

MORNING MEDITATION

Tuesday, Fifth Week of Easter

**The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost,
to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience.**

(Eleanor Roosevelt)

Acts 14:19-28

Some Jews from Antioch and Iconium stoned Paul and dragged him out of the town. Paul's disciples formed a circle around him and protected him. Paul and Barnabas continued their missionary journey, instructing people and encouraging them to stand strong in the face of difficulties.

Be strong and be faithful even in the face of difficulties!

Psalms 145

**Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord,
And let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
And speak of your might.**

John 14:27-31

Jesus gave his disciples his farewell gift: PEACE. He said that this was not the kind of peace the world would give. It is enduring peace, lasting peace, eternal peace. The word for peace used in this context is "shalom" and shalom means "total well-being", "the highest good", "that which befits God". It is not the absence or the end of war or conflict. It is the presence of shalom, even in the midst of tension. This is the kind of peace, shalom that Jesus experienced in loving and fulfilling the Father's will.

Pray for:

- **respect for the individual**
- **respect for all persons; unity in families; fellowship in communities; communion of cultures; respect for diversity and tolerance of differences**
- **hunger for brotherhood, justice, righteousness and peace in the world.**
- **recognition of the hunger of people and the willingness to share from the abundance we have received, food for the body as well as food for the spirit.**

Saint of the Day, May 20 – St. Bernadine of Siena and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

Bernardine was born on September 8, 1380 in a noble family in Massa Marittima, Italy. He was orphaned at six and was raised by a pious aunt. In 1397, after a course of civil and canon law, he joined the Confraternity of Our Lady attached to the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala church. When he was 20, the plague was at its height in his hometown of Siena. Sometimes as many as 20 people died in one day at the hospital. Bernardine offered to run the hospital and, with the help of other young men, nursed patients there for four months. He escaped the plague but was so exhausted that a fever confined him for several months. He spent another year caring for a beloved aunt whose parents had died when he was a child, and at her death began to fast and pray to know God's will for him.

At the age of 22, he entered the Franciscan Order. He was ordained a priest in 1404 and was commissioned as a preacher the next year. He always traveled on foot, sometimes speaking for hours in one place, then doing the same in another town. Most preachers of the time either read a prepared speech or recited a rhetorical oration. Instead of remaining cloistered and preaching only during the liturgy, Bernardine preached directly to the public. For more than 30 years, he preached all over Italy and played a great part in the religious revival of the early fifteenth century. Although he had a weak and hoarse voice, he is said to have been one of the greatest preachers of his time. His style was simple, familiar, and abounding in imagery.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Bernardine chose his themes not from the daily liturgy, but from the ordinary lives of the people of Siena. He selected biblical themes to focus on the immediate interests of his audience. He travelled from place to place, remaining nowhere more than a few weeks. These journeys were all made on foot. In the towns, the crowds assembled to hear him were at times so great that it became necessary to erect a pulpit in the marketplace. The sermons often lasted three or four hours.

He was especially known for his devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. He devised a symbol—IHS, the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek—in Gothic letters on a blazing sun. This was to displace the superstitious symbols of the day. The devotion spread, and the symbol began to appear in churches, homes and public buildings.

Opposition arose from those who thought it a dangerous innovation. Three attempts were made to have the pope take action against him, but Bernardine's holiness, orthodoxy, and intelligence were evidence of his faithfulness. He died on May 20, 1444 at L'Aquila in the Abruzzi and is buried in the Basilica of San Bernardino. He was canonized on May 24, 1450 by Pope Nicholas V

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

