

MORNING MEDITATION

Monday, Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Change what cannot be accepted and accept what cannot be changed.
(Reinhold Niebuhr)

1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13

King Solomon and the elders went to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice and the priests carried the Ark of the Lord, which contained only the two stone tablets which Moses had put there. There they had a tremendous experience of the glory of the Lord and Solomon began to believe that he had built a house in which the Lord had chosen to dwell.

Psalm 132

**Advance, O Lord, to your resting place,
You and the ark of your majesty.
May your priests be clothed with justice;
Let your faithful ones shout merrily for joy.**

Mark 6:53-56

Jesus and his disciples went to a deserted place to be by themselves. People came to know about it and reached the place ahead of them. Jesus had compassion on those who were hungry and tired, and he fed them with five loaves and a couple of fish. **Jesus saw people in need and reached out to them. He and his disciples had gone to the place for rest. Seeing people in need, Jesus, moved with compassion, ministered to them.**

Then Jesus went up the mountain by himself to pray. In the middle of the night, seeing his disciples on troubled waters, he came to them and gave them courage and comfort and called them to trust in him.

Be confident. The Lord will be there in troubled times. Turn to him for strength and support in testing times.

Jesus and his disciples crossed over to Gennesareth and people came from all over to touch and be touched by Jesus.... All kinds of people found the power of healing in that touch - the healing touch of Jesus. Mark tells us that all who touched Jesus got well.

May your touch be affirming, compassionate, encouraging, gentle, healing, kind, loving, sensitive, supportive, transforming.....

Saint of the day, February 9 - St. Josephine Bakhita and 20 other saints are remembered this day

Josephine Margaret Bakhita was born around 1869 in the village of Olgossa in the Darfur region of Sudan. Historians believe that sometime in February 1877, Josephine was kidnapped by Arab slave traders. She was bought and sold many times. As a slave, her experiences varied from fair treatment to cruel. Her owners mistreated her, punished her cruelly and often incapacitated her. The wife of one of her masters ordered her to be scarred. As her mistress watched, ready with a whip, another woman drew patterns on her skin with flour, then cut into her flesh with a blade. She rubbed the wounds with salt to make the scars permanent. She would suffer a total of 114 scars from this abuse.

In 1883, the Turkish general sold her to the Italian Vice Consul, Callisto Legani. He was a much kinder master and he did not beat her. When it was time for him to return to Italy, she begged to be taken with him, and he agreed. After the arrival in Italy, she was given away to another family as a gift and she served them as a nanny. When her new mistress decided to travel to Sudan without Josephine, she placed her in the custody of the Canossian Sisters in Venice. While she was in the custody of the sisters, she came to learn about God. She was deeply moved by her time with the sisters and discerned a call to follow Christ.

When her mistress returned from Sudan, Josephine refused to leave. Her mistress spent three days trying to persuade her to leave the sisters, but Josephine remained steadfast. The superior of the institute complained to Italian authorities on Josephine's behalf. The case went to court, and the court found that slavery had been outlawed in Sudan before Josephine was born. So, she could not be lawfully made slave. She was declared free. For the first time in her life, Josephine was free and could choose what to do with her life. She chose to remain with the Canossian Sisters.

She was baptized on January 9, 1890 and took the name Josephine Margaret and Fortunata. (Fortunata is the Latin translation for her Arabic name, Bakhita). She also received the sacraments of her first holy communion and confirmation on the same day. The Archbishop who gave her the sacraments was Giusseppe Sarto, the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, who would later become Pope Pius X.

Josephine took her final vows on December 8, 1896 in the religious order of the Canossian Daughters of Charity. For the next 42 years of her life, she worked as a cook and a doorkeeper at the convent. She also traveled and visited other convents telling her story to other sisters and preparing them for work in Africa. She was gentle and charismatic and was often referred to lovingly as the "little brown sister" or honorably as the "black mother." She died on the evening of February 8, 1947. Pope John Paul II canonized her on October 1, 2000.

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