

MORNING MEDITATION

Tuesday, Fourth Week of Easter

**We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.
(Mother Teresa)**

Acts 11:19-26

The good news of Jesus reached the Greeks and a large number of them believed and were converted to the Lord. Barnabas was sent, from Jerusalem, to minister to them. He was a man full of the Spirit, who encouraged and brought Saul for Support in his ministry. For the first time, here in Antioch, the disciples of Jesus were called Christians. **Be gracious and accept, gratefully, the support of others in your ministry!**

Psalm 87

**Zion shall say: “One and All were born in her;
And he, who has established her, is the Highest Lord.”
They shall note, when the peoples are enrolled:
“This man was born there.”
And all shall sing, in their festive dance:
“My home is within you”.**

John 10:22-30

It was the festival of the Dedication, Festival of lights or Hanukkah. King Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.) of Syria decide to eliminate the Jewish religion and introduce everything Greek into Palestine. Many Jews died resisting this move of Antiochus. The Maccabaeus brothers began a revolution, fought a good fight and finally won the struggle in 164 B.C. and in that year the temple and all that was used in the temple were purified. It was to remember this event that this Feast of Dedication was introduced – it was actually a rededication of the temple.

It was here in the temple, at this festival of lights, they asked Jesus, again, whether he really was the Messiah. Jesus affirmed his claim again. Some accepted it and others walked away. To those who accepted it, Jesus promised eternal life, a life that is full and safe. This is possible because of the intimacy that he has with the Father. Jesus said to them, “I and the Father are one”. All are safe in the arms of the loving Father, whom Jesus revealed.

Acceptance of Jesus and growing in intimacy with Him guarantees intimacy with God, our father.

Saint of the Day, May 10 - St. Damien de Veuster and 17 other saints are remembered this day.

Joseph de Veuster was born in Tremelo, Belgium in 1840. He was forced to quit school at age 13 to work on the family farm. He entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary six years later and took the name Damien. He volunteered to take the place of his brother, a priest of the same religious congregation, who was unable to go to the Hawaiian Islands because of illness. In May 1864, two months after arriving in his new mission, Damien was ordained a priest in Honolulu and assigned to the island of Hawaii.

The Kingdom of Hawaii was struggling with a public health crisis from infectious diseases coming to the islands from Europe and Asia. One of the diseases was leprosy, or Hansen's disease. In 1865, fear of the disease resulted in a law that required leprosy patients to live in the settlement colony of Kalaupapa on the island of Molaka'i.

In 1873 Father Damien volunteered to go to Kalaupapa permanently as the priest for the lepers. He cared for their physical, medical, and spiritual needs. He nursed the sick, built homes and furniture, made coffins, and dug graves. He also established leadership within their community. In time, he became their most effective advocate to obtain promised government support. Morale improved considerably. A few years later, he succeeded in getting the Franciscan Sisters of Syracuse, led by Mother Marianne Cope, to help staff this colony in Kalaupapa.

Fr. Damien contracted leprosy and died of its complications on March 30, 1889. He was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 11, 2009.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs