

# MORNING MEDITATION

## Monday, Third Week in Ordinary Time

**The true purpose of life in the physical world  
is the development of the eternal soul.**

### **Hebrews 9:15, 24-28**

Christ is the mediator of a new Covenant. Christ has entered the eternal sanctuary and he appears before God on our behalf. Through Christ we receive the promised eternal inheritance.

### **Psalm 98**

Sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvelous deeds;  
His right hand has won victory for hi, his holy arm.

### **Mark 3:22--30**

Jesus was accused of being possessed by Beelzebul. Jesus asked them how Satan could expel Satan.....internal dissention, disintegration within would cause kingdoms to fall. Jesus had to be in harmony with goodness, with truth, with love, with God to stand against evil forces. **Harmony within is a necessary condition for overcoming enemy forces, whatever the enemy may be! Reflect on need for unity, integrity, harmony!**

In Jewish thought (not as we understand it today), the Holy Spirit had two great functions: the revelation of God's truth and enabling men to recognize that truth when it is revealed. This Gospel passage (Mk.28-30) should be understood in light of this concept of the Holy Spirit. If a man, by repeated refusal of God's guidance (Holy Spirit's revelation) has lost the ability to recognize goodness when he sees it and if he has got his moral values so twisted (inverted) that evil to him is good and good to him is evil - then he is not conscious of sin, he can not repent and therefore he can not experience forgiveness. And that is the sin against the Holy Spirit.

**This passage speaks more about the need for recognizing evil and evil forces; repenting of ones' failures and accepting forgiveness...than about not being forgiven of a particular sin. Reflect on the need to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**

**Pray for the gift of discernment. Pray for those who have not been enlightened, those who have not come to know the truth, those who have not experienced Forgiveness and Grace.**

**Saint of the day, January 27 – St. Angela Merici and 19 other saints are remembered this day.**

St. Angela Merici was born on March 21, 1474 in Desenzano, a small town in Lombardy, Italy. Angela and her older sister became orphans at the age of 10 and went to live with their uncle in Salo. There they led a quiet and devout Catholic Christian life. After the untimely death of her sister, Angela dedicated herself to the Lord and give her life in service to the Church to help everyone grow closer to the Lord. She joined the Third Order of St. Francis where she also pledged to remain a consecrated virgin, forsaking marriage to one man to be married to the Lord and His Church.

When Angela was 20 years old, her uncle died, and she returned to Desenzano. She found that around her hometown there were many young girls who had no education and no hope. Her heart was moved. She also became distressed by their ignorance and upset at the parents who had not educated them. Angela became convinced that there was great need for a better way of teaching these young girls. So, she opened her own home to them and began to teach them herself. She devotedly taught them the Catholic Christian faith. By her example and instruction, she taught them to pray and participate in the sacramental life of the Church. She evangelized and catechized these young girls, opening them up to the life of grace.

On November 25, 1535, Angela gathered together 12 young virgins and laid down the foundation for the Order of the Ursulines. Her goal was to elevate family life through Christian education for women. The community she founded was different than many of the religious orders of women which existed in her day. She believed it was important to teach the girls in their own homes with their own families. One of her favorite sayings was, "Disorder in society is the result of disorder in the family."

Though the women in the community wore no special religious habit and took no formal vows, Angela wrote a Rule of Life for those who lived and served in the community of women. They did pledge to live a life of consecrated celibacy, poverty and obedience. They lived this Rule of Life within their own homes. This was the first group of consecrated women to work outside of a formal cloister or convent in her day and became the first teaching order of women in the Catholic Church. The community existed as what is called a "secular institute" until years after Angela's death.

Angela Merici died on January 27, 1540. She was beatified on April 30, 1768 by Pope Clement XIII and canonized May 24, 1807 by Pope Pius VII. Her Rule was officially approved by Pope Paul III in 1544 and the Ursulines became a recognized religious community of women with a teaching ministry.

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