

MORNING MEDITATION

Saint Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor of the Church

**Simplicity leads us to tell things candidly,
and just as they exist in our hearts.**

(Saint Vincent de Paul)

Isaiah 40:25-31

Isaiah reminds his people that God, who is the author of everything and whose knowledge is beyond all understanding, is eternally present to them. God gives strength to the weak and renews the strength of those who hope in him. So stand strong and be faithful to God as God is ever faithful. Isaiah encouraged his people to live a life worthy of the covenant God had established with them.

Be strong and be a source of strength for the weak.

Psalm 103

**Bless the Lord O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.
Bless the lord, O my soul;
and forget not all his benefits.**

Mathew 11:28-30

Jesus said, “come to me all who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest.....Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.....I am meek and humble of heart.....My yoke is easy and my burden is light.....”.

My yoke is easy - The word “easy” should be translated “well-fitting”. This simply means that the yoke is “tailor-made” to fit well.

The discipline, the way, the life that Jesus offers is made to fit us well, “tailor-made” for us - it won’t hurt us, it won’t burden us.

Jesus came proclaiming good news - love, forgiveness, healing, peace - not as an avenging ruler, but proclaiming the triumph of compassion. Jesus came meek and humble, inviting all to turn to him with their burdens.....

To rest in Jesus is to dwell in him, to drink fully of his spirit, to be refreshed and renewed for life and ministry. St. Augustine says, “our hearts are restless until they come to rest in you”.

Saint of the day, December 7 - St. Ambrose and 290 saints are remembered this day.

Ambrose was born around 340 A.D. in a Roman Christian family. After Ambrose's father passed away, he was educated in Rome, where he studied law, literature and rhetoric. Ambrose received a place on the council, like his father, and was made consular prefect, or the Governor, of Liguria and Emilia around the year 372. Ambrose's headquarters were in Milan, the then second capital of Italy. He remained Governor until 374 when he became the Bishop of Milan. After the former Bishop of Milan died, Ambrose attended the election to prevent any uproars between the Nicene Church and the Arians. While giving an address, the assembly began calling for him to become the next bishop.

Ambrose was known for his Nicene beliefs, but Arians also favored him because he had previously shown charity in theological matters. However, being neither baptized or trained in theology, Ambrose refused to become the next bishop. He ran and attempted to hide, but his colleague gave him up. Within a week's time, Ambrose was baptized, ordained and duly consecrated bishop of Milan on December 7, 374. As bishop, he donated all of his land and gave his money to the poor. This made him widely popular and often times more politically powerful than even the emperor. Ambrose died on April 4, 397.

Ambrose's knowledge and abilities impressed Augustine of Hippo, who previously thought poorly of Christian preachers. After meeting Ambrose, Augustine reevaluated himself and was forever changed. In 387, Ambrose baptized Augustine. St. Monica, Augustine's mother, loved Ambrose "as an angel of God who uprooted her son from his former ways and led him to his convictions of Christ."

Ambrose was a great defender of the Church against Arianism in Milan. He often attempted to theologically dispute their propositions. Ambrose was generous to the poor. To him, giving to the poor was just a repayment of God's resources, which were intended for everyone equally. He introduced reforms in the order and manner of public worship. He was known for his "liturgical flexibility that kept in mind that liturgy was a tool to serve people in worshipping God, and ought not to become a rigid entity that is invariable from place to place."

Ambrose authored many of the Church's important writings and hymns. He is credited with composing the repertory Ambrosian chant, also known as the Antiphonal Chant. He is also credited with composing the hymn "Te Deum," which is believed to have been written when he baptized Augustine of Hippo. He is one of the four original doctors of the Church.

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