

MORNING MEDITATION

Friday, Twenty Second Week in Ordinary Time

**Lack of forbearance leads to disunity
and breakdown in families, communities and countries.**

I Corinthians 4:1-5

Paul had taught the Corinthians not to get into factions and parties which cause divisions in community. In this excerpt, we hear Paul urging them not to consider him and the other apostles as leaders of parties, but as servants of Christ. The Corinthians, with their party spirit, had made judgments on their leaders, preferring one to the other. Paul taught them to leave the judgments to God and accept their leaders as stewards of the mysteries which God in his goodness and mercy reveals to his people.

Psalm 37

**Trust in the Lord and do good,
that you may dwell in the land and enjoy security.
Take delight in the Lord,
And he will grant you your hearts requests.**

Luke 5:33-39

This excerpt is about a discussion Jesus had with the Scribes and the Pharisees about fasting and other religious practices. Jesus offered them a new way of seeing religious practices. He challenged them to develop new attitudes and live by new values.

Religion by rule seems to be a standard for many. Some even make an agony of their religion. Many have the idea, like the Jews of the time of Jesus, that a person was not being religious unless he/she was being uncomfortable. If it is not bitter, it is not medicine. If it is not uncomfortable, it is not religion. Jesus brought a new vision: You don't have to be uncomfortable. In fact, you need to rejoice. More than once, Jesus compared the Christian life to a wedding feast. Joy is the primary characteristic of Christian life.

**A passion for the old and a closed mind will not allow change or growth or transformation.
Never be afraid of change! Remain open to new approaches, new methods, new possibilities.
However, be discerning and wise in choosing the new. Fearlessness is a good thing.
Recklessness brings disaster.**

**Saint of the Day, September 6 - St. Eleutherius and 18 other saints are
remembered this day**

Saint Eleutherius was born in Nicopolis, Epirus, Roman Empire (now in Greece) sometime after 100 C.E. His name means "frank, honest, free-spirited". Whether that is his real name, or a description of the man is unknown. Eleutherius was Bishop of Rome from about 175 to May 24, 189 AD. It is said that he was martyred at that time.

The biggest problem Eleutherius had to face was the continuing problem of the Montanists, also known as the "New Prophecy" and the Marcionists. These were groups of people who described themselves as Christians but tended to claim that the Holy Spirit was directing them to do and say things not adopted by the orthodox church. In many ways, they were similar to the Pentacostalists of today. However, with their fasting and ascetic ways, it was difficult to piece together whether they were actually heretical or not. The most embarrassing activities they held were their large public displays of ecstatic prophesying.

In 177, Eleutherius received a letter from the Church at Lyon, France, asking him to consider carefully the Marcionists, to show mercy but to not compromise in his dealing. The letter was delivered by the deacon, Irenaeus, who shortly became the bishop of Lyon. Many of the bishops in Asia Minor, where the heresy began, were totally against the sect early on. They had synods and wrote letters, disclaiming the followers. Eventually, the followers of Montanus claimed that he, himself was the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, sent from Jesus to guide and direct the Church. That was the beginning of the end for this heresy.

Some references say Eleutherius was martyred, others that he died a natural death. In either case, Pope Eleutherius was buried on Vatican Hill after his death, near other popes.

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