Friday of 1st Week of Lent

DRINK

"We must detach ourselves from all, for the all who is Jesus Christ, and we must trust him alone." St. John of God

ST JOHN OF GOD

At eight years old, John, born Juao Duarte Cidade, heard a visiting priest speak of adventures that were waiting in the age of 1503 with new worlds being opened up. That very night he ran away from home to travel with the priest and never saw his parents again. They begged their way from village to village until John fell sick.
The man who nursed him back to health, the manager of a large estate, adopted John. John worked as a shepherd in the mountains until he was 27. Feeling pressure to marry the manager's daughter, whom he loved a sister, John took off to join the Spanish army in the war against France. As a soldier, he was hardly a model of holiness, taking part in the gambling, drinking, and pillaging that his comrades enjoyed. Drink had a great hold on him and often caused him to become another person. One day, he was thrown from a stolen horse near French lines. Frightened that he would be captured or killed, he reviewed his life and vowed impulsively to make a change.

After hearing a sermon from the famous John of Avila on repentance, he was so overcome by the thought of his sins that the whole town thought the little bookseller had gone from simple eccentricity to madness. He was hospitalized and while still a patient, he began helping to care for other patients. He went on caring for the sick and the poor, and starting hospitals for the poor. John showed great love for others and in sharing God's love was known as St. John of God. Over time John learned that the thirst he had for drink was really a thirst to experience God's love and share that love with all those he met. He went from being the false self of John of Drink to being the true self of John of God. We all could probably call ourselves by a name connected to a vice and forget our connection to God.

Drink often leads to forgetfulness where we can forget who we are. Many people say they need drink to relax or give them a pick me up. They believe the lie that only drink can allow them to be their true selves. The truth is that only God can help us to become our true selves especially when we drink the Eucharist. Do you believe that God can help you to remember who you are when you choose to drink of the chalice of salvation?

For your prayer

St. John would have prayed with Ezekiel 18:21-28. Use your imagination as you slowly read Ezekiel 18:21-28. Please reflect on what vices you need to turn away from in your life in order to live. Now choose to see the fairness of God's way by turning away from this vice and receiving new life in the Eucharist.