

MORNING MEDITATION

Tuesday, Second Week of Advent

The virtue of forbearance builds, forms, shapes and transforms our character as disciples of Jesus.

Isaiah 40:1-11

Isaiah shared his vision of what God would do for the salvation of exiled Israel. He described his vision of a voice crying out, “comfort my people....speak tenderly to Jerusalem.....with glad tidings.....valleys shall be filled and mountains shall be leveled, rough land shall be made plain.....all mankind, together shall see the glory of God”.

Isaiah’s vision was not about a geographic transformation of landscape, but a transformation of a people who will experience salvation of God. He called his people to be confident and stand strong and look forward to the day when God will gather his people again and bring them home. In the meantime, he encouraged them to fill what needed to be filled, level what needed to be leveled, make straight what was crooked and make smooth what was rough in their lives. Today, we are challenged to change what need to be changed and bring about a transformation of our life in Christ.

Fill what needs to be filled, level what needs to be leveled, make straight what is crooked and make smooth what is rough in your life.

Psalms 96

**Sing to the Lord a new song;
Sing to the Lord, all you lands.
Sing to the Lord; bless his name;
Announce his salvation day after day.**

Matthew 18:12-14

Jesus was accused of being in the company of sinners. He told them the parable the lost sheep. Even one single sheep is precious. The loss of that single sheep is great. The joy of discovering the lost is even greater! So, will it be with the re-discovery of every person!

Great is the loss if you are lost! Greater is the joy of your re-discovery! Even the angels will rejoice!

**You are not just “another” in tens or hundreds or thousands or millions - you just are!
And as you are, you are precious in the eyes of God and precious in the eyes of those
who love you!**

**Saint of the day, December 10 - St. Pope Gregory III and 22 other saints
are remembered this day.**

Gregory was the son of a Syrian named John. He was elected pope by popular acclamation on February 11, 731 and his pontificate lasted till his death on November 28, 741. His pontificate, like that of his predecessor, was disturbed by Byzantine iconoclasm and the advance of the Lombards. He was the fifth Syrian pope and the last pope born outside of Europe for 1,272 years, until the election of Pope Francis in 2013.

After he was proclaimed Pope Gregory III, Emperor Leo III attacked the veneration of holy images. Because Leo III thought the honor paid to Jesus, Mary, and the saints by keeping statues and icons was idolatry, he condemned them and wanted them destroyed. Gregory III sent a letter to Leo III. He couldn't get the letter through because the priest-messenger was afraid to deliver it. So instead, Gregory called a synod that approved strong measures against anyone who would try to destroy images of Jesus, Mary, or the saints.

Gregory took his stand and Leo III apparently thought the only way to move him was through physical force. So, Leo sent ships to kidnap Gregory and bring him to Constantinople. Once again God intervened. A storm destroyed Leo's ships. The only thing Leo could do was capture some of the papal lands. So, Leo got a few acres of land and we kept our wonderful reminders of the love of God, the protection of Jesus, the prayers of Mary, and the examples of the saints. All because Gregory knew when to take a stand and when to stand there and let God work.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs