

MORNING MEDITATION

Monday, First Week of Advent

Simplicity means freedom from complexity or division into parts, having a single aim or purpose...doing everything out of love for God.

Isaiah 4:2-6

Isaiah has a beautiful vision of the Messianic times when God's glory will be "shelter and protection" for the survivors of Israel, when the Lord will "create" "a smoking cloud by day and a light of flaming fire by night over the assembly of his people. The survivors, the faithful ones will find joy and happiness because the Lord will wash away their filth and create a new, holy people and protect and shelter them.

Psalms 122

**I rejoiced when I heard them say:
let us go to the house of the Lord.
And now we have set our foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem.**

Matthew 8:5-11

Centurions were the finest men in the Roman army. The centurion mentioned in this excerpt was a man of honor. Even his attitude toward his servant was extraordinary - he was grieved that his servant was ill and he was determined to do everything to save him. This was the reverse of the normal attitude of Master to his slave. How different people are! And how easy it becomes for us to judge and put everyone into one square box.

This calls us to overcome our prejudices and learn to go beyond common perceptions to discovering truth.

This centurion was also a man of extraordinary faith. He wanted Jesus to heal his slave. But he had a problem - he was a Gentile and Jesus was a Jew and Jews didn't enter the house of Gentiles. He was a noble man and his faith was great. So, he could say, "you don't need to come - just say the word". This was the voice of faith. And so, Jesus declared faith as the "door" to the feast in the kingdom of God. The Jews had to learn that access to God's presence was not a matter of membership in any nation, but faith.

Saint of the day, November 28 - Saint James of the March and 14 other saints are remembered this day.

St. James of the March was born Dominic Gangala in early 1390 to a poor family in the March of Ancona in central Italy. As a child, he began his studies at Offida under the guidance of his uncle, a priest, who soon afterwards sent him to school in the nearby city of Ascoli Piceno. He later studied at the University of Perugia where he took the degree of Doctor in Canon and Civil Law.

He entered the Order of Friars Minor in Assisi in 1416 and took the name Jacobus (James in English). During his novitiate, he practiced all virtues so well that he became a model of religious perfection. Soon after his ordination, he was sent out as a missionary. He traveled through Italy, Dalmatia, Croatia, Albania, Bosnia, Austria, Bohemia, Saxony, Prussia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Russia for over 50 years. During the years 1427 and 1428 he preached in Vienna, Augsburg, Ratisbon, Ulm, Limburg, Brandenburg, and Leipzig. He spent the last three years of his life in Naples, and died there on November 28., 1476.

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