

# **MORNING MEDITATION**

**Monday, First Week of Advent**

**Have a definite, realistic and single purpose  
and dedicate yourself unreservedly to it.**

## **Isaiah 4:2-6**

Isaiah has a beautiful vision of the Messianic times when God's glory will be "shelter and protection" for the survivors of Israel, when the Lord will "create" "a smoking cloud by day and a light of flaming fire by night over the assembly of his people. The survivors, the faithful ones will find joy and happiness because the Lord will wash away their filth and create a new, holy people and protect and shelter them.

## **Psalms 122**

**I rejoiced when I heard them say:  
let us go to the house of the Lord.  
And now we have set our foot  
within your gates, O Jerusalem.**

## **Matthew 8:5-11**

Centurions were the finest men in the Roman army. The centurion mentioned in this excerpt was a man of honor. Even his attitude toward his servant was extraordinary - he was grieved that his servant was ill and he was determined to do everything to save him. This was the reverse of the normal attitude of Master to his slave. How different people are! And how easy it becomes for us to judge and put everyone into one square box.

**This calls us to overcome our prejudices and learn to go beyond common perceptions to discovering truth.**

This centurion was also a man of extraordinary faith. He wanted Jesus to heal his slave. But he had a problem - he was a Gentile and Jesus was a Jew and Jews didn't enter the house of Gentiles. He was a noble man and his faith was great. So, he could say, "you don't need to come - just say the word". This was the voice of faith. And so, Jesus declared faith as the "door" to the feast in the kingdom of God. The Jews had to learn that access to God's presence was not a matter of membership in any nation, but faith.

**Saint of the day, December 1 - Bl. Charles de Foucauld and 20 other saints are remembered this day.**

Charles de Foucauld (Brother Charles of Jesus) was born in Strasbourg, France on September 15, 1858. Orphaned at the age of six, he and his sister Marie were raised by their grandfather in whose footsteps he followed by taking up a military career. He lost his faith as an adolescent. His taste for easy living was well known to all and yet he showed that he could be strong willed and constant in difficult situations. He undertook a risky exploration of Morocco. Seeing the way Muslims expressed their faith questioned him and he began repeating, "My God, if you exist, let me come to know you."

On his return to France, the warm, respectful welcome he received from his deeply Christian family made him continue his search. Under the guidance of Fr. Huvelin he rediscovered God in October 1886. He was then 28 years old. He said, "As soon as I believed in God, I understood that I could not do otherwise than to live for him alone."

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land revealed his vocation to him: to follow Jesus in his life at Nazareth. He spent 7 years as a Trappist, first in France and then at Akbès in Syria. Later he began to lead a life of prayer and adoration, alone, near a convent of Poor Clares in Nazareth.

Ordained a priest at 43 (1901) he left for the Sahara, living at first in Beni Abbès and later at Tamanrasset among the Tuaregs of the Hoggar. He wanted to be among those who were, "the furthest removed, the most abandoned." He wanted all who drew close to him to find in him a brother, "a universal brother." In a great respect for the culture and faith of those among whom he lived, his desire was to "shout the Gospel with his life". "I would like to be sufficiently good that people would say, "If such is the servant, what must the Master be like?" On the evening of December 1, 1916, he was killed by a band of marauders who had encircled his house.

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