

MORNING MEDITATION

Twenty-fifth Sunday of the Year

Good humor is a tonic for body, mind and spirit and the way to serenity and peace.

Isaiah 55:6-9

This excerpt is taken from the concluding chapter of Deutero-Isaiah's book of Consolation. The Prophet had repeated over and over again his assurance of God's unconquerable love, constant, forgiveness and mercy. He also had promised his people that God would bring them home from exile and this return would be more glorious than their exodus from Egypt.

Despite the many assurance of the Prophet and despite the feelings of repentance of his people, many of them continued to feel burdened by the guilt of their wrongdoings. They had not learned that God's forgiveness was unconditional; that forgiveness meant new beginnings; that guilt and shame and regret should be replaced with faithfulness to God's law of love. They had problems understanding how God could forgive and accept a people who had repeatedly offended him, how he could love so tenderly and graciously.

It is to them that this chapter is addressed. The Prophet told them that sinners must turn to God for mercy, not because they deserve but because God is generous in forgiving. God's way is radically different from that of men: "My thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." God's ways are not vindictive or vengeful or mean or petty. God's will to forgive is unfathomable and his mercy immeasurable and his love unconquerable. So, the Prophet challenged his people to turn to God, seek God and call upon God here and now and not just in liturgy and worship in the temple.

Rejoice! Be happy! Be grateful! God's way is radically different from that of men! God's will to forgive is unfathomable and his mercy immeasurable and his love unconquerable.

Psalms 145

This is a psalm composed for public worship. It is an acrostic (alphabetic) poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The Psalm focuses primarily on God's compassion, especially for the underprivileged and depressed. A daily reminder of praising the unfathomable greatness of God, which goes beyond all our theologies, philosophies and doctrines. Verse 4 invites us to meditate on

the Wondrous acts of God and to pass on this memory to the future generations. Verses 8-9 express the most basic faith of the O.T. about the very nature of God: “steadfast love”, “compassion”all-embracing love, abundant love. Verses 9-10 – All God’s works give thanks because of the “all-embracing love”.

**I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.**

Philippians 1:20-27

Paul had special affection for the converts of Philippi. He wrote to them about how he was caught between two personal and intense desires – one to live for the Gospel and the other to die to live with Christ. In the excerpt referenced above, Paul tells the Philippians that the most important thing in his life was to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus.

Paul continued to insist that it did not matter to him if he died. Death would mean glory in Christ. He expressed his deepest desire to live for Christ even if it meant death for him.

All that mattered was that Christ was proclaimed because salvation would result from preaching Christ and his Gospel. He instructed his readers to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel. For Paul, Christ was the end, the purpose of his life and all his energies were directed to the final union with Christ.

Stay focused! Direct your energies toward proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus.

Mathew 20:1-16

This is one of the greatest parables that reveals God as a gracious, benevolent, merciful and compassionate person. It is a story of Grace. Whether we have served from sunrise to sunset or only the last hour of the day, God gives because He is grace-filled and not because we have earned or merited.

The favor and mercy of God are not reserved for the meritorious and the saints, but for all, including sinners.

This parable is about a master who chose to reward the workers equally regardless of the length of time they spent in service. All people, no matter when they come, are equally precious to God. The first are not necessarily first and the last not necessarily last. All are precious. In God’s plan, there is no “most favored people or nation” status. Some come into the kingdom in an hour, others in a lifetime - some enter at the beginning of their life and others at the close of their life. **No matter when a person**

comes to Christ, he/she is equally dear to him.

This parable also contains elements of compassion and generosity. It reminds us that the spirit in which work is done is more important than anything else. "What do I get out of it?" is not a praiseworthy attitude. **Do all you do with love!**

Saint of the Day, September 20 - St. Andrew Kim Tae-gon, St. Paul Chong Ha-sang and 8100 saints are remembered this day.

Saint Andrew Kim Taegon generally referred to as Saint Andrew Kim in English, was the first Korean-born Catholic priest and is the patron saint of Korea. Christianity came to Korea during the Japanese invasion in 1592. During this time a small number of Koreans were baptized, probably by Japanese soldiers who were Christians. Soon after, Korea cut itself off from the rest of the world.

When a Chinese priest secretly arrived about 12 years later, he found 4,000 Catholics who had never seen a priest. Korea's first Christian community was made up entirely of laypeople! Between 1839 and 1867, there were fierce persecutions. One hundred three members of this community were martyred along with three bishops and seven priests from the Paris Foreign Mission Society.

Andrew Kim Taegon was the son of converts, born on August 21, 1821. His father, a farmer, was also martyred. Andrew was baptized when he was 15. He then attended the seminary in Macao, China, 1,300 miles away from home. After six years Andrew returned to Korea and assumed the job of bringing missionaries into the country secretly. Almost immediately he was arrested, tortured, and beheaded on September 16, 1846.

On May 6, 1984, Pope John Paul II canonized Kim along with 102 other Korean Martyrs, including Paul Chong Hasang, during his trip to Korea.

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