

Spiritual Moments



Fr. Peter Mermier

St. Francis de Sales

Volume 25, Issue 2

Wellspring - Franciscan Center for Spirituality
Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales

September 15, 2026

"Be Your Best
Give Your Best
Do Your Best
and
Leave the Rest
to the Lord."

Fr. Gus

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EDITORIAL

George had been homebound for many months with broken legs, ribs and other serious cuts and bruises from a car accident. He had been an active and responsible person all his life. The accident now kept him home bound during a long severe winter. One day, the dreary, late winter warmed just enough for his wife to take him on a short ride to the neighborhood shopping plaza. He waited in the car for ten minutes as she did some quick errands.

In those ten minutes, George took note of how the sunshine occasionally broke through, the way people walked, how parents dragged their children, the expressions on the faces of people crossing the driveways, the interactions of people, and how fast people drove through the parking lot. George spoke of those ten minutes for days. Of course, he had visited that shopping plaza scores of times before the accident. The parking lot had not changed but he had because he was present in those few tranquil and still moments. George had the kind of peace and serenity that he had never before experienced.

Silence, solitude and stillness are prerequisites for peace and serenity. All our meditations and prayers at Wellspring begin with the call to "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) This call is posted all over our Wellspring facilities. It is in stillness now, in this moment, that we find serenity. Being still is about being present now, in this moment. This is the moment of grace; this is a God-moment. Living in the present and enjoying each moment, rather than being consumed by past regrets or future anxieties, is one of the ways of nurturing serenity.

Being present is what we experience when we are fully focused on this very moment. God speaks to us through what happens to us now, moment by moment. The events of each moment carry the will of God. God's will can be done only in this moment. So, be present in this moment and to this moment. Serenity happens to those who strive to be still in the midst of all that happens around them. Serenity is not the absence of activities and movements. Serenity is tranquil and peaceful presence now, in this moment, where we are, doing what we are called to do and fulfilling our responsibilities.

I hope that the articles presented in this issue of "Spiritual Moments" will help our readers look at the possibility of nurturing serenity as a way of being and living.

Fr. Gus



Retreats & Programs at Wellspring

We have many activities and opportunities for spiritual growth at Wellspring. For more information, please visit our websites, call or email us. Please consider joining us for one of the remaining retreats.

SERENITY RETREAT - October 10, 2026
SERENITY RETREAT - November 14, 2026
ADVENT RETREAT - December 6, 2026

Thank you for Your Support

Tuesday, September 15, 2026, is the feast of the Mother of Compassion to whom our Shrine is dedicated. 28 years ago, on this feast day, the present Wellspring House was blessed and inaugurated. Many things have happened since then, and God has blessed us with a wonderful ministry and amazing people for support. We praise and thank the Lord for 28 years of blessings. Thank you for your words of appreciation, support and encouragement over the years. It is with your support and active participation in the activities, retreats and other ministries that Wellspring became what it is today. Thank you and God bless you and your family and keep you safe in his Love.

SERENITY IN GOD'S ACCEPTANCE

Silence, solitude and stillness are prerequisites for finding peace and serenity. Serenity makes us ready for a new meeting with God and a meeting with our own true selves. In serenity God's word can reach the hidden corners of our hearts and the light of Christ can reach, touch, heal and transform even what we are ashamed of.

Silence, solitude and stillness imply withdrawal to quiet places, to be alone with God, our Father. Jesus set this as an example for us to follow. Before He began his ministry He withdrew into the wilderness and spent forty days in communion with the Father. From the very beginning of their ministry, Jesus taught the disciples about the need for time away from work and service projects, the need for time to rest, relax, pray, time to be with their Master and learn from his wisdom. (Mark 6:30-34)

Most of us go to church on Sundays and some of us go every day. We listen to the word of God, sing a few songs, pray a few prayers, see familiar faces, see unfamiliar faces, hear children cry, hear people flipping the pages of the hymn books, listen to the sermon which sometimes touch our hearts and other times disturb us...more can be said of our Church experience.

We go to church for God's grace and peace, to feed our soul and nurture our spirit, to find some quiet and quality time with the Lord, to find what our daily and busy life does not offer us, to find blessing and grace for another day, another week or maybe even just for the moment. The silence, stillness and solitude that we are searching for is usually not part of our church experience. We need to make a special effort to create them to find serenity and peace.

It is hard to create silence, stillness and solitude as we live in the busy and noisy world. The world neither offers nor promotes silence and solitude. Our churches don't seem to be doing it either. There are many who are afraid of silence and solitude because it often brings to the surface intense feelings of inadequacy, imperfection, failures, and shortfalls and they tend to disturb the peace and serenity that silence, solitude and stillness promise. It is hard to accept this part of one's life, and for some it seems to be impossible, so silence, solitude and stillness become impossible as well.

One of the most basic sources of this peacefulness and serenity is the acceptance of self with all its imperfections, limitations, weaknesses, goodness and strength...being at ease with the incompleteness of one's self. Even Jesus, the perfect one, had to learn to be at ease with his own incompleteness...it sounds paradoxical, the perfect one being at ease with incompleteness. Jesus had to be born a baby in a manger and be dependent on others. He had to learn the skills of his Father, had to struggle with trying, testing times and had to hunger and thirst and doubt. The perfect one had to confront the imperfect and be at ease, at peace and serene.

Being at ease with the incompleteness of ourselves becomes a source of grace, strength, peace and serenity. Being accepted by others also contributes to peacefulness and serenity. Acceptance means that the people with whom we live give us a feeling of self-respect, a feeling of being good and worthwhile.

Acceptance does not mean that everything is alright and perfect. It means that we are given room to grow, unfold and to outgrow the mistakes of the past. In a way, we can say that acceptance is an unveiling. Every one of us is born with many potentialities. But unless they are drawn out by the warm touch of another's acceptance, they will remain dormant. Acceptance liberates everything that is good, true and worthwhile in us.



A puppy said to his old uncle, "From my short experience in life I have learned that the best thing for a dog is happiness, and that happiness is in my tail. That is why I am chasing my tail, and when I catch it, I shall have perfect happiness." The old uncle replied, "From my research and long experience, I, too, have

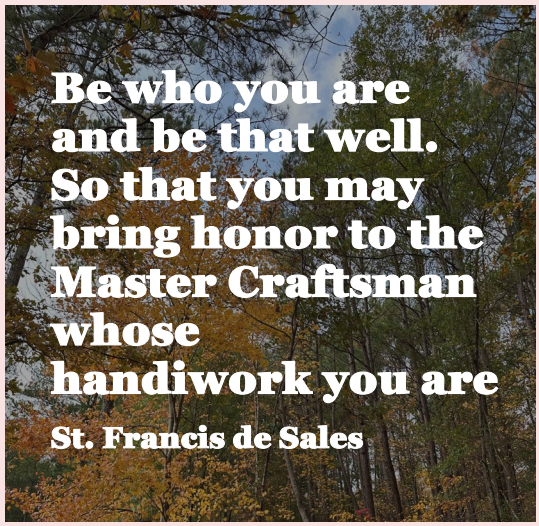
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judged that happiness is a fine thing for a dog and that happiness is in his tail. But I've noticed that whenever I chase it, it keeps running away from me, but when I go about my business, it comes after me." Be faithful to what you are called to be and do the best you can with your daily chores and responsibilities… happiness will follow.

Acceptance is not the denial of defects, limitations, imperfections or weaknesses. Denial is non-acceptance. Only acceptance can enable a person to face his defects, weaknesses, limitations and facilitate change, growth, conversion or transformation. The following story is an example of the serenity that comes with acceptance.



An old man who had only eight hairs on his head goes to a barber shop. The annoyed barber asked, "Shall I cut or count?" The old man smiled and said, "Color it!" Life is to be accepted, celebrated and enjoyed with whatever is available to us, however small, little, imperfect or incomplete it may be.

St. Francis de Sales advises us to accept ourselves as we are and strive to be the best that we can be. He says, "Be who you are and be that well. So that you may bring honor to the Master Craftsman whose handiwork you are."

God accepts us as we are, not as we should be. To proclaim the latter is an empty message because we are never as we should be. We know that in reality, we do not walk a straight path. There are many curves, many wrong decisions which in the course of life have brought us to where we are now. It takes a long time to believe that we are accepted and loved by God as we are, and in His love we are healed and transformed.

Acceptance of God's love is a freeing experience that brings us serenity and peace. Accepting yourself, being yourself, rejoicing in yourself, being at home with yourself and being at ease with your incompleteness, limitations, shortcomings and weaknesses are all basic to a joyful and fulfilling life, to meaningful relationships, to growing in families and communities, to serenity and peace. St. Paul found peace and serenity when he finally accepted and affirmed:

In Him we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28

By the Grace of God I am what I am. Corinthians 15:10

Nothing will separate us from the love of God. Romans 8: 38-39

He who began a good work in me will bring it completion. Philippians 1:6

When God accepts and loves me, I must accept and love myself as well. I cannot be more demanding than God, can I? And when God accepts and loves others, I must accept and love them as well. I cannot be more demanding than God, can I?

Serenity is found in accepting God's acceptance.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

SERENITY IN THE GRACE OF THE MOMENT

Early Christian communities believed that the return of Jesus was imminent. So some of them left their jobs, others became afraid and anxious and still others began to eat and drink and enjoy themselves. St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonian community advising and encouraging them not to be anxious but to live faithful lives and be filled with hope and be prepared to welcome Jesus whenever he came. (I Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Serenity is found in doing what we are called do now and now is the moment of grace, peace and serenity. Certain things cannot be obtained at the last minute. We must be prepared and preparation must be done now, not in some distant future. Knowing that there is tomorrow can be a blessing and a challenge. It can bring us hope and nurture optimism. It can be exciting to wait in anticipation for great and joyful things to happen. Knowing that there is tomorrow can also make a person put things off, become lazy, careless, irresponsible, and unprepared.

A flock of geese was starting to head south to escape the blast of wintry winds. The first night they landed in a farmer's yard and filled themselves with corn. The next morning, they flew on. All, that is, except one. "The corn is good," this big goose said, "so I will stay and enjoy it another day." The next morning, he decided to wait still another day, and another after that, enjoying the delicious food. Pretty soon he developed a habit. "Tomorrow I will fly south," he said. Then came the inevitable day when the winds of winter were so severe that waiting longer would mean death in the frozen wastes. So, he stretched his wings and waddled across the barnyard, picking up speed as he went. But alas! He was too fat to fly.

Certain things cannot be put off for tomorrow and certain things cannot be borrowed or obtained at the last minute. A good name, good character, noble virtues, healthy relationships, peace and serenity can never be borrowed or obtained at the last minute or nurtured on a convenient date in the future. No one can live on the spiritual capital of others and no one can develop a spiritual life in the future. Now is the moment of Grace. Now is the God-moment. Now is the only moment that is available to us.

Three little devils were under training to go to earth to tempt people. At the end of their training, the master devil gave them a test. "What will you do to tempt men when you go to earth? Tell me about your strategy." said the master devil to his students. The first one said that he would tell men that there is no God. The master said, "That won't work because man knows there is a God." The second one said that he would tell men that there is no hell. The master said, "That won't work either because the men in the world know that there is a hell." The third one said that he would tell men that there is tomorrow. The master said, "Congratulations! You got it right. You are ready to go to earth. You tell those men that there is tomorrow and they will put things off for tomorrow."

We have no hold on the past - we can't change even the smallest bit of it. We have very little hold on the future. We can't program our life in advance but can only receive it moment by moment. All we have is the present moment. Only in the present moment are we truly in contact with reality. In the present moment, we always have the possibility of starting again, not impeded by the past or tormented by the future.

The past is in the hands of the merciful God who can draw benefit from every-thing; the future is in the hands of our God who will never forget us. St. Francis de Sales tells us, "The God who brought you to this moment will carry you to the next." Our faith in a merciful God keeps us from living, as many people do, oppressed by a burdensome past or worrisome future or both. Living in the present permits our hearts to open and expand.

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SERENITY IS FOUND IN DOING WHAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO NOW AND NOW IS THE MOMENT OF GRACE, PEACE AND SERENITY.

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Taking care of today is the best preparation for tomorrow. If we are in God's presence today, we will stay there when tomorrow arrives. St. Francis de Sales suggests, "Think only of today and when tomorrow comes, it too will be called today, and we will think about it then."

> "THE BEST PREPARATION FOR TOMORROW IS DOING YOUR BEST TODAY"

There is an old Chinese tale about a woman whose only son died. In her grief, she went to the holy man and said, "What prayers, what magical incantations do you have to bring my son back to life?" Instead of sending her away or reasoning with her, he said to her, "Bring me a mustard seed from a home that has never known sorrow. We will use it to drive the sorrow out of your life and find peace."

The woman went off at once in search of that magical mustard seed. She came first to a splendid mansion, knocked at the door, and said, "I am looking for a home that has never known sorrow. Is this such a place? It is very important to me." They told her that she had certainly come to the wrong place and began to describe all the tragic things that recently had befallen them. The woman said to herself, "Who is better able to help these poor, unfortunate people than I, who have had misfortune of my own?" She stayed to comfort them then went on in search of a home that had never known sorrow.

But wherever she turned, in hovels and in other places, she found one tale after another of sadness and misfortune. She became so involved in ministering to other people's grief that ultimately, she forgot about her quest for the magical mustard seed, never realizing that it had, in fact, driven the sorrow out of her life and she found peace and serenity.

The Christian community in Thessalonia, believing that Christ's final coming was imminent, became concerned about what would happen to those who died before the return of Jesus.

Paul, like a good, sensitive and compassionate pastor, advised them not to "grieve as those who have no hope", rather, "console and encourage one another." Paul encouraged them to trust in Christ and remain faithful to him without becoming anxious and losing hope. Console one another with the simple message: "God's Grace is there for all. We shall be with him…we belong with him."

Don't be anxious! Be filled with hope now! Be optimistic and positive about life,
death and the world now and you will find peace and serenity.

The secret of health for body, mind and spirit is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment intentionally and wisely. Living in the present moment means letting go of the past and not waiting for the future. It means living your life consciously and intentionally now, aware that each moment you breathe is God's gift. "Every moment comes to us pregnant with a command from God, only to pass on and plunge into eternity, there to remain forever what we have made of it." (St. Francis de Sales)

We must embrace this moment and make the best of it and find peace and serenity. Tomorrow will be a blessing if we make this moment a blessing. It is up to us to choose this moment and make it a blessing and make tomorrow a blessing for you and others and find peace and serenity.

To be present now, in this moment, means that we live as though we have nothing to hide, nothing to prove and nothing to lose. This is how our mind, body, heart and soul become unified in that one moment. Time slows down. We are connecting with God, the eternal, the ever-living Father of all.

Being present means being attentive to this moment, being awake, alert and vigilant. Preoccupations about the happenings of yesterday and anxieties about what may happen tomorrow can stifle the spirit.

The presence of God must be felt deep within, right here, right now,
in our ordinary, everyday moments and you will find peace and serenity.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

THE SHEEP AND THE CROW



The other day I saw a television commercial that caught my eye. A man was working at his computer when suddenly another person came running up from behind him and was looking over his shoulder at the man's computer screen. Then another man joined the man looking at the computer screen. The commercial was about purchasing a software product to prevent your information from being compromised or stolen.

This ad reminded me of an Aesop fable about the sheep and the crow. The sheep was busy eating the tasty grass in the field when a loud crow flew by and landed on the back of the sheep. The crow was making loud squawks and chattering. The crow also started pecking on the back of the sheep's soft wool. The sheep had no defense except to ask the crow to leave. The crow remained.

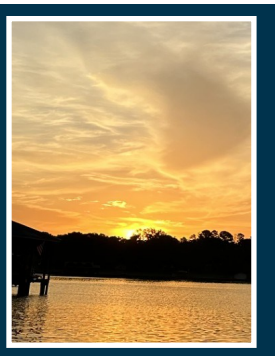
Like the uninvited men hovering over the man at the computer and the crow on the back of the sheep, news about ongoing wars, political unrest, religious indifference as well as our own family concerns, poor health, financial problems, and the future of children can fall on our backs and take away our inner peace and create anxieties, doubts, fears, and worries. It is up to us to focus on the presence of Emmanuel, God-with-us, within us and around us, who alone can take away the troublesome and unsettling thoughts.

God is with me, around me and within me even in disappointing, distressing and troublesome situations. The scriptures remind me that "The Lord is my shepherd and I will not be in want, I will not be afraid and only blessings will come to me. (Psalm 23). I take comfort that "The Lord is with me like a mighty champion." (Jeremiah 20:11). I trust that "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear." (Psalm 27:2). I know that "Jesus will be with me always, till the end of time." (Matthew 28:20).

Remembering and pondering these words of our sacred scriptures bring me peace and serenity in the midst of all the anxieties and worries that tend to intrude into my mind and heart. I must learn to stay focused on memories and thoughts that bring me peace and serenity.

Patricia Cussen

SOLITUDE



This summer, I have spent many early mornings sitting on our boat dock at our lake house on Lake Palestine.

Being up early waiting for the sun to peek out, listening to the birds, seeing the ripples of the water, hearing the fish jump have brought me so much peace and serenity. Each morning is different, and each morning that I have the privilege of being on our dock, I look out with gratitude at God's creation and marvel at the it's beauty.

On those early mornings, I often reflect on things I have learned in the monthly serenity retreats Fr. Gus offers at Wellspring. I wish to share a few.

Being still is a prerequisite to serenity. I am learning that to find peace, I have to slow down, sit before the Lord and listen for His voice.

Stillness is not merely inactivity but a conscious decision to stop trying to control every outcome, allowing for trust and rest to take over. Being still before the Lord each morning has taught me to surrender my worries and concerns to the Lord. It has allowed me to let go of the many things that are out of my control and just enjoy the beauty of nature that surrounds me.

Serenity and inner peace can not be achieved while the mind and life are chaotic. We must actively pause, let go of striving and quiet the inner noise to find true calm. I typically like being busy. I wake up with a long "to do" list most days and love crossing things off my list. As I have let go of striving to accomplish so much, I have found more peace, joy and serenity each day and I am so grateful.

Bari Walker

Nature speaks the language God designed before words existed. Every sunrise whispers His faithfulness, every storm declares His power, and every quiet moment in creation offers His peace.
Author Unknown

OUR FAVORITE

Serenity

QUOTES



GREAT TRANQUILITY OF HEART IS HIS WHO CARES FOR NEITHER PRAISE NOR BLAME

THOMAS A. KEMPIS

The answers to your questions come when the mind is quiet & still

The key to serenity in less than perfect times is joy in experiencing whatever is now

WHEN YOU ALLOW THINGS TO UNFOLD AT THEIR OWN SPEED RATHER THAN DRIVE YOURSELF TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN AT YOUR PACE, YOU WILL FIND SERENITY

CRAVINGS FOR MORE AND BETTER TAKE AWAY YOUR PEACE. BE CONTENT WITH WHAT YOU HAVE.





Want to find Serenity?

CREATE A SPACE OF SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND SERENITY IN YOUR HEART AND FROM THIS SPACE, MAKE ALL YOUR DECISIONS

SERENITY IS THE CALM THAT COMES WHEN YOU STOP TRYING TO CONTROL THE UNCONTROLLABLE

PEACE AND SERENITY COMES FROM NOT WANTING TO BE SOMEWHERE ELSE, DO SOMETHING ELSE OR BE SOMEONE ELSE

"Spiritual Moments" is published each year by Wellspring, Fransalian Center for Spirituality. Its main purpose is to share "spiritual moments" and articles on various aspects of spirituality along with information on programs and events at Wellspring. It is circulated, primarily, among the many volunteers, participants, friends and wells-wishers of Wellspring and the Fransalian Missionaries.

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