

MORNING MEDITATION

Thursday, Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

**In the midst of movements and chaos,
be still and let stillness bring you peace and serenity.**

James 2:1-9

James taught the community to maintain harmony. There must be no discrimination against the poor or favoritism toward the rich in Christian communities. This excerpt speaks of favoritism as a sin. The command of the Lord is “love your neighbor as yourself” and favoritism is a violation of this command.

Be gracious to all! Do all you can to maintain harmony in your community.

Psalm 34

**I will bless the Lord at all times;
His praise shall be ever in my mouth,
Let my soul glory in the Lord;
The lowly will hear me and be glad.**

Mark 8:27-33

After being on a long journey with the disciples and being with them through many exciting, challenging, and even painful experiences, Jesus raised questions about people’s opinion about him and finally the most important question: “who do you say that I am?”

Those of us who have known Jesus and walked with him for some time must still listen and keep responding that question: Who Jesus is for us and how important he has become for us. We need to deepen our own vision of Jesus.

Jesus teaches the disciples about the cost of following him – suffering, rejection, cross, death and resurrection. **Reflect on the cost of being a disciple. How much of yourself are you prepared to invest and what are you prepared to give?**

Peter came to the defense of Jesus. Jesus challenged Peter to get behind him and follow him and his way.....the way of suffering, sacrifice, total giving, even death. Peter was given a new vision, a new way of seeing and thinking and following....a way of seeing things God’s way, not his way!

Be docile. Be discerning. Learn to see things God's way!

Saint of the day, February 20

St. Jacinta & Francisco Marto and 20 other saints are remembered this day.

Saint Francisco de Jesus Marto (June 11, 1908 – April 4, 1919), his sister Saint Jacinta de Jesus Marto (March 11, 1910 – February 20, 1920) and their cousin Lúcia dos Santos (1907–2005) were children from Aljustrel, a small hamlet near Fátima, Portugal, who witnessed three apparitions of the Angel of Peace in 1916 and several apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Cova da Iria in 1917. At that time, Europe was involved in an extremely bloody war. Portugal itself was in political turmoil, having overthrown its monarchy in 1910; the government disbanded religious organizations soon after.

At the first appearance, Mary asked the children to return to that spot on the thirteenth of each month for the next six months. She also asked them to learn to read and write and to pray the rosary “to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war.” They were to pray for sinners and for the conversion of Russia, which had recently overthrown Czar Nicholas II and was soon to fall under communism. Up to 90,000 people gathered for Mary's final apparition on October 13, 1917.

The title Our Lady of Fátima was given to the Virgin Mary as a result, and the Sanctuary of Fátima became a major center of world Christian pilgrimage.

Less than two years later, Francisco died of influenza in his family home. He was buried in the parish cemetery and then re-buried in the Fátima basilica in 1952. Jacinta died of influenza in Lisbon in 1920, offering her suffering for the conversion of sinners, peace in the world, and the Holy Father. She was re-buried in the Fátima basilica in 1951. Their cousin Lúcia dos Santos, became a Carmelite nun and was still living when Jacinta and Francisco were beatified in 2000; she died five years later. Pope Francis canonized the younger children on his visit to Fátima to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first apparition, May 13, 2017.

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