

MORNING MEDITATION

Wednesday, Second Week in Ordinary Time

Being purposeful is having a clear focus.

Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17

This excerpt describes the qualities of the priesthood of Melchizedek as the priesthood of righteousness and peace, as royal and eternal, without beginning and end and as superior to the priesthood of Aaron. Jesus is presented as the priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Psalm 110

**Yours is princely power from the day of your birth.
In holy splendor before the daystar, like the dew I begot you."
The LORD has sworn and will not waver:
"Like Melchizedek you are a priest forever."**

Mark 3:1-6

Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on a Sabbath. Our Gospel does not tell us anything more about this man. The Gospel according to Hebrews, which was one of the early Gospels that didn't get into the New Testament, tells us that this man was a stone mason. He said to Jesus, "I was a stone mason, seeking my living with my hands. I pray you, Jesus, to give me back my health so that I shall not need to beg for food in shame."

Jesus gave the man his health, his dignity, his self-respect and work for his living. Sabbath was not a barrier for Jesus to restore someone's dignity and worth, to heal and bring wholeness.

To the Pharisee, religion was ritual; it meant obeying certain rules and regulations. One could be very religious without being sensitive to human needs, blind to the tears of the world around.

To Jesus, religion had to find its way into service, into the care of human beings. Religion was love of God and of people. Ritual was irrelevant compared with love in action. To Jesus, the most important thing was not correct performance of rituals, but spontaneous response to the human need. There is no time so sacred that it can not be used for helping a person in need.

Saint of the Day, January 22 - St Vincent of Zaragoza and 19 others are remembered this day.

Vincent was born at Huesca, near Saragossa, Spain during the latter part of the 3rd century, the actual date is not known. He spent most of his life in the city of Saragossa, where he was educated and ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Valerius of Saragossa, who commissioned Vincent to preach throughout the diocese. Because Valerius suffered from a speech impediment, Vincent acted as his spokesman.

When the Roman Emperor Diocletian began persecuting Christians in Spain, both were brought before the Roman governor, Dacian in Valencia. Vincent and his bishop Valerius were confined to the prison of Valencia. Though he was finally offered release if he would consign Scripture to the fire, Vincent refused. Speaking on behalf of his bishop, he informed the judge that they were ready to suffer everything for their faith, and that they could pay no heed either to threats or promises.

His outspoken manner so angered the governor that Vincent was inflicted every sort of torture on him. He was stretched on the rack and his flesh torn with iron hooks. Then his wounds were rubbed with salt and he was burned alive upon a red-hot gridiron. Finally, he was cast into prison and laid on a floor scattered with broken pottery, where he died. During his martyrdom he preserved such peace and tranquility that it astonished his jailer, who repented from his sins and was converted. Vincent's dead body was thrown into the sea in a sack but was later recovered by the Christians and his veneration immediately spread throughout the Church. The aged bishop Valerius was exiled.

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