

MORNING MEDITATION

Wednesday, Twenty Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

One of the most basic sources of peacefulness and serenity is forgiveness of past hurt, failures, resentments, sins, guilt and shame.

Galatians 5:18-25

Paul had taught the Galatians to trust in God's gift of Grace and live a life of Grace. His teaching was that with the coming of the reign of Grace, the reign of law was ended.

This led to misunderstandings and misinterpretations to the point of saying that the law did not matter and that all that mattered was trust in God's Grace and do what you like. Now Paul sets out to teach the Galatians that God's love frees us to love and to live in the spirit of Jesus and not follow our own desires and inclinations. Those who follow Christ are guided by the spirit and they must follow the way of the spirit and not of the flesh. "If you are guided by the spirit, you are not under the law". So you must cultivate the fruits of the spirit and remove evil tendencies.

Psalms 1

**Happy the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked
Nor walks in the way of sinners, nor sits in the company of the insolent,
But delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on it day and night.**

Luke 11:42-46

Jesus spoke harsh words to the Pharisees and to the lawyers. They were beyond reproach by external standards. However, their motives were not noble. They drew attention to themselves. They loved respect in public places, they concentrated on externals that gave them recognition, they focused on details and forgot essential matters of the law such as justice and care for the less privileged. They had the right ideas but failed to practice them.

It is easy to get caught up with details of worship and fail to worship; details of helping the poor and fail to help the poor, details of hospitality and fail to be hospitable; details of social service and fail to do justice for the oppressed.....

Stay focused on important matters of life without neglecting essential details. Set your priorities straight.

Saint of the Day, October 14 - St. Callistus and 19 other saints are remembered this day

Pope Callistus is listed as a martyr but we have no record of how he was martyred or by whom. There were no official persecutions at the time, but he may well have been killed in riots against Christians.

As sad as it is to realize that the only story we have of his life is by an enemy, it is amazing to see in it the fact that the Church is large enough not only to embrace sinners and saints, but to proclaim two people saints who hold such wildly opposing views and to elect a slave and an alleged ex-convict to guide the whole Church.

Callistus was a slave in the imperial Roman household. Put in charge of the bank by his master, he lost the money deposited, fled, and was caught. After serving time for a while, he was released to make some attempt to recover the money. He was arrested for brawling in a Jewish synagogue. This time he was condemned to work in the mines of Sardinia. Through the influence of the emperor's mistress he was released and went to live at Anzio.

After winning his freedom, Callistus was made superintendent of the public Christian burial ground in Rome, known as the cemetery of Saint Callistus and probably the first land owned by the Church. The pope ordained him a deacon and made him his friend and adviser.

Callistus was elected pope by a majority vote of the clergy and laity of Rome, and thereafter was bitterly attacked by the losing candidate, Saint Hippolytus, who let himself be set up as the first antipope in the history of the Church. The schism lasted about 18 years.

Hippolytus is venerated as a saint. He was banished during the persecution of 235 and was reconciled to the Church. He died from his sufferings in Sardinia. He attacked Callistus on two fronts—doctrine and discipline. Hippolytus seems to have exaggerated the distinction between Father and Son—almost making two gods—possibly because theological language had not yet been refined. He also accused Callistus of being too lenient, for reasons we may find surprising: 1) Callistus admitted to Holy Communion those who had already done public penance for murder, adultery, and fornication; 2) he held marriages between free women and slaves to be valid—contrary to Roman law; 3) he authorized the ordination of men who had been married two or three times; 4) he held that mortal sin was not a sufficient reason to depose a bishop; 5) he held to a policy of leniency toward those who had temporarily denied their faith during persecution.

Callistus was martyred, probably during a local disturbance in Trastevere, Rome, around the year 222 C.E.

Fr. Gus Tharappel,msfs