

MORNING MEDITATION

Saturday, First Week in Ordinary Time

Simplify your needs. The less you need, the more free you are!

1 Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1

Samuel met Saul who had gone searching for the lost asses of his father. God had inspired Samuel with wisdom to choose a king for Israel. Samuel saw in Saul the kind of leader that Israel needed and anointed him king over Israel.

God fulfills his plan through the most unexpected people, in unexpected ways...God's ways are not our ways! Be open and prayerfully discern God's ways!

Psalm 21

**O Lord, in your strength the king is glad;
In your victory he greatly rejoices!
You have granted him his heart's desire;
You refused not the wish of his lips.**

Mark 2:13-17

Jesus invited Levi (Mathew) to leave his tax collectors post and follow him. Levi responded and gave Jesus a great reception which included the company that Levi kept and the scribes and Pharisees could neither understand nor appreciate it.

Jesus came to call all people...the good, the faithful, the bad, the unfaithful.....all kinds of people without prejudice and discrimination. This is a call and inspiration for us to rise above our own prejudices and remain open to all people.

Jesus made a bold statement: I have come to call sinners to a change of heart. Jesus saw Mathew the tax collector and all others like him as people who needed forgiveness and healing and Grace and new beginnings.

Be attentive and sensitive to people around you. It is compassion and forgiveness and healing that people need and not judgment and condemnation.

Mathew celebrated his new found freedom and joy in Jesus. He shared the truth and the goodness and the love he found with people like himself. **Share the joy you find in Jesus and his forgiving and healing love. Share it with others like yourself.**

Saint of the Day, January 15 - St. Paul the Hermit and 27 other saints are remembered this day.

Paul of Thebes, commonly known as Paul, the First Hermit or Paul the Anchorite, is regarded as the first Christian hermit. Tradition has it that he lived alone in the desert from the age of sixteen to one hundred and thirteen years of age. He was probably born around 227 C.E. in Egypt.

Paul and his married sister lost their parents when he was only 15. In order to obtain Paul's inheritance, his brother-in-law sought to betray him to the persecutors. Paul fled to the Theban desert as a young man during the persecution of Decius and Valerian around C.E. 250. Tradition tells us that he lived in the mountains of this desert in a cave near a clear spring and a palm tree. The leaves of the palm tree provided him with clothing and its fruit provided him with his only source of food until he was 43 years old, when a raven started bringing him half a loaf of bread daily. He would remain in that cave for the rest of his life, almost a hundred years.

Tradition also tells us that St. Anthony the Great visited Paul of Thebes around the year 342. Anthony the Great was told in a dream about Paul's life as a hermit and went to find him. Anthony the Great and Paul met when the latter was aged 113. They spent one day and one night together. Paul was dead when Anthony visited him again around the year 342. Anthony clothed him in a tunic which was a present from Athanasius of Alexandria and buried him. Anthony returned to his monastery taking with him the robe woven with palm leaf. He honored the robe so much that he only wore it twice a year: at the Feast of Easter, and at the Pentecost.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs