

Conversion

Psalm 40: 2-9

I waited, waited for the Lord;
Who bent down and heard my cry,

Drew me out of the pit of destruction,
Out of the mud of the swamp,
Set my feet upon rock, steadied my steps,
And put a new song in my mouth,
A hymn to our God.

Many shall look on in awe
And they shall trust in the Lord.

Happy those whose trust is the lord,
Who turn not to idolatry
Or to those who stray after falsehood.

How numerous, O Lord, my God,
You have made your wondrous deeds!
And in your plans for us
There is none to equal you.

Should I wish to declare or tell them,
Too many are they to recount.

Sacrifice and offering you do not want;
But ears open to obedience you gave me.

Holocausts and sin-offerings you do not require;
So I said, "Here I am;
Your commands for me are written in the scroll.

To do your will is my delight;
My God, your law is in my heart!"

All: Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen

1st Reader: (please read slowly)

I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean, from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.
Ezekiel 36: 24-28

2nd Reader: (please read slowly)

Whenever we come together to listen to the Word of God, what we are seeking at bottom is not mental information or moral instruction or even a sentimental influence that will make us "feel" the presence and goodness of God. What we seek with all our soul, rather, is the possibility of opening ourselves up in prayer to God's transforming action. Whether we are fully conscious of it or not, in other words, we desire a change of life, a conversion from what we presently are to a more precise embodiment of the likeness of Christ at the center of our being, radiating out from us through all our thoughts, words, and actions.

This is why the life of contemplation is the boldest and most adventuresome of undertakings, for what could be more radical, more truly earth-shattering, than the willingness to be dismantled and created anew, not once or twice in a lifetime, but day after day? “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” (2 Cor 5:17) But being created in this sense is not a passive work. Our “clay” is the spiritual stuff of our will and freedom and thoughts and feelings and desires, and all of these have to be surrendered every day anew to God’s power. We cannot become new creations without actively participating in our remaking by the Holy Spirit. Erasmio Leiva-Merikakis *The Way of the Disciple* p. 18

3rd Reader: (please read slowly)

Pursue what you should desire above all else, namely, to have the Spirit of God and God’s grace working in you, to pray always with purity of heart and to have humility, patience in persecution and in infirmity, and to love those who persecute and rebuke and slander you. [cf. *Earlier Rule* XVII 15-16]

******Quiet Contemplative Time******

Time for sharing particular words or ideas that touched you

******Intercessions******

Our Father...

All: May the Lord bless us with openness to the Spirit’s transforming power, that we may come to be, as Francis was, formed into a more precise embodiment of the likeness of Christ. Amen



Formation Visioning
Workshop

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