

# **MORNING MEDITATION**

## **Friday, Fourth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Purposefulness is the virtue of the person with clear vision of purpose, who actively, intentionally and tenaciously works towards fulfilling the discerned purpose.**

### **Hebrews 13:1-8**

The author encourages his readers to cultivate the following virtues:

- Love your brothers and sisters always.....
- Be hospitable.....you may be entertaining angels without knowing it!
- Be mindful of prisoners as if you were sharing their imprisonment.....
- Honor your marriage and its commitments.....
- Be content with what you have.....
- Be mindful of your leaders who remained faithful to the word they proclaimed and imitate their faithfulness.....

### **Psalm 27**

**The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear?  
The Lord is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid?  
Though an army encamps against me, my heart will not fear;  
Though war be waged upon me, even then will I trust.**

### **Mark 6:14-29**

The disciples spread the good news. They proclaimed the name of Jesus and the message that he brought. Herod heard about Jesus and became curious: "who is this man that I hear about?! Could he be John the Baptist?" Herod feared John and respected him at the same time. It was as though he was haunted by the goodness of John and his own sinfulness at the same time. Herod could not escape the call of goodness and virtue...he was afraid! Herod acted on impulse, afraid of what people might think or say.....

Herodias shows us what bitterness can do to a person.....

John the Baptist shows us what courage and faithfulness can do. His life also reveals to us the cost of such courage and faithfulness.

**Reflect on the three characters and their qualities and get in touch with what they call forth from you.**

## **Saint of the day, February 7 - Pope Pius IX and 20 other saints are remembered this day.**

Giovanni Maria Mastai Ferretti was born on May 13, 1792 in Senigallia, Italy. He was the ninth child born into the noble family of Girolamo dei conti Ferretti and was baptized on the same day of his birth with the name of Giovanni Maria Battista Pietro Pellegrino Isidoro. He was educated at the Piarist College in Volterra and in Rome. As a young man, he was engaged to be married to an Irishwoman, Miss Foster (the daughter of the Bishop of Kilmore), and arrangements were made for the wedding. His parents opposed the marriage and he did not appear at the church on the appointed day.

As a theology student in his hometown Sinigaglia in 1814, he met Pope Pius VII, who had returned from French captivity. In 1815, he entered the Papal Noble Guard but was soon dismissed after an epileptic seizure. He threw himself at the feet of Pius VII, who elevated him and supported his continued theological studies. He was ordained a priest on April 10, 1819. He initially worked as the rector of the Tata Giovanni Institute in Rome. Shortly before his death, Pius VII sent him as Auditor to Chile and Peru in 1823 and 1825 to assist the Apostolic Nuncio. When he returned to Rome, the successor of Pius VII, Pope Leo XII appointed him head of the hospital of San Michele in Rome (1825–1827) and canon of Santa Maria in Via Lata.

Pope Leo XII appointed him Archbishop of Spoleto in 1827 at the age of 35 and cardinal in 1839. His episcopal priorities were the formation of priests through improved education and charities. He became known for visiting prisoners in jail, and for programs for street children. He was chosen the 255th pope in the conclave of 1846. He was the last pope to hold temporal power, that is, to rule a secular state. His election raised the hopes of patriotic and liberal circles of Catholics. One of his first acts was an amnesty for all political prisoners. He defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on December 8, 1854. Celebrated the First Vatican Council from 1869 to 1870, which was interrupted by the Franco-Prussian War. This council defined the dogma of papal infallibility. He supported several reforms in the Papal States. He created 123 cardinals. Gained a reputation for being a patriotic, and reforming Pope.

He died on February 7, 1878 in Vatican City of natural causes. Pius IX's cause for beatification was one of the longest and most difficult in Church history. Begun under Pius X on February 11, 1907, re-launched by Benedict XV without much success, later by Pius XI, and then by Pius XII on December 7, 1954. The decree on the heroic exercise of theological and cardinal virtues was finally promulgated by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on July 6, 1985, allowing his proclamation as Venerable. Among Pius

IX's most outstanding virtues were his unconditional love for the Church, his charity, and his high regard for the priesthood and for missionaries.

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