

MORNING MEDITATION

Monday, Twenty Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

**Forgiving one another for being flawed human beings
is an important key to a reasonably serene life.**

Ephesians 2:1-10

Writing to a people who believed that their salvation depended on the knowledge they acquired, the author of the letter to the Ephesians tells his readers that salvation is God's transforming gift to sinners. Salvation is not one's own doing, neither is it a reward for one's accomplishments. However, the author of Ephesians stresses the importance of leading a life of virtue, of good and kind and loving deeds, resulting from the gift of God's Grace.

The gift of salvation, the gift of Grace touches and shapes every aspect of a person's life and enables a person to live a life of virtue. Learn to live virtuous lives!

Psalm 100

**Sing joyfully to the Lord all you lands;
Serve the Lord with gladness,
Come before him with joyful song.**

Luke 12:13-21

Jesus tells the story of the "rich fool" who pulled down his barn to build a bigger one to gather in his rich harvest. The man never saw beyond himself. Neither did he see beyond this world. He lost himself even in this world!

This reminds me of the story of the rich young man who wanted to know from Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus responded to him by suggesting that he follows the commandments that he knew. The young man seemed to want to do more. Jesus invited him to do "one more thing", to sell all he had and give it to the poor and choose to follow him, if he really wanted to. The young man could not make that choice. He went away sad because he had many possessions, and he was not ready to part with them. Like the "rich fool" in today's excerpt, he failed to see beyond himself...neither did he see beyond this world.

Possessions do not guarantee life! In fact, possessions could take away the joy of life! We have choices to make: grow rich before God or the world! Being rich before the world does not guarantee life! We are challenged and inspired to consider and prayerfully reflect on our own attitude toward the passing pleasures and possessions of this world.

Saint of the Day, October 19 - Saints Isaac Jogues, Jean de Brébeuf, and Companions and 28 other saints are remembered this day

Isaac Jogues and his companions were the first martyrs of the North American continent officially recognized by the Church. As a young Jesuit, Isaac Jogues, a man of learning and culture, taught literature in France. He gave up that career to work among the Huron Indians in the New World, and in 1636, he and his companions, under the leadership of Jean de Brébeuf, arrived in Quebec. The Hurons were constantly warred upon by the Iroquois, and in a few years Father Jogues was captured by the Iroquois and imprisoned for 13 months. His letters and journals tell how he and his companions were led from village to village, how they were beaten, tortured, and forced to watch as their Huron converts were mangled and killed.

An unexpected chance for escape came to Isaac Jogues through the Dutch, and he returned to France, bearing the marks of his sufferings. Several fingers had been cut, chewed, or burnt off. Pope Urban VIII gave him permission to offer Mass with his mutilated hands: "It would be shameful that a martyr of Christ not be allowed to drink the Blood of Christ."

In 1646, he and Jean de Lalande, who had offered his services to the missionaries, set out for Iroquois country in the belief that a recently signed peace treaty would be observed. They were captured by a Mohawk war party, and on October 18, Father Jogues was tomahawked and beheaded. Jean de Lalande was killed the next day at Ossernenon. René Goupil who with Lalande, had offered his services as an oblate was tortured along with Isaac Jogues in 1642, and was tomahawked for having made the sign of the cross on the brow of some children. Father Anthony Daniel, working among Hurons who were gradually becoming Christian, was killed by Iroquois on July 4, 1648. His body was thrown into his chapel, which was set on fire.

Jean de Brébeuf was a French Jesuit who came to Canada at the age of 32 and labored there for 24 years. He composed catechisms and a dictionary in Huron, and saw 7,000 converted before his death in 1649. Having been captured by the Iroquois at Sainte Marie, near Georgian Bay, Canada, Father Brébeuf died after four hours of extreme torture. Gabriel Lalemant had taken a fourth vow, to sacrifice his life for the Native Americans. He was horribly tortured to death along with Father Brébeuf. Father Charles Garnier was shot to death in 1649 as he baptized children and catechumens during an Iroquois attack.

Father Noel Chabanel also was killed in 1649, before he could answer his recall to France. He had found it exceedingly hard to adapt to mission life. He could not learn the language, and the food and life of the Indians disgusted him, plus he suffered spiritual dryness during his whole stay in Canada. Yet he made a vow to remain in his mission until death.

These eight Jesuit martyrs of North America were canonized in 1930.

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