Friday of 4th Week of Lent

STATUS

"Envy is the mother of murder. Through this Cain slew Abel his brother; through this Esau (would have slain) Jacob, and his brethren Joseph, through this the devil all mankind. Thou indeed now killest not, but thou dost many things worse than murder, desiring that thy brother may act unseemly, laying snares for him on all sides, paralyzing his labors on the side of virtue, grieving that he pleaseth the Master of the world. Yet thou warrest not with thy brother, but with Him whom he serves, Him thou insultest when thou preferest thy glory to His. And what is in truth worst of all, is that this sin seems to be an unimportant one, while in fact it is more grievous than any other; for though thou showest mercy and watchest and fastest, thou art more accursed than any if thou enviest thy brother." -Saint John Chrysostom

ST HELENA

St. Helena is best known as the Empress mother of Constantine the Great. However, she also struggled with envy by desiring the status of others. She was a native of Bithynia, who married the then Roman general Constantius I Chlorus about 270. Helena was motivated to marry in order to become an empress because she thought this status would bring her fulfillment. Constantine was born soon after the marriage, and in 293, Constantius was made Caesar, or junior emperor. Constantius divorced Helena to marry co Emperor Maximian's stepdaughter. Without any special status Helena started to be grateful for her status of just being a mother. Constantine became emperor in 312 after the fateful victory at Milvian Bridge, and Helena was named Augusta, or empress. It was at the moment that she no longer felt the need for special status that she attained the status she had once desperately desired. She converted to Christianity and performed many acts of charity, including building churches in Rome and in the Holy Land. On a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Helena discovered the True Cross. Helena found the true cross because of her pure motivations not to gain status but to help others realize their true status as Christians or Beloved ones of God.

The deadly sin of envy involves making status a false God. We become convinced that attaining a certain status in life will bring fulfillment. However, desiring the status of another only blinds us to the status we have already been given as Beloved of God. Being God's Beloved is the best status there is. Yet, we seek other status because of how we allow envy to blind us to the only status that matters. How have you desired to have certain positions or status in your life and been blinded to your status as a Beloved one of God?

For your prayer

St. Helena would have prayed with John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30. Use your imagination as you slowly read John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30. Please reflect on how people so often thought they knew Jesus status due to where he was from. Reflect on how you might have mistakenly judged someone's status from where they were from or been envious of the status of another.