

MORNING MEDITATION

Monday, Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Forbearance is being resolute under strain,
especially when faced with long-term difficulties.**

Jeremiah 28:1-17

Jeremiah tried to bring hope to his people. He encouraged his people to trust in God to free them from the “yoke” of Babylon and give them freedom. The peace that they would find is not the work of men but the gift of God.

Seek the peace that only God can give you.

Psalms 119

**Remove from me the way of falsehood,
and favor me with your law.
Take not the word of truth from my mouth,
for in your ordinance is my hope.**

Matthew 14:13-21

After feeding five thousand with five loaves and a couple of fish, Jesus withdrew to the mountain alone for prayer. He sent the disciples ahead of him to the other side of the lake and they had to face strong headwinds. Jesus came to them on the troubled waters.

The Lord reaches out to us when we are in troubled waters and are facing strong headwinds. Be confident...stand strong.... hold your heads high!

The disciples were so frightened that they did not recognize the Lord reaching out to them. Fear has a way of blinding our eyes while simple faith opens our eyes. Peter saw his master and wanted to walk across to him over the troubled waters and he did. Peter lost his focus.....he saw how headstrong the wind was.....he became frightened, lost his strength and began to sink into the deep water. Faith gives us a new vision...a vision of strength, of the presence of something and of someone far greater than ourselves in whom we can put our trust and face what must be faced.

Stay focused! Keep your eyes on the Lord and his strength!

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.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs