

MORNING MEDITATION

Tuesday, Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Be still when afraid and pray when you are still.

Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:4

Ezekiel had an overwhelming experience of God. It would be good to read chapter 2 from beginning to end to get a good sense of the awesomeness of the experience. The scroll with the words, “lamentations and wailing and woe”, was stretched out to him to eat and then go to his people and he did. It was in exile that he heard God’s call and he was overwhelmed by the message he had to deliver and so he did nothing for some time - just sat seven days among the exiles that he was called to serve.

Psalm 119

**In the way of your decrees I rejoice,
as much as in all riches.
Yes your decrees are my delight;
they are my counselors.**

Mathew 18:1-5, 10, 12-14

The disciples wanted to know who was of greatest importance in the kingdom. Jesus responded, unless you turn and become as children, you will not enter the kingdom of God. You are going in the wrong direction, not in the direction of the Kingdom. You are aiming at personal power, prestige, etc. which is the opposite of the Kingdom. Humility is the quality of a person who belongs in the kingdom. Child’s humility, trust, dependence, innocence, purity are qualities of people of the kingdom.

Reflect on turning toward the Kingdom, away from personal power, prestige, etc.

Jesus told them the parable the lost sheep. Even one single sheep is precious. The loss of that single sheep is great. The joy of discovering the lost is even greater! So will it be with the re-discovery of every person! You are not just “another” in tens or hundreds or thousands or millions - you just are! **As you are, you are precious in the eyes of God!**

Great is the loss if you are lost! Greater is the joy of your re-discovery! Even the angels will rejoice!

Saint of the day, August 1 – St. Clare of Assisi and 14 other saints are remembered this day.

Clare was born into a noble and wealthy family in Assisi July 16, 1194. As a teen she heard Francis preach during a Lenten service in the church of San Giorgio at Assisi and asked him to help her to live after the manner of the Gospel. At the age of 18, in the middle of the night on Palm Sunday, she silently slipped out of her Father's house, through a door usually reserved for dead bodies, to meet her friend and spiritual guide in a tiny chapel in Assisi. There she cut her hair, replaced her jewels and rich garments with a dress of rough grey sackcloth tied with a rope. She entered into an intimate, lifelong relationship with Christ.

Francis placed Clare in the convent of the Benedictine nuns of San Paulo. Her father attempted to force her to return home. She clung to the altar of the church and threw aside her veil to show her cropped hair. She resisted any attempt, professing that she would have no other husband, but Jesus Christ. Clare was soon joined by her sister Catarina, who took the name Agnes. They remained with the Benedictines until a small dwelling was built for them next to the church of San Damiano, which Francis had repaired some years earlier.

Many young women joined Clare and they were known as the "Poor Ladies of San Damiano". They lived a simple life of poverty, austerity, and seclusion from the world, according to a Rule which Francis gave them as a Second Order. Clare saw herself as the servant of those who joined her in her position as the head of the convent. Her spirit continues to inspire many to live a life of prayer, poverty, simplicity, and service. By 1263, just ten years after Clare's death, the order had become known as the Order of Saint Clare. Clare endured a long period of poor health and died on August 11, 1253. She was canonized on September 26, 1255, by Pope Alexander IV.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs