

MORNING MEDITATION

Baptism of the Lord

**We are created, ordained, baptized
and anointed as sons of God to image God.**

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

This excerpt is one of Isaiah's servant songs which describe the character of the Servant of God who brings forth truth and justice gently and peacefully and without violence. In it the prophet offered a vision of the identity of Israel as a nation through which God's loving care and saving power would be revealed to all nations. Israel was to be the symbol of unity and strength, harmony and peace, justice and the mercy of God. Through the servant Israel God's justice, mercy and salvation would be revealed to all nations.

Jesus is the gentle servant of justice, mercy and salvation. We who follow him must continue his mission of revealing God's justice, mercy and salvation for all.

Psalms 29

Psalms 29 is a hymn inviting members of the heavenly court to acknowledge God's supremacy by ascribing glory and might to God alone. Divine glory and might are dramatically visible in the storm. The storm apparently comes from the Mediterranean onto the coast of Syria-Palestine and then moves inland. The psalm concludes with a prayer that God will impart the power just displayed to the Israelite king.

**Give to the Lord, you sons of God,
Give to the Lord Glory and Praise,
Give to the Lord the Glory due his name,
Adore the Lord in holy attire.**

Acts 10:34-38

Peter told the community that he had come to know God as impartial and that anyone who fears God and lives upright lives is acceptable to God. This excerpt tells us that Peter spoke to the community from the house of Cornelius. This itself is a sign of the change of Peter's attitude. Peter had come to know and accept Cornelius and his household while giving up his old attitudes toward the gentiles.

We are invited to change out attitudes toward people of other cultures and nations

and religions and give witness to our solidarity with them and commit ourselves to the well-being of all people.

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

The disciples of John the Baptist wanted to know whether he was the messiah they were waiting for. John made it clear to them that he was not even worthy to untie the sandal straps of the Messiah. He saw his mission as preparing the way of the Messiah. He called people to conversion and to wait for the good news. He announced the coming of some one who will baptize with water and the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist inspires us to be humble, and be at the service of others in serving God. He calls us to give God first place, to seek God's honor. He calls us to point to Christ, to draw people to Christ rather than to our own self.

Jesus came to John to be baptized and John recognized him as the one for whom he was preparing the way. As Jesus was being baptized John saw the spirit rest on him and heard the assurance that Jesus was the beloved Son of God.

Pray that you may have the gift of recognizing Jesus as he reveals himself through the many events, situations and people in your life.

When Jesus was baptized, he was Identified and affirmed as the beloved son of God and empowered with the Holy Spirit. This is what happens at our own baptism. We are identified and affirmed as "sons of God" and empowered with the Holy Spirit to live as sons of God and to fulfill the mission entrusted to us. To be identified as "Sons of God" means to be immersed into the very likeness of God. "Like father, like son" is an old expression indicating that the son has the characteristics of the father. This is what it means to be sons of God...to be immersed into the character of God, to be identified with the image of God, to be named to image God.

Pray that you may be gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit to image God and to fulfill the mission God has given to you.

Saint of the day, January 12 - Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys and 25 other saints are remembered this day.

Marguerite Bourgeoys, was born, sixth of 12 children in Troyes, France on April 17, 1620. At the age of 20, she believed that she was called to religious life. Her applications to the Carmelites and Poor Clares were unsuccessful. A priest friend suggested that perhaps God had other plans for her.

In 1654, the governor of the French settlement in Canada visited his sister, an Augustinian canoness in Troyes. Marguerite belonged to a sodality connected to that convent. The governor invited her to come to Canada and start a school in Ville-Marie (eventually the city of Montreal). When she arrived, the colony numbered 200 people with a hospital and a Jesuit mission chapel.

Soon after starting a school, she realized her need for coworkers. Returning to Troyes, she recruited a friend, Catherine Crolo, and two other young women. In 1667, they added classes at their school for Indian children. A second trip to France three years later resulted in six more young women and a letter from King Louis XIV, authorizing the school. The Congregation of Notre Dame was established in 1676 but its members did not make formal religious profession until 1698 when their Rule and constitutions were approved. Marguerite established a school for Indian girls in Montreal. At the age of 69, she walked from Montreal to Quebec in response to the bishop's request to establish a community of her sisters in that city.

Marguerite survived many threats in the twenty-six years she had been in wilderness of Canada. She had lived through Iroquois attacks, a fire that destroyed her small village, plagues on the ships that she took back and forth to France, but nothing threatened her dreams and hopes more than what her own bishop said to her in 1679. He told her that she had to join her Congregation of Notre Dame with its teaching sisters to a cloistered religious order of Ursulines.

Marguerite was not ready to surrender to the bishop. There was too much at stake. She reminded him that the Ursulines, because they were cloistered, could not go out and teach, as her Sisters had done. The poor and uneducated would not and could not travel to a Quebec cloister over miles of frontier at the risk of their lives. But her Sisters were more than willing to live in huts in order to fulfill their call from God. She had set up schools all over the territory, not just for children. How could they do the work for God that they had done so well in a cloister?

The bishop replied, "I cannot doubt, Mother Bourgeoys, that you will succeed in moving heaven and earth as you have moved me!" The Congregation remained an active teaching order, one of the very first of its kind for women. Their rule had to go through one more attempt at turning them into a cloister but Marguerite lived to see the triumph when their Rule was made official in 1698. She died on January 12, 1700 in Montreal. She was canonized in 1982 by Pope John Paul II.

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