

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

**The body is cleansed and strengthened by exercise and movement.
The mind is cleansed and strengthened by stillness.**

Isaiah 8:23 – 9:3

The setting is a civil war between the two kingdoms into which the Jewish nation was split after the death of Solomon: Judah (South) and Israel (North). Judah had called in the Assyrians to help. They invaded Israel and took many captives among the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali (735-732 B.C.) Isaiah saw all this as a punishment for sin, especially the king's lack of faith in God. As descendant of the great king David, they should be representatives of God on earth. They failed.

In this excerpt, Isaiah sings his dream of an ideal king, a king of peace, who would dispel darkness, bring joy in abundance, break the yoke that burdens and crush the rod of the task master.

Wait patiently and in hope.... He comes...Emmanuel...wait with courage!

Psalm 27

Psalm 27 proclaims the firm faith and boundless hope that God is all that the Psalmist longs for and God will bring deliverance, salvation. The psalmist longs for the presence of God in the Temple and protection from all enemies. He says, "I believe" and "I trust" and speaks of "seeking his face". To "seek the face" is to be in God's presence, to be in communion with God.

**The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom should I fear?
The Lord is my life's refuge;
Of whom should I be afraid?**

I Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

There were dissensions and factions in the community at Corinth. Paul wrote to the community, challenging them to be united in mind and heart. All are called to share in the life and mission of Jesus. It is unwise to take sides, form cliques, factions and exclusive groups. The disciples of Jesus must work toward cultivating and maintaining a sense of community, belongingness, unity in spirit, life and mission.

Pray for respect for differences, unity in diversity, fellowship in communities and harmony in the world.

Mathew 4:12-23

Mathew, a Jew, writing for Christians of Jewish background, sees Isaiah's dream being fulfilled in Jesus, who begins his ministry in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali. John the Baptist was arrested and imprisoned. For Jesus, time had come to go forth and fulfill His mission. So he left Nazareth and took up residence in Capernaum. He left his home never again to return to live in it. **He closed the door behind before he opened the one in front!**

He went to Galilee to begin his mission. Among the many characteristics of Galilee, one that is of special significance is that it had a mixed population, surrounded by the Gentiles.

His message was going to be proclaimed to a wider circle from the beginning - a more inclusive mission!

The message of Jesus was not preached or taught, but proclaimed..... His message was simple, pure, uncomplicated good news.... He proclaimed the good news with a voice of certainty, with a voice of authority, with the voice of God. His message was to repent, to turn from our own ways and turn to God and God's ways.....to rent your hearts, to Change your attitudes..... because the Kingdom has come..... Eternity has invaded time.....God has entered the earth in Jesus and chose to stay.....

So, it is urgent to choose to close the door behind and open the door in front and walk in.

Saint of the Day, January 26

Timothy & Titus and 9 other saints are remembered this day **Timothy**

Timothy had a Greek father and a Jewish mother named Eunice Being the product of a "mixed" marriage, he was considered illegitimate by the Jews. It was his grandmother, Lois, who first became Christian. We do not have much more information about his birth and early days. Timothy was a convert of Paul around the year 47 and later joined him in his apostolic work. He was with Paul at the founding of the Church in Corinth. During the 15 years he worked with Paul, he became one of his most faithful and trusted friends. He was sent on difficult missions by Paul—often in the face of great disturbance in local churches which Paul had founded.

Timothy was with Paul in Rome during the latter's house arrest. At some period, Timothy himself was in prison (Hebrews 13:23). Paul installed him as his representative at the Church of Ephesus. Timothy was comparatively young for the work he was doing. "Let no one have contempt for your youth," Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:12a. Several references seem to indicate that he was timid. And one of Paul's most frequently quoted

lines was addressed to him: “Stop drinking only water, have a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent illnesses” (1 Timothy 5:23). He, probably died around 97 C.E.

Titus

We do not know much about the birth and early days of Titus. He has the distinction of being a close friend and disciple of Paul as well as a fellow missionary. He was Greek, apparently from Antioch. Even though Titus was a Gentile, Paul would not let him be forced to undergo circumcision at Jerusalem. Titus is seen as a peacemaker, administrator, great friend. Paul’s second letter to Corinth affords an insight into the depth of his friendship with Titus, and the great fellowship they had in preaching the gospel: “When I went to Troas...I had no relief in my spirit because I did not find my brother Titus. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.... For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way—external conflicts, internal fears. But God, who encourages the downcast, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus...” (2 Corinthians 2:12a, 13; 7:5-6).

When Paul was having trouble with the community at Corinth, Titus was the bearer of Paul’s severe letter and was successful in smoothing things out. Paul writes he was strengthened not only by the arrival of Titus but also by his encouragement and devotion to Paul. The Letter to Titus addresses him as the administrator of the Christian community on the island of Crete, charged with organizing it, correcting abuses and appointing presbyter-bishops. Titus probably died around 94 C.E.

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