

# **MORNING MEDITATION**

**Friday after Ash Wednesday**

**When you lose touch with inner stillness,  
you lose touch with yourself.**

(Eckhart Tolle)

## **Isaiah 58:1-9**

The Prophet Isaiah invites us to change not only our behavior but also our heart. True worship includes caring for the needs of the poor, the oppressed and the homeless. Justice and the care of the orphans, the poor and the widows are integral part of covenant relationship.

Vatican II document says “the poor cry for a change of heart and mind” (ES) and that is what Isaiah calls for. An attitudinal change, change of heart is what brings about genuine change in the person and the world around the person.

## **Psalms 51**

Have mercy on me, God, in your goodness;  
In your abundant compassion, blot out my offense.  
Wash away all my guilt;  
From my sin, cleanse me.

## **Matthew 9:14-15**

Jesus rejects the sad and gloomy approach to religion and religious practices. There is a place and time for fasting and penance. But there is also a time for feasting. Balance fasting and feasting!

The spirit of fasting and penance is a spirit of joy and not of gloom. The spirit of joy is the gift of Jesus to all disciples.

Let the fasting and feasting create joy and freedom of spirit.

Let the fasting and feasting create generosity of spirit and fellowship in community.

Let the fasting and feasting be inclusive. Let them include the less fortunate and the unfortunate!

Let your fasting and feasting help you to reach out to the less fortunate, the unfortunate, the disadvantaged, the poor, and the marginalized and suffering people in your community.

## **Saint of the Day, February 20 - St. Jacinta & Francisco Marto and 20 other saints are remembered this day.**

Saint Francisco de Jesus Marto (June 11, 1908 – April 4, 1919), his sister Saint Jacinta de Jesus Marto (March 11, 1910 – February 20, 1920) and their cousin Lúcia dos Santos (1907–2005) were children from Aljustrel, a small hamlet near Fátima, Portugal, who witnessed three apparitions of the Angel of Peace in 1916 and several apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Cova da Iria in 1917. At that time, Europe was involved in an extremely bloody war. Portugal itself was in political turmoil, having overthrown its monarchy in 1910; the government disbanded religious organizations soon after.

At the first appearance, Mary asked the children to return to that spot on the thirteenth of each month for the next six months. She also asked them to learn to read and write and to pray the rosary “to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war.” They were to pray for sinners and for the conversion of Russia, which had recently overthrown Czar Nicholas II and was soon to fall under communism. Up to 90,000 people gathered for Mary’s final apparition on October 13, 1917. The title Our Lady of Fátima was given to the Virgin Mary as a result, and the Sanctuary of Fátima became a major center of world Christian pilgrimage.

Less than two years later, Francisco died of influenza in his family home. He was buried in the parish cemetery and then re-buried in the Fátima basilica in 1952. Jacinta died of influenza in Lisbon in 1920, offering her suffering for the conversion of sinners, peace in the world, and the Holy Father. She was re-buried in the Fátima basilica in 1951. Their cousin Lúcia dos Santos, became a Carmelite nun and was still living when Jacinta and Francisco were beatified in 2000; she died five years later. Pope Francis canonized the younger children on his visit to Fátima to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first apparition, May 13, 2017.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs