

MORNING MEDITATION

Tuesday, Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Purposefulness includes virtues of determination, intentionality, sense of direction and steadfastness.

Hebrews 12:1-4

The author encourages us to keep our “eyes fixed on Jesus” and keep “running the race” which lies ahead. Jesus endured the cross and its shame and did not give up. It is up to us to persevere in our efforts and follow the example of Jesus. **Stay focused on Jesus.**

Psalm 22

**I will fulfill my vows before those who fear him.
The lowly shall eat their fill;
They who seek the Lord shall praise him:
“May your hearts be ever merry!”**

Mark 5:21-43

There are two miracles in Mk.9:21-43 - the healing of the ruler’s daughter and the healing of the woman with hemorrhage. Each of them came with what we could be interpreted as “inadequate” faith: desperate, having tried everything.....The amazing thing is: they were, all, accepted, with inadequate faith - with what they brought, the way they were.

No matter, how imperfectly we come, His love and his arms are open to us in welcome embrace. We come as we are. We do not wait until our motivations, our faith and our theology are perfect. We come....just as we are!

The ruler left all that he was.....his prejudices, his dignity as a ruler, his pride, his prestige.....and came, himself, to Jesus leaving his daughter when she was on the point of death. He left himself behind only to find himself again in the person of Jesus!

The woman with hemorrhage also had to leave everything behind and risk being caught and punished for being in public with a hemorrhage. She had to go through humiliating experience in order to reach out and touch the power that healed her and made her whole.

There is nothing beyond facing, nothing beyond conquest for the one who believes and hopes and loves.

Saint of the day, February 4 – St. John de Britto and 19 other saints are remembered this day.

John de Britto was born on March 1, 1647 to a noble Portuguese family in Lisbon. His father died while serving as Viceroy of Brazil. At the age of fifteen, he joined the Society of Jesus. Against the strenuous objections of his family, he volunteered for the missions in India in 1673 and was sent to Madura. He studied the complex Indian caste system and found that most converts belonged to the lowest caste.

He realized that for Christianity to have a lasting influence in India, higher caste members must also convert. He worked in Malabar, Tanjore, Marava, and Madura. He established himself as an Indian ascetic, a Pandara Suami, lived as they lived, dressed in saffron cloak and turban, and held retreats in the wilderness in southern India where interested Indians could visit him.

Though the practice of Catholicism was not illegal in India, John was hated by many because of his faith. He and his followers were often subjected to agonizing torture, but each time John miraculously recovered. In 1683, John was banished from India to Portugal. He returned soon after and continued his ministry for three more years. In 1693, he was again arrested, tortured and once more commanded to leave India. When he refused, John was sentenced to death.

On February 4, John de Britto was executed. As he knelt at the execution block, the rajah's order of death was read aloud. The executioner hesitated, but John said to him, "My friend, I have prayed to God. On my part, I have done what I should do. Now do your part." John de Britto was canonized in 1947.

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