh because the Lord, Yahweh is restoring his people and renewing his covenant. He encouraged his people to trust in the word of Yahweh. The greatest of earth's glories, if not built on the foundation of God's word, will surely pass away.

Deuteronomy 32:35-41

**Learn then that I alone am God,
And there is no God beside me.
It is I who bring both death and life,
I whop inflict wounds and heal them.**

Mathew 16:24-28

Intimate relationship calls forth commitment which involves suffering, pain, self-sacrifice, self-surrender and total giving in death... Yet there is always "resurrection", newness, new life, new growth, new possibilities.....each person being graced, blessed and rewarded according to "his conduct", according the way he/she lived!

The Jews waited for the Messiah, conqueror, and King. To them, Jesus spoke of the terrible experience he would go through, the experience of the cross which his disciples would also have to take up. How different from the idea of conqueror King! Jesus came not with avenging armies but giving His life and he called his disciples to do the same.

The cost of being a disciple of Jesus is great...deny self, take up the cross and follow the master.....but the reward is greater still...welcome into the kingdom of the Father, into the eternal presence of steadfast love and grace!

Saint of the day, August 5 - Dedication of Saint Mary Major Basilica and 14 other saints are remembered this day

This feast commemorates the dedication of the rebuilt Basilica Saint Mary Major by Pope Sixtus III, just after the First Council of Ephesus in 431. This major basilica, located on the summit of the Esquiline Hill in Rome, is called the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore because it is the largest church in Rome dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The original church was built during the pontificate of Pope Liberius (352–366), and is thus sometimes known as the Basilica Liberii or Basilica Liberiana. First raised at the order of Pope Liberius in the mid-fourth century, the Liberian basilica was rebuilt by Pope Sixtus III shortly after the Council of Ephesus affirmed Mary's title as Mother of God in 431. Rededicated at that time to the Mother of God, St. Mary Major is the largest church in the world honoring God through Mary. Standing atop one of Rome's seven hills, the Esquiline, it has survived many restorations without losing its character as an early Roman basilica. Its interior retains three naves divided by colonnades in the style of Constantine's era. Fifth-century mosaics on its walls testify to its antiquity.

St. Mary Major is one of the four Roman basilicas known as patriarchal cathedrals in memory of the first centers of the Church. St. John Lateran represents Rome, the See of Peter; St. Paul Outside the Walls, the See of Alexandria, allegedly the see presided over by Mark; St. Peter's, the See of Constantinople; and St. Mary's, the See of Antioch, where Mary is supposed to have spent most of her later life.

One legend, unreported before the year 1000, gives another name to this feast: Our Lady of the Snows. According to that story, a wealthy Roman couple pledged their fortune to the Mother of God. In affirmation, she produced a miraculous summer snowfall and told them to build a church on the site. The legend was long celebrated by releasing a shower of white rose petals from the basilica's dome every August 5.

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