

MORNING MEDITATION

Tuesday, Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Be still and be present to the moment
and you will find peace and serenity peace**

Jeremiah 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22

Jeremiah reflects on the plight of his people and sees them as a people with “incurable wound and grievous bruise”. He offers his people hope: God will restore their nation and give them a renewed sense of being God’s special people: “You shall be my people and I will be your God”.

Psalm 102

**The nations shall revere your name, O Lord,
and all the kings of the earth your glory,
When the Lord has rebuilt Zion and appeared in his glory;
When he has regarded the prayer of the destitute,
and not despised their prayer.**

Mathew 15:1-2, 10-14

This excerpt from Mathew describes the conflict that was developing between the Pharisees, scribes and Jesus. The question here is about ceremonial or ritual purification which the disciples of Jesus did not observe and Jesus didn’t seem disturbed by it. Jesus challenged his listeners and adversaries to go beyond the rituals purifications to keeping the heart clean and pure, to go beyond man-made traditions to the law of God. For the Pharisees and scribes religion consisted of many and detailed external observances.

Jesus taught his listeners that what really matters is not how we act but why. Man sees the deed, but God sees the heart, the intention, the motivation.

What really matters is what is in one’s heart. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure of heart, they will see God”. No one can call himself good because he follows certain rules and regulations and observes certain customs and traditions. Ceremonial observances do not guarantee inner purification. One is good when the heart is good and pure.

Saint of the Day, August 4 - St. John Vianney and 13 other saints are remembered this day.

Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney (John Vianney) was born on May 8, 1786 in Dardilly, France and

was baptized the same day. As his education had been disrupted by the French Revolution, he struggled in his studies, particularly with Latin, but worked hard to learn. In 1802, the Catholic Church was reestablished in France and religious freedom and peace spread throughout the country. Unfortunately, in 1809, John was drafted into Napoleon Bonaparte's armies.

Two days into his service, John fell ill and required hospitalization. As his troop continued, he stopped in at a church where he prayed. There he met a young man who volunteered to return him to his group, but instead led him deep into the mountains where military deserters met. John lived with them for one year and two months. He used the name Jerome Vincent and opened a school for the nearby village of Les Noes' children.

John remained in Les Noes and hid when gendarmes (armed force) came in search of deserters until 1810, when deserters were granted amnesty. Now free, John returned to Écully and resumed his ecclesiastic studies. He was ordained priest on August 12, 1815 and eventually appointed parish priest of the Ars parish.

When he began his priestly duties, Fr. Vianney realized many were either ignorant or indifferent to religion as a result of the French Revolution. Many danced and drank on Sundays or worked in their fields. Fr. Vianney spent much time in confession and often delivered homilies against blasphemy and dancing. He spent 11 to twelve hours each day working to reconcile people with God. In the summer months, he often worked 16-hour days and refused to retire. His fame spread until people began to travel to him in 1827. Within thirty years, it is said that he received up to 20,000 pilgrims each year.

By 1853, Fr. Vianney had attempted to run away from Ars four times, each attempt with the intention of becoming a monk but decided after the final time that it was not to be. Six years later, he passed away on August 4, 1859 at the age of 73 and was canonized on May 31, 1925.

Fr. Gus Tharappel,msfs