MORNING MEDITATION

Thursday, Thirty Second Week in Ordinary Time

Joy is everywhere - it is in the earth's green covering of grass and in the blue serenity of the sky.
(Rabindranath Tagore)

Philemon 7-20

This is the only private letter of Paul that has survived. Onesimus was a runaway slave (and probably a thief, verse 18-19 seems to indicate). Somehow, he reached Rome and met Paul and became a Christian. Somehow, the story of Onesimus came out in the open and now it is time to break free of all discreditable past. So, Paul sends him back to his master, although Paul would have liked to keep him. Onesimus had become indispensable to Paul. So, Paul gives this letter to Onesimus. Paul even puns on Onesimus name. Onesimus in Greek means "profitable".

A useless man became useful as a slave and now he has become much more as a "son" in faith. Now Paul is sending his "son" back to his master asking him to receive him back as a Christian receives a brother. Being Christian has brought slaves and masters into new relationships. Class distinctions had not gone yet. New relationships were developing. Onesimus was a slave and still is a slave, but now he has become a brother to his master.

Philemon is a simple letter in 25 verses, but an inspirational reading. Its' about conversion; its about a slave regaining his dignity; its about welcoming back a runaway slave; its about welcoming back a runaway slave as a brother; its about Christian transformation……..much to reflect on!!!

Psalm 146

The Lord secures justice for the oppressed,
Gives food to the hungry,
The Lord sets captives free.

Luke 17:20-25

Jesus was asked when the reign of God would come. He responded, "The reign of God is already in your midst". The reign of God creates not new things or new systems but new people! It is not a revolution in material things, but a revolution in the hearts of men and women! The secret of God is here and now! You need to recognize it! You need to embrace, live, and love this mystery!

Saint of the Day, November 12 - St. Josaphat and 22 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Josaphat was born John Kuncevic around 1580 in Vladimir, a village of the Lithuanian Province of Volhynia (then a part of the Polish Kingdom begun under the Jagellonian Dynasty). His parents belonged to the Eastern Rite Church of Kyiv (Ukraine) which was then separated from Rome.

In 1595, the Orthodox bishop of Brest-Litovsk in present-day Belarus and five other bishops representing millions of Ruthenians, sought reunion with Rome. John Kunsevich, who took the name Josaphat in religious life, was to dedicate his life, and die for the same cause. He became a Basilian monk, then a priest, and soon was well known as a preacher and an ascetic.

St. Josaphat is the first Byzantine-rite saint to be formally canonized. As Bishop, he worked for better understanding, acceptance and fair treatment of Byzantine Catholics in Poland. One day, he offered himself in the place of the servants being beaten by an angry crowd and the crowd hit him with an ax, shot him and threw him in the river. He died on November 12, 1623. He kept his faith alive and stirred into flame the faith of many others.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs