

MORNING MEDITATION

Wednesday, Twenty Third Week in Ordinary Time

Serenity is a certain quality of mind which no condition or fortune can alter.

1 Corinthians 7:25-31

Paul challenged the Corinthian converts to set their priorities in light of the fact that “the world in its present form is passing away”. At the time he wrote this letter to the Corinthians, Paul was convinced of the imminence of the return of Jesus. In light of the expectation of Christ’s return, Paul invited his readers to reassess their priorities and align them with their commitment to Christ. The expectation of Christ’s return should shape and direct their thoughts, plans, choices and actions. Christians should not invest themselves into the issues and affairs of the world. Their life should characterize their expectation of the coming of Christ.

Though the exhortation of Paul was to a community that expected Christ’s immediate return, it still has meaning and value for our times. Paul’s teaching invites us even today to set our priorities straight, to invest our life into the enduring and the eternal rather than the passing realities of life, to be cautious of the standards of the world and to live our life in the context of the eternal existence of love and truth.

Psalms 45

**Hear, O daughter and see, turn your ear,
Forget your people and your father’s house.
So shall the king desire your beauty;
For he is your lord, and you must worship him.**

Luke 6:20-26

Jesus proclaims a new set of values, each of which is a challenge and radically different from what the world has to offer. He takes the accepted standards and values and turns them upside down. “Woe to you rich because you have all the comfort you are going to get”. The word Jesus uses for “have” is the word used for receiving payment in full for an account. It simply means that if we set our heart and bend all our energies to get the things which the world values, we may get them, but that’s all we may ever get.” It’s another way of saying: “You have had it!”

If you set your hearts on things of the “Kingdom” and channel your energies to being loyal to God, you may get into trouble, but “eternal joy” will be yours - “eternal” - not in the sense of lasting or everlasting, but in the sense of “what befits God”, joy that is characteristic of God. We are offered a choice: the ways of the world or the ways of God.

Saint of the Day, September 9 - St. Peter Claver and 14 other saints are remembered this day

Peter Claver was born on June 26, 1580 into a devoutly Catholic and prosperous farming family in the Catalan village of Verdú in Spain. He was born 70 years after King Ferdinand of Spain set the colonial slavery culture into motion by authorizing the purchase of 250 African slaves in Lisbon for his territories in New Spain. Peter was distressed by the number of captive African slaves brought in to port each month and the cruelty they suffered. At early age, he wrote these words in the notebook he kept throughout his life: "I must dedicate myself to the service of God until death, on the understanding that I am like a slave."

After his ordination in 1616 and for the next 38 years, he dedicated himself to the service of the slaves Cartagena, which began in the cargo hold of the slave boat after it docked. Peter Claver showed them abundant kindness, offered them nourishment, and cared for the sick and dying. He followed them to the plantation or other sites where they were sent and became their advocate for humane treatment by their masters. With the help of other Africans as interpreters, he was able to bring Jesus to them and prepare them for the sacraments. As time passed, Father Claver became a moral force for all the people of Cartagena. He preached in the city square and gave missions to sailors and traders. The people named him "Apostle of Cartagena." Father Claver died on September 8, 1654 after four years of serious illness. During his life's work, he baptized three hundred thousand black African slaves. Pope Leo XIII canonized Saint Peter Claver on January 15, 1888.

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