

MORNING MEDITATION

Thursday, Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

The elements have no forbearance...the fire burns, the water drowns, the air consumes, the earth buries. But we have forbearance.

2 Timothy 2:8-15

Paul encouraged Timothy to keep reminding people: "If we have died with him, we shall also live with him. If we hold out to the end, we shall reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us. If we are unfaithful, he will still remain faithful, for he can not deny himself." Therefore try hard to make yourself worthy of God's approval, following a straight course in preaching the truth.

Psalm 25

Your ways O Lord, make known to me,
Teach me your paths,
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
For you are God my savior.

Mark 12:28-34

One of the Scribes asked Jesus about which of the commandments was the first. Jesus presented the first as loving God above all else with heart, mind, soul and strength, loving God with all you are and all you have and the second as loving "neighbor as yourself". The Scribe welcomed this insight and added that it was even worth more than any burnt offering or sacrifice. Jesus affirmed the Scribes insight and told him that he was "not far from the kingdom".

Jesus would teach, eventually, that we can be and belong in the kingdom and not just "not be far from the kingdom". To really belong in the kingdom, we must learn to "love one another as I have loved you". We must learn to love as Jesus loved.

This is our challenge. It is this "LOVE" - unconquerable benevolence that will make us "sons of God", godlike persons. That is WHO GOD IS: LOVE. We are to image HIM - His Love, His Benevolence - seeking the highest good of all.

God makes his sun rise on the good and on the wicked; He sends his rain on the just and the unjust. We are called to love others as Jesus loves us with unconditional, invincible, unconquerable, unwearied, benevolent love.....

Saint of the Day, June 6 - St. Norbert and 44 other saints are remembered this day.

Norbert was born in 1075 in Xanten, Germany. Through the influence of his family he obtained a financial subsidy from the parish church of St. Victor at Xanten when he accepted ordination to the subdeaconate. His only task was to chant the Divine Office at the Church, but he apparently paid someone a small fee to take his place in the choir, because he gained an appointment as a chaplain (religious counselor) to the emperor Henry V in Cologne. The salaries from the Xanten fund and the royal treasury were enough to equip him to live in the style of the nobility of the times.

He avoided ordination to the priesthood and even declined an appointment as bishop of Cambrai in 1113. One day in the spring of 1115, as he rode his horse to Vreden, a thunderbolt from a sudden storm struck at his horse's feet. After this near-fatal accident, his faith deepened, he renounced his appointment at Court and returned to Xanten to lead a life of penance, placing himself under the direction of Cono, Abbot of St Sigeberg, near Cologne. He was ordained to the priesthood soon afterward. Norbert was a great devotee of the Eucharist and Our Lady.

He visited Pope Gelasius II, who gave him permission to become an itinerant preacher and he preached throughout lands in what is now western Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and northern France. In settlement after settlement he encountered a demoralized clergy, lonely, often practicing concubinage and feeling that the official Church cared little about them.

At the Council of Reims in October 1119, Pope Calixtus II requested Norbert to found a religious order in the Diocese of Laon in France. On Christmas Day, 1120, Norbert established the Canons Regular of Prémontré. For a Rule of life, Norbert chose the Rule of St. Augustine as was common among communities of priests - 'canons'. In addition, he adapted some of the customs of the Cistercians. The whole idea was that his active priests needed an ascetic and contemplative haven. The Order of Canons Regular of Prémontré was founded and the young community at first lived in huts of wood and clay, arranged like a camp around the chapel of Saint John the Baptist, but they soon built a larger church and a monastery for the religious who joined them in increasing numbers. In 1125, the constitution for the order was approved by Pope Honorius II.

In 1126 Pope Honorius II appointed Norbert to the Archbishopric of Magdeburg, where he put into practice the precepts that he instituted at Prémontré. Several assassination attempts were made as he began to reform the lax discipline of his diocese. He continued his work as Archbishopric of Magdeburg until his death on June 6, 1134.

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