

MORNING MEDITATION

Tuesday, Fifth Week of Lent

**Though the mountains fall away, and the hills be shaken,
My love shall never fall away from you, nor my covenant of peace
be shaken, says the LORD, who has mercy on you.**

(Isaiah 54:10)

Numbers 21:4-9

Tired, hungry, thirsty and impatient, the Israelites complained against God and Moses. They became sick with bitterness and suffered and some of them died. Moses turned to God and prayed for forgiveness and God had compassion on them and healed them.

Psalms 102

**O Lord, hear my prayer and let my cry come to you.
Hide not your face from me in the days of my distress.**

John 8:21-30

Jesus spoke about going away and they did not understand. Jesus said that the reason for their lack of understanding is because they follow the way of the world and think as the world thinks. They are not open to the Spirit of God.

Jesus said that they would die in their sins because they are not open to the revelations of the spirit. Jesus also said that they would realize what they missed when he is gone and will search for him and not find him.

God sends us many opportunities to know him and understand his wisdom. It is up to us to remain open and welcome the opportunities that God sends. Missed opportunities may never return.

Time waits for no one. Treasure every moment you have. You will treasure it even more when you can share it with someone special. Now is the moment of Grace. Treasure every moment you have.

Jesus again made bold statements, difficult for the listeners to grasp. He said that he always did what was pleasing to his Father. It is to do the will of the Father that he came, and he remained obedient to that will. We are called to follow the way of Jesus, the way of faithfulness and obedience.

Reflect on how you have been doing what was pleasing to the heavenly Father.... how you have been obedient to the will of the Father as revealed in Jesus.

Saint of the Day, March 28 - St. Catherine of Bologna and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Catherine was born on September 8, 1413, in Bologna, Italy to an aristocratic family. Her father, a diplomat to the Marquis of Ferrara, sent her to court when she was 11 to be a companion to the Marquis' daughter, Princess Margarita. At the time, the city of Ferrara was becoming a cultural center, and so the young girls had an excellent education in music, literature, painting, and dancing. Catherine particularly excelled at miniature painting, Latin, and the viola.

When Margarita became engaged, she wanted Catherine to remain her companion, but Catherine felt called to the religious life. At 14, she became a Franciscan Tertiary, an order of lay women who followed the ways of St. Francis. A few years later, dissension in the community led Catherine and others to join the Poor Clares, a contemplative order founded by St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi. Catherine willingly served in the humbler roles at the convent, including laundress, baker, and caretaker to the animals.

In 1456, she and 15 other sisters were sent to establish a Poor Clare monastery in Florence. As abbess, Catharine worked to preserve the peace of the new community. Her reputation for holiness drew many young women to the Poor Clare life. She continued in her artistic pursuits, playing the viola (even on her deathbed), painting religious pictures (her painting of St. Ursula hangs today in a gallery in Venice), copying out and illuminating her breviary (once belonging to Pius IX and now on display at Oxford), and writing spiritual guides and poetry.

At age 49, she became gravely ill and died on March 9, 1463 in Bologna. As was the custom of the Poor Clares, she was buried without a coffin. She was exhumed 18 days later after visitors noticed a sweet smell coming from her grave and some experienced miracles. Her body was found to be flexible and uncorrupted. Six hundred years later, her body remains intact. Her skin has blackened from exposure to oil lamps and soot, but still she sits, clothed in her nun's robes, on a golden throne behind a glass case in the Church of the Saint in Bologna. She was canonized in 1712.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs