

MORNING MEDITATION

Friday, Twenty Third Week in Ordinary Time

Serenity is the peaceful surrender to the flow of life.

I Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-27

In this excerpt, Paul speaks of himself as a servant of all. He says that he has been serving the community out of an inner urge and not from compulsion from anyone else and not for profit or prestige. The only thing that he has to boast about is the Gospel of Jesus. He also says that he had disciplined himself to be faithful to what he preaches.

Be faithful to who you are and to what you preach and teach.

Psalms 84

**My soul yearns and pines
for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my flesh
cry out for the living God.**

Luke 6: 39-42

Jesus taught his disciples to keep their eyes open, not to be blind to their own weaknesses and shortcomings, not to be misled and not to mislead....

Try to deepen your vision of yourself. Have a clearer vision of who you are, what your strengths and weaknesses are.

It is not difficult to find fault with others, to criticize others, to point out other's mistakes. But remember: "there is so much bad in the best of us and so much good in the worst of us that it is impossible for any of us to find fault with the rest of us" (Francis Bacon)

Jesus calls us to be compassionate, to develop a non-blaming, non-judgmental attitude, to have a generous heart, to be sensitive to other's feelings and needs, to be mindful of others in their weaknesses and limitations and failures.....and not be judgmental of others.

Saint of the Day, September 11 - St. Cyprian and 18 other saints are remembered this day.

Cyprian was born into a rich, pagan, Roman African Carthage family sometime during the early third century, between 200-210. He was baptized when he was thirty-five years old. After his baptism, he gave away a portion of his wealth to the poor of Carthage. Not long after his baptism he was ordained a deacon, and soon afterwards a priest. Sometime between July 248 and April 249 he was elected bishop of Carthage,

Christians in North Africa had not suffered persecution for many years. Cyprian complained that the peace the Church had enjoyed had weakened the spirit of many Christians and had opened the door to converts who did not have the true spirit of faith. When the Decian persecution began, many Christians easily abandoned the Church. It was their reinstatement that caused the great controversies of the third century and helped the Church progress in its understanding of the Sacrament of Penance.

The Emperor Decius issued an edict ordering sacrifices to the gods to be made throughout the Empire. Jews were specifically exempted from this requirement. Cyprian chose to go into hiding rather than face potential execution. Novatus, a priest who had opposed Cyprian's election, set himself up in Cyprian's absence and received back all apostates without imposing any canonical penance. Cyprian held that those who had actually sacrificed to idols could receive Communion only at death, whereas those who had only bought certificates saying they had sacrificed could be admitted after a more or less lengthy period of penance.

During a plague in Carthage, Cyprian urged Christians to help everyone, including their enemies and persecutors. A friend of Pope Cornelius, Cyprian opposed the following pope, Stephen. He and the other African bishops would not recognize the validity of baptism conferred by heretics and schismatics. This was not the universal view of the Church, but Cyprian was not intimidated even by Stephen's threat of excommunication. He was exiled by the emperor and then recalled for trial. He refused to leave the city, insisting that his people should have the witness of his martyrdom.

On September 13, 258, Cyprian was imprisoned on the orders of the new proconsul, Galerius Maximus. After trial, Cyprian was sentenced to be executed with the sword. The execution was carried out in an open place near the city. A vast multitude followed Cyprian on his last journey. He removed his garments without assistance, knelt down, and prayed. After he blindfolded himself, he was beheaded by the sword on September 14, 258 in Carthage.

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