

MORNING MEDITATION

Saturday, Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

2 Timothy 4:1-8

Paul encouraged Timothy to preach the good news at all times....correcting, reproofing, appealing....to stick to this task...constantly teaching and never losing patience, whether convenient or inconvenient....be faithful to fulfilling the mission. Paul says that he has fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith and is waiting for the reward...

Be faithful to the mission God has given you when convenient and inconvenient!

Psalm 71

**I give you thanks with music on the lyre,
For your faithfulness, O my God!
I will sing your praises with the harp,
O Holy One of Israel!**

Mark 12:38-44

The scribes and the Pharisees knew what was good, right and just. But they failed to live according to the knowledge they had. They said the right things, but did not live them out in their lives. They made an impression on others as righteous people. They lived pretentious lives. Jesus challenged his disciples to live honest lives, to be faithful to the truth they have come to know, to place themselves at the service of others, to honor God rather than seek their own honor and glory, to find honor in serving others rather than being served.....

Honor God with your lives, not with your lips! Make every effort to practice what you preach and be faithful to what you have come to know as truth.

Jesus pointed to a poor widow who gave generously "from her want" as an example for all to follow. Her "two small copper coins" became a model of generosity for all generations because she gave from "what she had to live on" while many of the wealthy gave "sizable amounts from their surplus".

Be gracious! Give and give generously! Don't wait for times of surplus!

Saint of the Day, June 6

St. Norbert and 44 other saints are remembered this day.

Norbert was born in 1075 in Xanten, Germany. Through the influence of his family he obtained a financial subsidy from the parish church of St. Victor at Xanten when he accepted ordination to the subdeaconate. His only task was to chant the Divine Office at the Church, but he apparently paid someone a small fee to take his place in the choir, because he gained an appointment as a chaplain (religious counselor) to the emperor Henry V in Cologne. The salaries from the Xanten fund and the royal treasury were enough to equip him to live in the style of the nobility of the times.

He avoided ordination to the priesthood and even declined an appointment as bishop of Cambrai in 1113. One day in the spring of 1115, as he rode his horse to Vreden, a thunderbolt from a sudden storm struck at his horse's feet. After this near-fatal accident, his faith deepened, he renounced his appointment at Court and returned to Xanten to lead a life of penance, placing himself under the direction of Cono, Abbot of St Sigeberg, near Cologne. He was ordained to the priesthood soon afterward. Norbert was a great devotee of the Eucharist and Our Lady.

He visited Pope Gelasius II, who gave him permission to become an itinerant preacher and he preached throughout lands in what is now western Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and northern France. In settlement after settlement he encountered a demoralized clergy, lonely, often practicing concubinage and feeling that the official Church cared little about them.

At the Council of Reims in October 1119, Pope Calixtus II requested Norbert to found a religious order in the Diocese of Laon in France. On Christmas Day, 1120, Norbert established the Canons Regular of Prémontré. For a Rule of life, Norbert chose the Rule of St. Augustine as was common among communities of priests - 'canons'. In addition, he adapted some of the customs of the Cistercians. The whole idea was that his active priests needed an ascetic and contemplative haven.

The Order of Canons Regular of Prémontré was founded and the young community at first lived in huts of wood and clay, arranged like a camp around the chapel of Saint John the Baptist, but they soon built a larger church and a monastery for the religious who joined them in increasing numbers. In 1125, the constitution for the order was approved by Pope Honorius II.

In 1126 Pope Honorius II appointed Norbert to the Archbishopric of Magdeburg, where he put into practice the precepts that he instituted at Prémontré. Several assassination attempts were made as he began to reform the lax discipline of his diocese. He continued his work as Archbishopric of Magdeburg until his death on June 6, 1134.

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