

MORNING MEDITATION

Thursday, First Week of Advent

**There is no hope of success for the person who does not have
a central purpose, or definite goal at which to aim.**

(Napoleon Hill)

Isaiah 26:1-6

Isaiah sings the song of the newly formed nation out of the survivors of great devastation. This new nation will be a nation of firm purpose, a nation that keeps faith, a nation that is just, a nation that trust the Lord. It is such a nation that the Lord keeps in peace.

God's peace, shalom is grounded in firm purpose, faithfulness, justice and trust in the Lord. Reflect on the urgency of developing these virtues.

Let us pray for a new world order.... a world where justice and peace prevail, a world that is re-established and renewed in faith.

Psalms 118

**Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
For his mercy endures forever.
It is better to take refuge in the Lord,
than to trust in man.
It is better to take refuge in the Lord,
than trust princes.....**

Matthew 7:21, 24-27

All are called to the Kingdom of God. However, crying out, "Lord...Lord..." will not give anyone access to the Kingdom. Jesus calls for sincerity of purpose. Sincerity of purpose is shown in practice, in the way we live out our purpose.

Fine words are never substitutes for fine deeds. Be sincere in your efforts to live out your faith.

There is only one proof of love and that proof is obedience (surrender).

It is not difficult to recite a creed, but to live the Christian life is demanding and challenging and often difficult.

Faith without practice is dead. Love without obedience (surrender) is impossible.

Saint of the Day, December 4 - St. John Damascene and 19 other saints are remembered this day.

John was a Byzantine monk and priest, born and raised in Damascus around the year 675 or 676. He received a classical and theological education and followed his father in a government position under the Arabs. After a few years, he resigned and went to the Monastery of Saint Sabas near Jerusalem and spent most of his life in this Monastery.

Eastern Orthodox Christian traditions and Eastern Catholic traditions have been particularly shaped by his insights. Among Eastern Christians, St. John is best known for his defense of Christian sacred art, particularly in the form of icons. While the churches of Rome and Constantinople were still united during St. John's life, the Byzantine Emperor Leo III broke radically from the ancient tradition of the church, charging that the veneration of Christian icons was a form of idolatry.

St. John began publicly opposing the emperor's command against sacred images in a series of writings. His argument was that Christians did not actually worship images, but rather, through them they worshiped God, and honored the memory of the saints and that by taking an incarnate physical form, Christ had given warrant to the Church's depiction of him in images.

He is famous for his treatise, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, a summary of the Greek Fathers, of which he became the last. He is known as a poet, one of the two greatest of the Eastern Church, the other being Romanus the Melodist. His devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and his sermons on her feasts are well known. He died at his monastery, Mar Saba, near Jerusalem on December 4, 749.

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