

MORNING MEDITATION

Friday, First Week of Lent

While forgiveness heals the heart of old hurts, gratitude opens it to love.

Ezekiel 18:21-28

The prophet says, repent and all will be well! Virtue means strength and life. Absence of virtue means weakness and eventual death. Ezekiel says, the Lord remembers virtuous life and forgets crimes of the past. You are called to live virtuous lives!

Psalms 130

Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice;
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication!

Matthew 5:20-26

In this excerpt, Matthew offers us very challenging messages of Jesus:

- Your holiness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees! You are called to live higher standards of life. You are called to live virtuous lives!
- All forms of prayer and worship call forth reconciliation. Sacrifice and worship assume genuine confession of sin, true penitence and forgiveness from the heart. Be reconciled with others! Be reconciled now!
- Be aware of the words you speak. Be sensitive and speak affirming, encouraging, healing, supporting, empowering words!
- Be aware of words that may insult or hurt others. Words could alienate you from the community - they break down relationship. Speak words that bring life and not death.
- Make peace in time and make it now! Now is the time for reconciliation and peace!

Genuine Forgiveness is Unconditional. Learn to forgive from the heart!

Saint of the Day, February 26 - St. Isabel of France and 7 other saints are remembered this day.

Saint Isabel was born in 1271 to the King of Aragon, Spain. Baptized Elizabeth, after her

great-aunt, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, she was known in her own country by the Spanish form of that name, Isabella. At 12 years of age, she was married to Denis, King of Portugal.

She divided her day between prayer and devotions, domestic duties, public affairs, service to others, especially to those in need. She sought out the poor and unfortunate to help them; and established institutions throughout her kingdom, especially hospitals and orphanages, to aid those she could not personally reach.

She continued to love and respect her husband, bearing his neglect and infidelity with great patience. Denis, though a good ruler, was a bad subject; just, brave, generous, and compassionate in public life, but in his private relations, selfish and extravagant. When he fell seriously ill, she was constantly at his bedside. It may well have been her prayers and faithful devotion that brought about his sincere repentance before his death some months later. Denis and Isabel had two children, Alfonso and Constance. Alfonso succeeded his father as King.

Though Isabel retired to live a life of simplicity in a small home, she was often called upon to settle disputes between the rulers of that day. Her gentle nature and ability to reconcile prevented a great deal of bloodshed. In fact she was on another errand of reconciliation when, overcome by age and the extreme heat, she died on July 4, 1336.

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