

# MORNING MEDITATION

## Monday of Holy Week

**Steadfast love is unconditional, unconquerable, unfailing, unchanging, constant, enduring, and eternal.**

### Isaiah 42:1-7

The servant is raised up to proclaim justice, a time of deliverance. Isaiah describes this servant as having the finest qualities of Israel and her great leaders: noble, gentle and wise. **Learn to be noble, gentle and wise!**

### Psalm 27

**I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.  
Wait for the Lord with courage; be stouthearted and wait for the Lord.**

### John 12:1-11

Jesus attended a banquet in the home of Lazarus in Bethany. Martha served. How wonderful! Martha is at it again. She is a serving disciple. She expressed her love the way she knew best - serving and serving in the kitchen, not on a public platform or in a career lived in the eyes of men. **Service without notice...just with simple, profound, pure love! Be a serving disciple, but serve with love!**

Mary was different. Her love didn't calculate the cost. She took the precious thing she had and spent it on Jesus - love's extravagance! **Love gived all there is to give.....**

It was an honor to anoint someone's head. Mary anointed the feet of Jesus. She wasn't seeking honor. She just loved and served the best way she knew. She humbled herself in service and in care. **Serve without seeking to be honored.....**

"The house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment". What else? Martha's service and Mary's anointing - the house had to be filled with the fragrance of love.....**Love has its own fragrance and it has a way of transforming the air!**

Judas couldn't appreciate such love. He saw "extravagant waste" and nothing more. Hearts that are full of greed and jealousy and bitterness and such slings and arrows can not see and appreciate love and all love's expressions.

**Learn to appreciate the simple and the profound signs and expressions of love all around you.**

## **Saint of the Day, April 3 - St Benedict the African and 10 other saints are remembered this day.**

Benedict was born to Cristoforo and Diana Manasseri, Africans who were taken as slaves in the early 16th century to San Fratello, a small town near Messina, Sicily. They were given Italian names and later were converted to Christianity. Benedict's parents were granted freedom for their son before his birth because of their "loyal service". Like most peasants, Benedict did not attend any school and was illiterate.

During his youth, he worked as a shepherd and was quick to give what he had earned to the poor. When he was 21 years old, he was publicly insulted for his color. His patient and dignified bearing at this time was noted by the leader of an independent group of hermits on nearby Monte Pellegrino, who followed the Rule for hermit life written by St. Francis of Assisi. Benedict was quickly invited to join that community, and shortly thereafter he gave up all his earthly possessions and joined them. He served as the cook for the community and at the age of twenty-eight succeeded Jerome Lanze as leader of the group.

In 1564 Pope Pius IV disbanded independent communities of hermits, ordering them to attach themselves to an established religious Order, in this case, the Order of Friars Minor. Once a friar of the Order, Benedict was assigned to Palermo to the Franciscan Friary of St. Mary of Jesus. He started at the friary as a cook, but, showing the degree of his advancement in the spiritual life, he was soon appointed as the Master of novices, and later as Guardian of the community, although he was a lay brother rather than a priest, and was illiterate.

Benedict accepted the assignment, and successfully helped the order adopt a stricter version of the Franciscan Rule of life. He was widely respected for his deep, intuitive understanding of theology and Scripture, and was often sought for counseling. He also had a reputation as a healer of the sick. Combined, these characteristics continued to draw many visitors to him. As he enjoyed cooking, he returned to kitchen duty in his later years. Benedict died at the age of 65 in 1589. Upon his death, King Philip III of Spain ordered the construction of a magnificent tomb to house his remains in the friary church.

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