

MORNING MEDITATION

Thursday, Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Just as exercise strengthens our muscles, stillness strengthens our spirit.

2 Timothy 2:8-15

Paul encouraged Timothy to keep reminding people: "If we have died with him, we shall also live with him. If we hold out to the end, we shall reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us. If we are unfaithful, he will still remain faithful, for he can not deny himself." Therefore try hard to make yourself worthy of God's approval, following a straight course in preaching the truth.

Psalm 25

Your ways O Lord, make known to me,
Teach me your paths,
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
For you are God my savior.

Mark 12:28-34

One of the Scribes asked Jesus about which of the commandments was the first. Jesus presented the first as loving God above all else with heart, mind, soul and strength, loving God with all you are and all you have and the second as loving "neighbor as yourself". The Scribe welcomed this insight and added that it was even worth more than any burnt offering or sacrifice. Jesus affirmed the Scribes insight and told him that he was "not far from the kingdom".

Jesus would teach, eventually, that we can be and belong in the kingdom and not just "not be far from the kingdom". To really belong in the kingdom, we must learn to "love one another as I have loved you". We must learn to love as Jesus loved. This is our challenge.

It is this "LOVE" - unconquerable benevolence that will make us "sons of God", godlike persons. That is WHO GOD IS: LOVE. We are to image HIM - His Love, His Benevolence - seeking the highest good of all.

God makes his sun rise on the good and on the wicked; He sends his rain on the just and the unjust. We are called to love others as Jesus loves us with unconditional, invincible, unconquerable, unwearied, benevolent love.....

Saint of the Day, June 4

St. Francis Caracciolo and 19 other saints are remembered this day.

St Francis Caracciolo was born on October 13, 1563 in Villa Santa Maria in the Abruzzo region, in the Kingdom of Naples. From a young age, he had a reputation for gentleness and uprightness. At age 22, he developed a troublesome skin disease resembling leprosy, one of the most dreaded diseases of the day. So serious was this attack that he was considered hopeless. With death so near, he made a vow that if he regained his health, he would spend the rest of his life in the service of God and his fellow men. He recovered so quickly after this vow, that his cure was considered miraculous. Eager to fulfil his promise to God, he went to Naples to study for the priesthood. There he befriended a man who wanted to establish a new religious community that would focus on both the active and the contemplative life. Francis helped draw up Rules for the new Order of the Minor Clerks Regular. Members of the Order agreed among themselves never to seek leadership within the group, though Francis was elected many times to serve in such positions.

Even in his capacity as superior of the Order, he insisted on sharing simple tasks: sweeping rooms, making beds, washing dishes. As a priest, Francis spent many hours in the confessional. He also begged in the streets for the poor and gave away most of his possessions to the needy. Francis died on June 4, 1608 and was canonized on May 24, 1807 in Rome by Pope Pius VII

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