

FOR JUSTICE TAKE A MINUTE TO MEDITATE TODAY

08/09/10 through 08/15/10 5-32

MONDAY

The servant who knew his master's will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely; and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating shall be beaten only lightly. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

- **Luke 12:47-48**

Luke reminds us that God wants to give us the kingdom of God (the horizon and goal of hope) and offers advice on faithful conduct in the present. The Master is the risen Jesus, who will come again as the glorious Son of Man, and the servants are his followers. The future coming of the Son of Man is certain, but its precise time is not known. Therefore the proper attitude for the servants is constant watchfulness. They should not use the master's apparent delay as an excuse for improper behavior. The hope of the faithful servants is that they will enjoy the fullness of God's kingdom.

- **Fr. Daniel Harrington**

TUESDAY

For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

- **Galatians 5:13-14**

True freedom, freedom worthy of the sons and daughters of God, is that freedom which most truly safeguards the dignity of the human person. It is stronger than any violence or injustice. Such is the freedom which has always been desired by the Church, and which she holds most dear. It is the sort of freedom which the Apostles resolutely claimed for themselves. The apologists defended it in their writings; thousands of martyrs consecrated it with their blood.

- **Pope Leo XIII**

WEDNESDAY

Whoever is united with the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

- **1 Corinthians 6:17-17**

When the spirit of man attains to the wisdom of mystical theology – that is, to divine union – he is already illuminated with the light of eternal truth; his faith is rendered firm, his hope is strengthened, and his charity is enkindled. Wherefore, if all the wise men of the world were to say to a man experienced in mystical union, "You are miserably deceived; your faith is not true," he would answer at once: "Nay, you are all deceived, for my faith is most true and absolutely certain." Thus he would reply with the upmost confidence, having in his heart an infallible foundation, not much through the investigation of reason as by the union of love. For such a man knows the Godhead better than many learned masters of theology who have never been admitted into the Holy of holies and the secret chamber of the eternal King, and have never been illuminated in any extraordinary way with the light of grace. God unfolds to him the secret power of the divine Scriptures, and gives him to know and spiritually relish the Gospels. He, therefore, drawing true wisdom rather from the influence of the Holy Spirit than from the reading of many books, understands clearly what should be done and what left undone by himself and others.

Those, indeed, who are united to God without any intermediary, and follow him freely to work in them, are the most dear friends of God, and in one little hour are of more advantage to the Church than others who have not attained to this

union can be in many years. These intimate friends and children of God rejoice with a happy and peaceful liberty of mind, raised above cares, above all disturbance, above the fear of death, purgatory, hell, and of all things that can happen to the soul in time and in eternity.

- **Fr. Francois-Louis de Blois (Blosius the Venerable)**

THURSDAY

Repent, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be wiped away, and that the Lord may grant you times of refreshment and send you the Messiah already appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the times of universal restoration of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.

-**Acts 3:19-21**

Biblically speaking, to repent doesn't mean to feel sorry about, to regret. It means to turn, to turn around 180 degrees. It means to undergo a complete change of mind, heart, direction. Turn away from madness, cruelty, shallowness, blindness. Turn toward the tolerance, compassion, sanity, hope, justice that we all have in us at our best.

- **Frederick Buechner**

FRIDAY

Although the body was duly buried, it did not remain in the state of death, neither was it dissolved by decay.... You were transferred to your heavenly home, O Lady, Queen and Mother of God in truth.

- **St. John Damascene**

The Assumption looks to eternity and gives us hope that we, too, will follow Our Lady when life is ended. The prayer for the feast reads; "All-powerful and ever-living God: You raised the sinless Virgin Mary, mother of your Son, body and soul, to the glory of heaven. May we see heaven as our final goal and come to share her glory."

In 1950, in apostolic Constitution, Pope Pius XII proclaimed the assumption of Mary a dogma of the Catholic Church in these words: "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heaven." With that, an ancient belief became Catholic doctrine and the assumption was declared a truth revealed by God.

- **Fr. Clifford Stevens**

Fast from disbelief. Read the story of the belief in "The Assumption" since Apostolic times.

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/answers/aofmary.htm>

SATURDAY

In the treatise on prayer, in the Dialogue of Catherine of Siena, she continues her presentation of the tenets of Roman Catholic orthodoxy, and she offers advice regarding what must be done in order for the full meaning of the tenets to be realized in the life of the individual. When the question is asked in the divine soliloquy about the way in which imperfection is lost and perfection acquired, the answer follows immediately: "By perseverance seasoned with the most holy faith." Even if vocal prayer is imperfect it should be practiced lest one fall into the worse state of idleness. Catherine speaks from the depths of personal experience of perseverance, and often her asceticism may be discerned. When, for example, God is discoursing on the glory of His charity and mercy, which are extended to the unjust as well as the just, He adds that He often gives "more to the sinner than to the righteous man, because the righteous man is able to endure privation, and I take from him the goods of the world that he may the more abundantly enjoy the goods of heaven." If there is in some an invincible ignorance, there must surely be in others an invincible faith, and Catherine's faith is such. When desolation, suffering, and persecution are interpreted as proofs of God's mercy and love and become causes for praise, it is clear that here is a faith forged in the crucible of personal experience and validated in the mystical union which lies beyond human understanding. It is to descriptions of the various phases of the mystic state that the remainder of this section is dedicated.

The final treatise on obedience makes explicit what has been implicit throughout: attainment of the state whereby one is able to receive the glorious divine vision depends upon one's unquestioning obedience. The perfectly obedient soul "passes by the assaults of the devils, mortifying and macerating his flesh, stripping it bare of all pleasures," for it clothes itself with the "labors of the order in a faith which despises nothing." The obedient soul remembers not "the injuries, pains, or blows inflicted upon her by his superior in the order, but calling him humbly, turns to him without anger, hatred, or rancor, but with meekness and benevolence." He pains of the present, after all, are scarcely comparable to the joys which will come to the obedient person later in Heaven. A recapitulation of the major themes brings the work to a close on an exalted note of mystical rapture.

Though Catherine will be remembered for her activities in the politico-ecclesiastical sphere, for her published prayers. And for her nearly four hundred letters which have been ranked as equal to the work of Petrarch for beauty and significance, it is her Dialogue which shows most clearly her claim to spiritual greatness. (Part 3 of 3)

- **Unknown**

SUNDAY

Work for six days, and rest on the seventh.

- **Exodus 23:12**

Be still, and know that I am God.

- **Psalms 46:10**

FOR JUSTICE

TAKE A MINUTE TO MEDITATE TODAY

08/16/10 through 08/22/10 5 – 33

MONDAY

The Lord said to Peter. “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism, with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!

- **Luke 12:49-50**

Good religion is about being on fire and about liberation. It is about putting people on fire with life. It is about setting people free. Religious faith should be something that is exciting and energizing. It puts us on fire and sets us free. It involves risks and sometimes even causes tension and division.

The message of Jesus causes division. Not all are able to accept it – even within the same family. We also may struggle with it and resist it from time to time. Ultimately, it should lead us to freedom and life. Ultimately, we should end up on fire even in the midst of opposition. The message has power. It is worth the risk.

Good religion wakes people up and helps them be on fire. People become aware of life, aware of others, aware of God, aware of the poor, aware of injustice, aware of the problems, aware of the possibilities, aware of a new vision. Good religion leads people to awareness, and puts them on fire – on fire with love, filled with life, energized for service and solidarity. Our religion calls us to get into action – to speak up for justice, to serve the poor and all who are in need, to be aware of the struggles of the world, to work for the liberation of the oppressed, to relax in a deep trust in God, to include all people in our circle of community, to be a light to the world in the midst of darkness, to set people free, to proclaim justice for all, to be on fire with faith, hope, and love.

- **Fr. John Bucki**

TUESDAY

We who are receiving the unshakable kingdom should have gratitude, with which we should offer worship pleasing to God in reverence and awe. For our God is a consuming fire.

- **Hebrews 12:28-29**

The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire.

- **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

WEDNESDAY

Jesus said to his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.”

- **Matthew 16:15-17**

I've said that... faith, by which we believe that Christ Jesus has risen from the dead, is what distinguishes us from the pagans... Were the demons ignorant of all this, or did the demons not believe these things, which they also saw? Already, before he has risen, they cried out and said, "We know who you are, the Son of God." We were distinguishing ourselves from the pagans by believing that Christ has risen again. If we possibly can, let's differentiate ourselves from the demons. What is it, I ask you, what is it that the demons said? "We know who you are, the Son of God." And they are told, "Be quiet" (Mark 1:25). Didn't they say exactly what Peter also said, when Jesus was inquiring of the disciples, and said "Who do people say I am?" And when they had answered about other people's opinions, he questioned them once more and said, "You, though, who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Thus the demons, thus Peter; thus evil-minded spirits, thus the apostle. And the demons are told, "Be quiet;" Peter is told "Blessed are you."

What made the difference for them, also makes the difference for us. What made the demons cry out like this? Fear. What made Peter? Love. Take your choice, stick to it with love. That's the faith which differentiates Christians from demons...

Be on fire with the ardor of charity, in order to differentiate yourselves from demons. This ardor whirls you upward, takes you upward, lifts you up to heaven. Whatever vexations you suffer on earth, however much the enemy may humiliate Christian hearts and press them downward, the ardor of love seeks the heights... The Lord is always ready to give; let us choose to receive with open, expansive hearts.

- **St. Augustine of Hippo**

THURSDAY

In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Because, if God so loved us, we also must love one another.

- **1 John 4:10-11**

Two of the most important verses in the Bible, in my opinion, are 1 John 4:10-11. They are the verses that began my own transformation by the renewing of my mind. These verses became the bedrock of my dominant narrative about God. Our love of God does not determine God's attitude toward us. God loves us first, and we see that clearly in God's Son offering his life in order to reconcile us to God. And that love propels me to love God and others in return. God first loved us and will never stop loving us. The primary thing God wants from us is not improved moral behavior (which will come), but to love God because he first loves us.

- **James Bryan Smith**

FRIDAY

Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I say that Christ became minister of the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, but so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

- **Romans:15:7-9**

The purpose of the development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act, also called the Dream Act, is to help those individuals who meet certain requirements, have an opportunity to enlist in the military or go to college and have a path to citizenship which they otherwise would not have without this legislation. It would give an opportunity to undocumented immigrant students, who have been living in the U.S. since they were young, a chance to contribute back to the country that has given so much to them and a chance to utilize their hard earned education and talents.

- **DAP 218 6 0**

Fast from isolation. Learn how you can welcome and support another with the Dream Act Legislation
<http://dreamact.info/students>

SATURDAY

Not all hesychasts read. Many in past ages have been illiterate. Those advanced in prayer (usually in old age) need no further "information" than what the Prayer of the Heart, activated by the Holy Spirit, pours into them. But there is a tradition of reading among Eastern Christian monks, and hesychasts through the ages have been formed by it. It is all very good stuff, and as appropriate and "relevant" today as it ever was.

First, the Holy Gospels. There is a wonderful interrelation between the Gospels and the Jesus Prayer. The Gospels feed the Prayer, and the Prayer opens the ears ever wider to the depths of meaning in the Gospels. Read the four Gospels

through from beginning to end, then start over. This is a lifetime reading program. Read a little each day. Just a few verses read “from the heart” is sufficient. There is no hurry to finish a Book with which you are never going to be finished. Live with it. In time, its words and phrases, its very way of thinking, will become your own. This will help you acquire the mind of Christ.”

Next, the Epistles of St. Paul. For these, it helps very much to have an annotated edition of the Bible. There are many things in St. Paul which are “hard to understand,” as St. Peter rightly observes, and a good commentary by some reliable Orthodox or Roman Catholic theologian will be helpful. St. Paul’s Epistles are themselves such a fine commentary on the Gospels that it is well worth the mental effort required to thread one’s way through the argumentations of this great rabbinical mind. To those who say, “I’m not intelligent enough to understand St. Paul, I say; trust the Holy Spirit to help you.

Read also the three little epistles of St. John, the “beloved disciple”-the Theologian, as we call him.

Read the Psalms, the Prayer Book of the Church. Read them according to any plan you wish: one of the great liturgical traditions Anglican, Roman, Byzantine, or other – or according to some simpler and more spontaneous system of your own. For the beginner, and even for the more experienced, some kind of structured, formal prayer is very helpful, and the Psalms are the backbone of the formal prayer services of all the great Christian liturgical traditions. If you read the Psalms “from the heart” often enough so that their words and phrases, their feelings and aspirations, become your own, you will have been schooled very well in the art and science of prayer.

Read the rest of the Bible. Good notes by trustworthy theologians help. Never confine your Bible reading to your “favorite passages.” You will end up fashioning a private “revelation” and a private “spirituality.” Such a revelation, such a spirituality cannot be authentic. Read the whole Bible, even the boring or vindictive or violent passages. To those who say, “I can’t understand this, I can’t accept that,” I say: trust the Holy Spirit to help you. You must be a Christian of the Church, and the Bible is at the same time the Church’s most inspired literary production and her most precious source of written Tradition. It cannot be ignored, either in whole or in part. Read it according to any plan you like, at any speed you like. But read it all.

Those who are members of one of the Orthodox or “Uniate” Catholic Churches may have access to the hymnody of the Byzantine Rite, whether through participation in daily Matins and Vespers in some church or monastery that offers them to the public, or through private reading or singing from our liturgical books. We regard our hymnody as far more than merely the “papers” of an ecclesiastical “rite.” The eastern Orthodox Church ranks its vast repertoire of liturgical hymns and prayers as one of the fountains of Orthodoxy, along with the Bible, the Ecumenical Councils and the Fathers. The Christian who knows and can sing “from the heart” the hymns of our Church has received a far better theological training than any academic course of studies alone can give. And those of you who want to understand better our ascetical tradition, whether hesychasm exclusively, or the wider tradition of which it is a part, will find the liturgical poetry of our Church an excellent background and key to the rich mystical and ascetical literature of our Apostolic Churches of the East. More than that, the hymnody of our offices teaches you how to pray. The Psalms, the backbone of our Church Offices, school you in that universal art and science of prayer which is shared by all the Church in Christ. The hymnody introduces you to that particular style and modality of this art and this science that has produced the spirituality of the Christian Church. (Part 3 of 4)

- **A Priest of the Byzantine Church**

SUNDAY

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Exodus 23:12

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- Psalms 46:10

FORWARD to a friend

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