

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are now In the third week in Ordinary Time. “Ordinary” does not mean routine, dull, boring, or non-exciting time in the Church’s life of prayer and worship. It is 33-34 weeks of Ordinary Time or “Tempus Per Annum” in Latin, meaning “Time throughout the year.” This is the time between Christmas and Lent and between Easter and advent. They are called “Ordinary days” because they are ordered and numbered, since Sundays of Ordinary Time are expressed numerically.

The Liturgical Year follows the natural rhythms of Life - periods of intense concentration and celebration followed by times of quiet reflection and maturation. Ordinary Time challenges us to live the mysteries we celebrated during the great seasons in extraordinary ways as we continue our spiritual journey. We set aside the major anniversaries and remembrances of our Faith and concentrate on living the message of the Gospels in down to earth, practical ways as we go about doing our daily chores and fulfilling our responsibilities, with all our limitations, imperfections failures and shortfalls.

This year (2024), our Sunday liturgies follow Cycle B of the Lectionary and so, we meet Jesus through the Gospel of Mark. Cycle A uses the Gospel of Mathew and Cycle C uses the Gospel of Luke and Easter season uses the Gospel of John. I encourage you to start reading the Gospel of Mark, perhaps a chapter a day, or at least, read the whole chapter referenced on Sunday rather than just the excerpt of the day, before coming to Mass on Sunday. Next Sunday, we will be reading Mark 1:21-28.

Ordinary Time of the Year offers us many and varied opportunities to live our faith, test our hope and give ourselves to loving our God and our neighbor and to let our faith mature and let it become real and authentic. I encourage you take a few moments each day of this week to be still and to reflect on how your day has been, how you lived your faith, how you nurtured your hope and how you loved God and others. We live in a fast-paced world. Finding time to be still can be challenging. Bless yourself with a few quiet moments to be still and listen to the voice of God. Bless yourself, have a prayer in your heart for all and be a blessing to those around you.

God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Third Week In Ordinary Time

January 22-27, 2024

**Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams.
Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential.
Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in,
but with what it is still possible for you to do.
(Pope John XXIII)**

January 22 – Monday, Third Week in Ordinary Time

Three signs of a mature person: Humility, Forbearance and Silence.

2 Samuel 5:1-7, 10

David became king over all Israel and entered into a covenant with the people. The elders anointed him king. Then David and his men went to capture Jerusalem. This excerpt tells us that David continued to grow strong and powerful and he found favor with God.

Psalm 89

**I have found David my servant;
With my holy oil I have anointed him,
That my hand may be always with him,
And that my arm may make him strong.**

Mark 3:22--30

Jesus was accused of being possessed by Beelzebul. Jesus asked them how Satan could expel Satan..... internal dissention, disintegration within would cause kingdoms to fall. Jesus had to be in harmony with goodness, with truth, with love, with God to stand against evil forces.

Harmony within is a necessary condition for overcoming enemy forces, whatever the enemy may be! Reflect on need for unity, integrity, harmony!

In Jewish thought, the Holy Spirit had three great functions: the revelation of God's truth, enabling men to recognize that truth when it is revealed and empowering them to live the truth. This Gospel passage (Mk.28-30) should be understood in light of this concept of the Holy Spirit. If a man, by repeated refusal of God's guidance (Holy Spirit's revelation) has lost the ability to recognize goodness when he sees it and if he has got his moral values so twisted

(inverted) that evil to him is good and good to him is evil - then he is not conscious of sin, he cannot repent and therefore he cannot experience forgiveness. And that is the sin against the Holy Spirit.

This passage speaks more about the need for recognizing evil and evil forces; repenting of one's failures and accepting forgiveness...than about not being forgiven of a particular sin. Reflect on the need to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Pray for those who have not been enlightened, those who have not come to know the truth, those who have not experienced Forgiveness and Grace.

Saint of the day, January 22 - St Vincent of Zaragossa and 19 others are remembered this day.

Vincent was born at Huesca, near Saragossa, Spain during the latter part of the 3rd century, the actual date is not known. He spent most of his life in the city of Saragossa, where he was educated and ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Valerius of Saragossa, who commissioned Vincent to preach throughout the diocese. Because Valerius suffered from a speech impediment, Vincent acted as his spokesman.

When the Roman Emperor Diocletian began persecuting Christians in Spain, both were brought before the Roman governor, Dacian in Valencia. Vincent and his bishop Valerius were confined to the prison of Valencia. Though he was finally offered release if he would consign Scripture to the fire, Vincent refused. Speaking on behalf of his bishop, he informed the judge that they were ready to suffer everything for their faith, and that they could pay no heed either to threats or promises.

His outspoken manner so angered the governor that Vincent was inflicted every sort of torture on him. He was stretched on the rack and his flesh torn with iron hooks. Then his wounds were rubbed with salt and he was burned alive upon a red-hot gridiron. Finally, he was cast into prison and laid on a floor scattered with broken pottery, where he died. During his martyrdom he preserved such peace and tranquility that it astonished his jailer, who repented from his sins and was converted. Vincent's dead body was thrown into the sea in a sack, but was later recovered by the Christians and his veneration immediately spread throughout the Church. The aged bishop Valerius was exiled.

January 23 - Tuesday, Third Week in Ordinary Time

Forbearance hold us back from retaliations.

2 Samuel 6:12-15, 17-19

David brought the Ark of God into the city. He offered a sacrifice, blessed the people and the people celebrated the great event.....David and the people danced for joy because they believed that God had come to stay with them in the symbol of the Ark.

The Ark was the symbol of the presence of God among his people. Today, symbols of the presence of God are all around us. Look around, look within, look beyond, God is present!

Psalm 24

**Lift up, O gates, your lintels,
Reach up, you ancient portals,
That the king of glory may come in!**

Mark 3:31-35

This excerpt tells us about the family of Jesus coming to meet him. Jesus responded by saying, "Whoever does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me."

True relationship may be built on common experiences. Followers of Jesus have a common experience.

True relationship may be built on common interest. Followers of Jesus have a common interest.

True relationship may be built on common goal, common purpose, common mission. Followers of Jesus have a common, shared mission.

True relationship lies, most of all, in a common obedience. Followers of Jesus have a common obedience.

Obedience to God's will make us true brothers and sisters in Christ. Such relationship goes far beyond "blood" relationships.

Saint of the Day, January 23 - St. Marianne Cope and 17 other saints are remembered this day.

Marianne was born to Peter and Barbara Cope of Hessen-Darmstadt, Germany on January 23, 1838. Two years later the Cope family emigrated to the United States and settled in Utica, New York. Young Barbara worked in a factory until August 1862, when she went to the Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis in Syracuse, New York. After profession in November of the following year, she began teaching at Assumption parish school.

Marianne held the post of superior in several places and was twice the novice mistress of her congregation. A natural leader, three different times, she was superior of St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse, where she learned much that would be useful during her years in Hawaii.

Elected provincial in 1877, Mother Marianne was unanimously re-elected in 1881. Two years later the Hawaiian government was searching for someone to run the Kakaako Receiving Station for people suspected of having leprosy. More than 50 religious communities in the United States and Canada were asked. When the request was put to the Syracuse sisters, 35 of them volunteered immediately. On October 22, 1883, Mother Marianne and six other sisters left for Hawaii where they took charge of the Kakaako Receiving Station outside Honolulu; on the island of Maui they also opened a hospital and a school for girls.

In 1888, Mother Marianne and two sisters went to Molokai to open a home for "unprotected women and girls" there. On Molokai she took charge of the home that Saint Damien de Veuster had established for men and boys. Mother Marianne changed life on Molokai by introducing cleanliness, pride, and fun to the colony. Bright scarves and pretty dresses for the women were part of her approach.

Mother Marianne came to be known as Mother Marianne of Molokai. Awarded the Royal Order of Kapiolani by the Hawaiian government and celebrated in a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson, Mother Marianne continued her work faithfully. Her sisters have attracted vocations among the Hawaiian people and still work on Molokai. Mother Marianne died on August 9, 1918 and was beatified in 2005 and canonized seven years later.

January 24 – Saint Francis De Sales

**The acts of daily forbearance, the headache, or toothache, or heavy cold;
the tiresome peculiarities of husband or wife,
the broken glass...all of these sufferings, small as they are,
if accepted lovingly, are most pleasing to God's Goodness.**

(St. Francis De Sales)

Ephesians 3:2-12

Jews regarded Gentiles as unclean, unholy, and worthless in God's eyes. In this excerpt, the author of Ephesians describes the equal status of Jews and Gentiles in Christ as a "mystery" being revealed through him. The author says that Gentiles and Jews are Co-heirs, members of

the same body and sharers of the promises of God. This was the vision of the prophets, a vision of universal salvation, realized in the person of Jesus.

Pray for a broader, clearer, and cosmic vision of the freedom and salvation offered to us in and through Jesus.

Psalm 112

Happy the Man who fears the Lord,
who takes delight in all his commands.
His sons will be powerful on earth;
the children of the upright are blessed.

John 15:9-17

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.....Abide in my love.....that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete.” The secret of the life of Jesus was his constant contact with the Father. Again and again, he withdrew to quiet places to be alone with the father. He knew what it meant to “abide” in the Father’s Love. His disciples must do the same.

To “abide” is to be in close contact; to be in touch; to be intimate; to live an intense, personal relationship; to surrender in fidelity; to surrender in obedience. Stay focused on developing a personal, intense, intimate relationship with the Lord. Stay close...stay connected...be in touch.....Abide in the presence of the Lord, in silence and in solitude.....

Love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12-17). It is a challenge to reach out to others in love, “not to withhold” our love from others. We are called to give what we have received as gifts from the Lord. Jesus calls us his friends, not slaves....it was his choice, not ours. Now it is up to us to respond. It is never sufficient to abstain from wrong-doing or sin or evil. We are called to be good and to do good - a good word and a good deed proclaim who we are. We have many opportunities to share God’s gift of Love and life.

The standard of love is NOT an eye for an eye or love others as they love us or love others as we love ourselves...it is “Love one another as I have loved you”. The standard is to love as God loves us, as Jesus loves us.....it is enduring, joyful, unconditional, unconquerable, invincible, non-possessive, self-sacrificing, steadfast love! May your love transcend competition and control...May your love transcend ill feelings, jealousies, hatred, etc.....May you reach out in selfless and generous service!

Saint of the Day, January 24 - St. Francis de Sales and 20 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Francis De Sales was born on August 21, 1567 at Thonon, near Annecy in France. He graduated from the University of Padua with Doctorate in both civil law and ecclesiastical law. He was ordained a priest on December 18, 1593. He worked among the Calvinists, faced much opposition, including attempt on his life and converted the whole district of Chablais to the catholic faith.

He was ordained a bishop on December 8, 1602. He was a good shepherd, caring for all with a special love for the poor. He founded a contemplative religious order, "The Sisters of the Visitation" on June 6, 1610. This order was to accept as members the poor, the weak in health, the handicapped and the widows whom normally religious orders did not admit. He wrote two books, Spiritual Classics: 'The Introduction to Devout Life" and "A Treatise on The Love Of God". He died at the age of 55 on December 28, 1622. He was canonized a saint by Pope Alexander VII on April 19, 1665 and declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius IX on November 16, 1877.

Francis De Sales is foremost among those who were consistently and visibly human in his relationship to God and people. His spirituality was so human that those without theological insights could understand and follow his spirituality. He was very human and gentle, optimistic, and positive about life and the world, strong in character and compassionate in ministry and most of all he had a harmonious and peaceful spirit. He encouraged people to find holiness in everyday matters, emphasizing the freedom each one has to choose to be good and to do good, to live noble and virtuous lives and reject what is bad and harmful.

In whatever state of life men and women find themselves, they can discover the way to God, joyfully and without fear. God can be found anywhere, everywhere and by everyone. The hours we spend in our daily chores need not be spiritually empty or useless. It is in faithfully and generously doing our daily chores and fulfilling our responsibilities that we live our life of faith.

January 25 – The conversion of Saint Paul

Forbearance restrains us from inflicting punishment.

Acts 9:1-22

Saul was on his way to Damascus while persecuting the Christians. He had a great fall and lost his sight. He heard a voice instructing him to go to the city for further directions. In the city, he met Ananias who prayed over him. With this, Saul experienced a radical transformation of his life and began a new life proclaiming the risen Lord.

Trust in the transforming power of the faithful and praying community.

Psalm 117

**Praise the Lord, all you nations;
Glorify him, all you peoples!
For steadfast is his kindness towards us,
And the fidelity of the Lord endures forever.**

Mark 16:15-18

This is an amazing story. In verse 16:14, we read about Jesus taking the disciples “to task for their disbelief and their stubbornness since they had not put faith in those who had seen him after he had been raised”. In verse 15, the excerpt of today, we read about Jesus trusting the same men with all their “disbelief and stubbornness” and sending them with his mission of bringing good news to the world.

Today, we, with all our limitations and inconsistencies are trusted with this good news and called to bring this good news of Jesus to the world.

Saint of the Day, January 25 - Conversion of St. Paul and 14 other saints are remembered this day.

Paul was a highly educated and zealous Jewish Pharisee, who, like many of his peers, wanted to erase the notion that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God. Paul witnessed and supported the stoning of St. Stephen for his belief, faith and mission in Christ. Paul’s own mission was to find, arrest, and imprison all who believed and followed Christ’s teachings.

However, in 36 C.E., Paul’s life changed forever. While he was on his way to Damascus to find and capture more of Jesus’ followers, Paul had a personal encounter with Jesus in which Jesus called Paul to bring the Gospel to all people, including the gentiles. Paul’s hatred turned to joy and devotion to the Lord. He wrote that it is “for this reason that I labor and struggle, in accord with the exercise of his power working within me” (Colossians 1:29).

Paul’s ministry and writings bringing Christ’s redeeming salvation spanned 32 years. Paul traveled through Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia and Rome where he proclaimed the richness and power of God’s love. Paul suffered for the sake of Christ, too. He endured beatings, imprisonments, and finally martyrdom in Rome in 68 C.E. through the order of the Roman Emperor Nero.

January 26 - Saints Timothy and Titus

Forbearance restrains us from showing annoyance and anger.

2 Timothy 1:1-8

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy to inspire and strengthen him for his mission at Ephesus. In this excerpt, Paul affirms his confidence in Timothy and appreciates his family's heritage. Then he encourages Timothy to cultivate qualities of courage, strength, love and self-discipline as essential for any Christian teacher.

Psalm 96

**Sing to the Lord a new song,
Sing to the Lord all you lands,
Sing to the Lord, bless his name.....**

Luke 10:1-9

Jesus said to his disciples, "Look, there is a rich harvest....." Jesus looked at a crowd and saw a rich harvest while the Pharisees looked at the same people and found only sinful, unfaithful people worthy of judgment and condemnation. Jesus found people to be gathered, to be brought in and not shut out.....

The disciples of Jesus are called to maintain a positive attitude toward the world around them and gather people in rather than alienate them.....

Disciples of Jesus are called to live a simple life, travel light and not be burdened with stuff that weighs them down.....

Disciples of Jesus are called to be bearers of good news, of peace, of God's forgiving love, of God's healing presence and never to become a burden to others.

Saint of the Day, January 26 - Saints Timothy & Titus and 9 other saints are remembered this day

Saint Timothy

Timothy had a Greek father and a Jewish mother named Eunice. Being the product of a "mixed" marriage, he was considered illegitimate by the Jews. It was his grandmother, Lois, who first became Christian. We do not have much more information about his birth and early days.

Timothy was a convert of Paul around the year 47 and later joined him in his apostolic work. He was with Paul at the founding of the Church in Corinth. During the 15 years he worked with Paul, he became one of his most faithful and trusted friends. He was sent on difficult missions by Paul—often in the face of great disturbance in local churches which Paul had founded.

Timothy was with Paul in Rome during the latter's house arrest. At some period, Timothy himself was in prison (Hebrews 13:23). Paul installed him as his representative at the Church of Ephesus. Timothy was comparatively young for the work he was doing. "Let no one have contempt for your youth," Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:12a. Several references seem to indicate that he was timid. And one of Paul's most frequently quoted lines was addressed to him: "Stop drinking only water, have a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent illnesses" (1 Timothy 5:23). He, probably died around 97 C.E.

Saint Titus

We do not know much about the birth and early days of Titus. He has the distinction of being a close friend and disciple of Paul as well as a fellow missionary. He was Greek, apparently from Antioch. Even though Titus was a Gentile, Paul would not let him be forced to undergo circumcision at Jerusalem. Titus is seen as a peacemaker, administrator, great friend. Paul's second letter to Corinth affords an insight into the depth of his friendship with Titus, and the great fellowship they had in preaching the gospel: "When I went to Troas...I had no relief in my spirit because I did not find my brother Titus. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.... For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way—external conflicts, internal fears. But God, who encourages the downcast, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus..." (2 Corinthians 2:12a, 13; 7:5-6).

When Paul was having trouble with the community at Corinth, Titus was the bearer of Paul's severe letter and was successful in smoothing things out. Paul writes he was strengthened not only by the arrival of Titus but also by his encouragement and devotion to Paul. The Letter to Titus addresses him as the administrator of the Christian community on the island of Crete, charged with organizing it, correcting abuses and appointing presbyter-bishops. Titus probably died around 94 C.E.

January 27 – Saturday, Third week in Ordinary Time

**Forbearance, humility, compassion, sacrifice and self-control
are the qualities that reveal the outcome of a true education.**

2 Samuel 12:1-7, 10-17

Nathan confronted David and helped him to see that he had committed a crime and that he had done something unworthy of a king anointed by the Lord. David acknowledged his guilt and began a fast clothed in sackcloth.

Take courage to confront, challenge and help each other recognize shortcomings, failures and sinfulness and gently call forth conversion and transformation of life.

Psalm 51

**A clean heart create for me, O God,
And a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
And your holy spirit take not from me.**

Mark 4:35-41

Jesus reached out to the disciples who were frightened by the storm in the sea. This is one of the rare stories in the Gospels.... very human, very ordinary, down to earth experience of Jesus and the disciples.

We meet Jesus “sound” asleep. The Sea of Galilee was known for sudden and violent storms. Jesus trusted his men with the boat in an unpredictable Sea and went to sleep.

We meet the disciples who were afraid of the storm but unafraid to wake up their master in their urgent need!

He woke up to save his men. What a wonderful relationship between master and disciples...trusting each other...being free with each other.... unafraid of each other!

The Lord trusted his men with his mission and today he trusts us with his mission. It is up to us to trust in his presence, in his being with us in all our needs and to call him in our difficult moments with confidence. Be confident, the Lord is with you!

Saint of the Day, January 27 - St. Angela Merici and 19 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Angela Merici was born on March 21, 1474 in Desenzano, a small town in Lombardy, Italy. Angela and her older sister became orphans at the age of 10 and went to live with their uncle in Salo. There they led a quiet and devout Catholic Christian life. After the untimely death of her

sister, Angela dedicated herself to the Lord and give her life in service to the Church to help everyone grow closer to the Lord. She joined the Third Order of St. Francis where she also pledged to remain a consecrated virgin, forsaking marriage to one man to be married to the Lord and His Church.

When Angela was 20 years old, her uncle died, and she returned to Desenzano. She found that around her hometown there were many young girls who had no education and no hope. Her heart was moved. She also became distressed by their ignorance and upset at the parents who had not educated them. Angela became convinced that there was great need for a better way of teaching these young girls. So, she opened her own home to them and began to teach them herself. She devotedly taught them the Catholic Christian faith. By her example and instruction, she taught them to pray and participate in the sacramental life of the Church. She evangelized and catechized these young girls, opening them up to the life of grace.

On November 25, 1535, Angela gathered together 12 young virgins and laid down the foundation for the Order of the Ursulines. Her goal was to elevate family life through Christian education for women. The community she founded was different than many of the religious orders of women which existed in her day. She believed it was important to teach the girls in their own homes with their own families. One of her favorite sayings was, "Disorder in society is the result of disorder in the family."

Though the women in the community wore no special religious habit and took no formal vows, Angela wrote a Rule of Life for those who lived and served in the community of women. They did pledge to live a life of consecrated celibacy, poverty and obedience. They lived this Rule of Life within their own homes. This was the first group of consecrated women to work outside of a formal cloister or convent in her day and became the first teaching order of women in the Catholic Church. The community existed as what is called a "secular institute" until years after Angela's death.

Angela Merici died on January 27, 1540. She was beatified on April 30, 1768 by Pope Clement XIII and canonized May 24, 1807 by Pope Pius VII. Her Rule was officially approved by Pope Paul III in 1544 and the Ursulines became a recognized religious community of women with a teaching ministry.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking,
because its trust is not on the branch but on its own wings.**