

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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September 19, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Wednesday this week, September 21st is the feast of Saint Mathew. Little is known about the background of St. Matthew, except that he was a Jew, son of Alpheus. He was working for the occupying Roman forces, collecting taxes from other Jews. The Romans were not scrupulous about what the tax collectors took for themselves. Therefore, the tax collectors were generally hated as traitors by their fellow Jews. The Pharisees considered them “publicans” and “sinners”. So, it was shocking to them to hear Jesus calling such a man to be one of his intimate followers and to see Jesus having dinner at a sinner’s house.

The Gospel tells us that many tax collectors and “those known as sinners” came to the dinner. How could the supposedly great teacher associate with such immoral people? Jesus’ answer was, “I did not come to call the righteous but sinners” (Matthew 9:1-13). From such an unlikely situation, Jesus chose one of the foundations of the Church, a man, judging from his job, was not holy enough for the position. Jesus called and Mathew got up and followed him.” Many years following the death of Christ, around 41 and 50 A.D., Matthew wrote his Gospel in Aramaic, which was the common language spoken at the time of Jesus, hoping that his account would convince his fellow Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.

Most of the disciples of Jesus were fishermen. They had very little skill and practice in putting words together on paper. Mathew was a tax collector. He knew how to organize facts and had practice in putting things together on paper. He was gifted that way. When Jesus called Mathew, the Gospel says, Mathew left everything and followed him. But we know that he didn’t leave everything...he brought his pen with him – that is, his gift of organizing and putting things together on paper. He used his skill well to become the first man ever to compile an account of the teachings of Jesus.

Mathew tells us stories which Jesus told about finding and using gifts and talents. Those stories have taught us that using and working with our gifts and talents make them grow and become blessings for us. They also taught us that we lose the gifts and talents that we don’t use. Those stories also teach us that there are many gifts and talents, real treasures - buried, hidden, and some of them lost – for us to find. It is up to us to be diligent and vigilant to find those gifts and use them gratefully and find them growing and becoming more for us and for others. God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Twenty fifth Week in Ordinary Time

September 19-24, 2022

Be faithful to your calling!

**All you do may not be successful in your eyes or in the eyes of others.
The real success lies in your fidelity to who you are
and what you have come to know as your calling.
Just be faithful!**

September 19 - Monday, Twenty Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Simplify your life by getting rid of everything that does not matter.

Proverbs 3:27-34

The wise man says, a person should not plot against a neighbor nor be envious, but rather strive for friendship with neighbors. If you can do good, if it is in your power to do it, do it now. "Say not to your neighbor, 'go and come again, tomorrow I will give you' when you can do it now".

Be gracious and kind now, when you have the opportunity.

Psalm 15 - Lord, who may enter your holy tent...

Luke 8:16-18

Jesus invited his listeners to let their light shine. Hard it may be, never be ashamed of giving witness to who you are and whose you are and whom you serve! Let your goodness be visible in the way you live out your life. Be humble but never be ashamed to show who you are!

We can't all be shining examples. But we can, at least, twinkle a little!

Jesus spoke of the impossibility of secrecy! We try to hide certain things from ourselves, certain things from others and certain things, even from God! Happy is the person with nothing to hide!

Jesus spoke to them about the laws of increase and decrease. The man who has will get more and the man who has not, will lose even the little he thinks he has! Another way of expressing it would be: there is no standing still in life! Life is dynamic and it moves, changes, grows or weakens - there is no standing still!

Saint of the day, September 19 - St. Januarius and 12 other saints are remembered this day

Little is known about the life of St. Januarius. He was born in Italy and was bishop of Benevento during the Diocletian persecution, around the year 305. Bishop Januarius went to visit two deacons and two laymen in prison. He was then also imprisoned along with his deacon and lector. Legend has it that Januarius and his companions were thrown to the bears in the amphitheater of Pozzuoli, but the animals failed to attack them. They were then beheaded. What is believed to be Januarius' blood is kept in Naples, as a relic. It liquifies and bubbles when exposed in the cathedral. Scientists have not been able to explain this miracle to date.

September 20 - Tuesday, Twenty Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Simplicity is a spiritual discipline that tames and trains us to choose to live simply and to simplify our preferences and activities.

Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13

This excerpt contains several disconnected wise sayings. At the center of it, the wise man teaches us that doing what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

Psalm 119 - Blessed are they whose way is blameless...

Luke 8:19-21

Jesus was addressing the crowd and his mother and relatives came to speak with him. When someone told Jesus about it, he said, "who is my mother and who are my brothers.....whoever does the will of my Father is brother and sister and mother to me".

Jesus spoke of a new kind of relationship...one that goes far beyond blood relationships. Nothing can break the “blood connection” and yet we know that “blood ties” don’t necessarily create a bond of love or dedication or affection. History has shown that often a man’s enemies were those with whom he had “blood ties”.

Real relationships, true connections, bonds of love are established around shared goals, shared ideals, shared conflicts and pains, shared cause, shared obedience/fidelity, etc.

Jesus calls us to enter into a relationship of love and obedience....an obedience that binds us together as brothers and sisters of Jesus, sons and daughters of the heavenly Father. Our common obedience makes us true brothers and sisters.

Saint of the day, September 20 - St. Andrew Kim Tae-gon, St. Paul Chong Ha-sang and 8100 saints are remembered this day.

Saint Andrew Kim Taegon generally referred to as Saint Andrew Kim in English, was the first Korean-born Catholic priest and is the patron saint of Korea. Christianity came to Korea during the Japanese invasion in 1592. During this time a small number of Koreans were baptized, probably by Japanese soldiers who were Christians. Soon after, Korea cut itself off from the rest of the world.

When a Chinese priest secretly arrived about 12 years later, he found 4,000 Catholics who had never seen a priest. Korea’s first Christian community was made up entirely of laypeople! Between 1839 and 1867, there were fierce persecutions. One hundred three members of this community were martyred along with three bishops and seven priests from the Paris Foreign Mission Society.

Andrew Kim Taegon was the son of converts, born on August 21, 1821. His father, a farmer, was also martyred. Andrew was baptized when he was 15. He then attended the seminary in Macao, China, 1,300 miles away from home. After six years Andrew returned to Korea and assumed the job of bringing missionaries into the country secretly. Almost immediately he was arrested, tortured, and beheaded on September 16, 1846.

On May 6, 1984, Pope John Paul II canonized Kim along with 102 other Korean Martyrs, including Paul Chong Hasang, during his trip to Korea.

September 21 - Saint Mathew, Apostle and Evangelist

The message of the Gospel is simple.

Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13

Live a life worthy of your calling, with humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another lovingly. Do all you can to preserve the unity which has the spirit as its origin and peace as its binding force.

Each of us, in our own way, must contribute to the building of the Body of Christ.

Psalm 19 - The heavens proclaim the glory of God...

Mathew 9:9-13

One of the most unlikely candidates was Mathew and he was called, and he arose and followed. Mathew was a man who not only extorted his own people but also swindled the government. Jesus saw not only what Mathew was but also what he could be - So Jesus called and Mathew rose. What does this say to you today?

Reflect on what Mathew lost and what Mathew found. He lost a comfortable job, income, security, power.....But he found a new mission, honor, adventure, peace, joy, love, destiny, treasure eternal - wealth that he never dreamed of.

Jesus sits with Mathew and few others like him. To sit at table with the likes of Mathew!!!! Reflect on what this means to you today.

Jesus did much more. He dined with Mathew and others like him. Reflect on what this means to you today.

“I came not to call the righteous but sinners”. The word used for “call” in Greek here is the technical word for inviting a guest to a house or to a meal. Remember Jesus called Mathew. Reflect on this insight.

Saint of the Day, September 21 - St. Mathew, Apostle and Evangelist and 11 other saints are remembered this day.

Little is known about the background of St. Matthew, except that he was a Jew, son of Alphaeus. He was working for the occupying Roman forces, collecting taxes from other Jews. The Romans were not scrupulous about what the tax collectors took for themselves. Therefore, the tax collectors were generally hated as traitors by their fellow Jews. The Pharisees considered them “publicans” and “sinners”. So, it was shocking to them to hear Jesus call such a man to be one of his intimate followers and to see Jesus having dinner at a sinner’s house.

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September 22 - Thursday, Twenty fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Simplicity defines the way and the message of Jesus.

Ecclesiastes 1:2-11

This excerpt, difficult as it may be to interpret, invites us to reflect more deeply and remain open to discovering realities beyond what we have already seen or experienced – to remain open to the mystery that keeps unfolding for us. All things as we see them pass away...the real and the lasting and the eternal are beyond what is immediately perceived, goodness and truth and life and love are all eternal, ever present, unchanging realities. We only discover them..... we do not invent them or create them.

Be wise and keep looking beyond what you see...keep searching for the truth, for that which is lasting, enduring, real and eternal.

Psalm 90 - You turn man back to dust...

Luke 9:7-9

Herod heard about the reputation of Jesus and wondered whether this could be John the Baptist who had risen from the dead. Herod feared John and respected him at the same time. It was as though he was haunted by the goodness of John and his own sinfulness at the same time. He was afraid! Herod becomes curious: who is this man that I hear about?! Herod became curious and wanted to see Jesus because he was “perplexed” and afraid and not because of any particular attraction or inspiration.

Herod made a thoughtless and unwise choice. He acted on impulse, afraid of what people might think or say. He made a foolish oath and broke a great and noble law and had neither wisdom nor courage to admit and correct the error.

Be wise and be discerning in your choices. May all your choices be made in prayerful discernment!

Saint of the day, September 22 - St. Lorenzo Ruiz and 16 companion martyrs are remembered this day.

Lorenzo Ruiz was born in Binondo, Manila, on November 28, 1594 to a Chinese father and a Filipino mother who were both Catholic. His father taught him Chinese while his mother taught him Tagalog. Lorenzo served as an altar boy at the Binondo Church. After being educated by the Dominican friars for a few years, Lorenzo became a professional calligrapher, transcribing documents in beautiful penmanship. He became a member of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary. He married Rosario, a native, and they had two sons and a daughter. The Ruiz family led a peaceful and devout religious life.

In 1636, while working as a clerk for the Binondo Church, Lorenzo was falsely accused of killing a Spaniard. At that time, three Dominican priests, Antonio Gonzalez, Guillermo Courtet, and Miguel de Aozaraza, were about to sail to Japan in spite of a violent persecution there. With them was a Japanese priest, Vicente Shiwozuka de la Cruz, and a layman named Lazaro, a leper. Lorenzo, having taken asylum with them, was allowed to accompany them. But only when they were at sea, he learned that they were going to Japan.

The Tokugawa Shogunate was persecuting Christians by the time Lorenzo had arrived in Japan. The missionaries were arrested and thrown into prison, and after two years, they were transferred to Nagasaki to face trial by torture. They were subjected to an unspeakable kind of torture: After huge quantities of water were forced down their throats, they were made to lie down. Long boards were placed on their stomachs and guards then stepped on the ends of the boards, forcing the water to spurt violently from mouth, nose and ears.

The group endured many and various cruel methods of torture. On September 27, 1637, Lorenzo and his companions were taken to Nishizaka Hill, where they were tortured by being hung upside-down over a pit. Despite his suffering, Lorenzo refused to renounce Christianity. He died two days later on September 29, 1637, aged 42. His body was cremated, with the ashes thrown into the sea. Lorenzo was canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 18, 1987. He was among the 16 Martyrs of Japan, making him the first Filipino saint.

September 23 – Friday, Twenty Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

**God's love is simple and pure and a simple yes to the call of Love
will lead us to the transformation of our life in Christ.**

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

This excerpt must be read entirely and prayerfully reflected on. This captures the spirit of the book of Ecclesiastes: "there is a right time for everything...there is a purpose for everything even when man cannot grasp God's purpose at any particular point in time...we must accept time and opportunity as God's gift...discern his purpose for us and be faithful that purpose.

Psalm 144 - Blessed be the Lord, my rock...

Luke 9:18-22

Jesus asked his disciples the most important question: "who do you say that I am?" Jesus brought the great question "who", the question of identity and image, into prayer and prayerful reflection!

Reflect on the need for prayerful discernment of important matters in your life!

Who do they say? And who do you say? It is one thing to know what others say. It is much more..... to know personally, intimately..... Reflect on the need to know personally, intimately!

Take time to reflect on who Jesus is for you and what place you have given him in your life.

**Intimate relationship calls for commitment, sacrifice, suffering, pain, surrender.
Yet there is always "resurrection", new life, new growth, new possibilities...**

Saint of the Day, September 23 - St. Pio of Pietrelcina and 14 other saints are remembered this day

Francesco Forgione was born on May 25, 1887, in Pietrelcina, a town in the province of Benevento, in the Southern Italian region of Campania. His parents were peasant farmers. He worked on the land up to the age of 10, looking after the small flock of sheep the family owned. At the age of 15, Francesco joined the Capuchins and took the name of Pio. He was ordained a priest in 1910 and was drafted during World War I. After he was discovered to have

tuberculosis, he was discharged. In 1917, he was assigned to the friary in San Giovanni Rotondo, 75 miles from the city of Bari on the Adriatic.

On September 20, 1918, as he was making his thanksgiving after Mass, Padre Pio had a vision of Jesus. When the vision ended, he had the stigmata in his hands, feet, and side. Life became more complicated after that. Medical doctors, Church authorities, and curiosity seekers came to see Padre Pio. In 1924, and again in 1931, the authenticity of the stigmata was questioned; Padre Pio was not permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to hear confessions. He did not complain of these decisions, which were soon reversed.

Padre Pio rarely left the friary after he received the stigmata, but busloads of people soon began coming to see him. Each morning after a 5 a.m. Mass in a crowded church, he heard confessions until noon. He took a mid-morning break to bless the sick and all who came to see him. Every afternoon he also heard confessions. In time his confessional ministry would take 10 hours a day; penitents had to take a number so that the situation could be handled. Many of them have said that Padre Pio knew details of their lives that they had never mentioned.

Padre Pio saw Jesus in all the sick and suffering. At his urging, a fine hospital was built on nearby Mount Gargano. The idea arose in 1940; a committee began to collect money. Ground was broken in 1946. Building the hospital was a technical wonder because of the difficulty of getting water there and of hauling up the building supplies. This “House for the Alleviation of Suffering” has 350 beds.

One of Padre Pio’s sufferings was that unscrupulous people several times circulated prophecies that they claimed originated from him. He never made prophecies about world events and never gave an opinion on matters that he felt belonged to Church authorities to decide. He died on September 23, 1968 and was canonized on June 16, 2002 by Pope John Paul II

September 24 – Saturday, Twenty Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Simplicity is the language of God.

Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8

This excerpt contains a series of advises for the youth. The youth are advised to follow their heart, be faithful to their vision and be happy. The author ends with a reminder that all things as we know pass away and so search for enduring values.

Psalm 90 - You turn man back to dust...

Luke 9:43-45

Luke tells us about how Jesus tried to correct the disciples' vision of his mission. They expected a political, conquering, messiah king who would restore their nation and save them from the Romans.

To the Jews who waited for the Messiah, conqueror and King, Jesus spoke of the terrible experience he would go through, the experience of being delivered into the hands of men to be killed. How different it is from the idea of a conqueror King! Jesus came not with avenging armies but giving His life and he called his disciples to do the same. The disciples did not grasp the meaning of his sayings. Luke tells us that they were even afraid to ask him any questions about what he said.

Pray for courage and strength to accept the hardships and inconveniences that come with being a disciple of Jesus.

Saint of the Day, September 24 - St. Pacific of San Severino and 60 other saints are remembered this day.

Pacificus of San Severino was born on March 1, 1653 at San Severino. His parents died when he was three years old. He suffered hardships until December 1670 when he entered the Franciscan order, taking the name Pacificus, and began a long apostolate of service in his own region. Pacificus was ordained to the priesthood on June 4, 1678 and served as professor of philosophy from 1680 to 1683 for the newer members of the order. Following this he worked for four or five years as a missionary in the surrounding area until suffering lameness and deafness in addition to blindness he was unable to continue giving missions. Though he was in constant suffering from 1692 to 1693, he held the post of Guardian in the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie in San Severino, where he died on September 24, 1721 and was canonized on May 26, 1839 by Pope Gregory XVI

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**The only exercise some people get is jumping to conclusions.
You need a better exercise!
Prayerfully reflect and discern wisely!**