

Readings for Thursday, May 14, 2026

Pachomius of Tabenissi – *Monastic, 348*

Psalm 16

- 1 Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you; *
I have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord,
my good above all other."
- 2 All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land, *
upon those who are noble among the people.
- 3 But those who run after other gods *
shall have their troubles multiplied.
- 4 Their libations of blood I will not offer, *
nor take the names of their gods upon my lips.
- 5 O LORD, you are my portion and my cup; *
it is you who uphold my lot.
- 6 My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; *
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.
- 7 I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel; *
my heart teaches me, night after night.
- 8 I have set the LORD always before me; *
because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.
- 9 My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; *
my body also shall rest in hope.
- 10 For you will not abandon me to the grave, *
nor let your holy one see the Pit.
- 11 You will show me the path of life; *
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

2 Timothy 2:1-6

You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules. It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops.

Matthew 6:24-33

'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Collect:

Set us free, O God, from all false desires, vain ambitions, and everything that would separate us from your love; that, like your servant Pachomius, we might give ourselves fully to a life of discipleship, seeking you alone and serving those whom you have given us to serve; through Jesus Christ, our only mediator and advocate. **Amen.**

Pachomius of Tabenissi

Monastic, 348

Pachomius is commonly regarded as the founder of coenobitic monasticism, the form of Christian monasticism in which members live together in community rather than individually as hermits, and he was the author of the first formal monastic rule of life.

Born to a pagan family in 292, Pachomius first encountered Christianity when he was imprisoned as part of a forced military conscription. The Christians of the city visited everyone in the prison, bringing them food, supplies, and comfort, and Pachomius was astonished. He asked the other prisoners, “Why are these people so good to us when they do not even know us?” They answered, “They are Christians, and therefore they treat us with love for the sake of the God of heaven.” When he was released from prison, he was baptized, and began to lead an ascetic life of manual labor, prayer, and care for the poor.

In time, a community of people was drawn to Pachomius, and they began to organize themselves into a formal monastic community. This way of life was particularly attractive to those who were drawn to monasticism but could not withstand the hardship of a solitary life, particularly those who might be elderly or ill or very young. Before long, a federation of monastic communities was created, with houses for both men and women, which were organized into a common structure. Pachomius and his disciples wrote the first monastic rules to organize the life of these communities.

The new monastic movement was controversial in its day, and was initially opposed by many bishops and priests. When the monks were building their first monastery, the local bishop came with a mob to try to tear it down. Others came to respect the monks and their way of life, but wanted to unite them more closely to official church institutions. The bishops Serapion and Athanasius visited the community with the hope of ordaining Pachomius to the priesthood, but he hid from them until they finally went away. Indeed, the life of Pachomius states that originally “he did not want any clergy in his monasteries at all for fear of jealousy and vainglory.” In time, however, the new monastic movement and the church hierarchy developed a mutual respect for the differing gifts and responsibilities that each of them bore within the church.

By the time that Pachomius died, his monastic federation included several thousand monks and nuns, and within a generation the monastic movement would spread from Egypt to Palestine, Turkey, and Western Europe.