

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Brothers and Sisters,

We have been making our journey with Jesus through the Gospel of Mathew. The following is what we have learned so far about being his disciples. We are sent into the world with a positive attitude to bless and befriend the world. We must cultivate virtues of hospitality, fidelity, humility, gentleness, patience, generosity and a habit of listening to the voice of God. We were challenged to strive to be the rock on which Christ would build his Church and be prepared to accept the cost of being that rock...the cross, suffering, and death await all disciples who follow Jesus. We were advised to be patient and tolerant with our imperfections, failures, mistakes and shortfalls and those of others as well and be open to mutual, brotherly, sisterly and friendly corrections and forgive others as our God has forgiven us.

Today, we celebrate the Twenty-Fifth Sunday in ordinary time of the year. Our Scripture readings proclaim the generosity of our God in showing mercy to His unfaithful children. The generosity of God is not dependent on what we do. He is generous because it is His nature to be generous and His mercy is for all regardless of what they did or where they came from. The prophet Isaiah reminds the exiles in Babylon that their God is more merciful than they are, and more forgiving as well (first reading). In spite of their infidelities, God blessed them with material and spiritual blessings. So, the prophet called them to seek the Lord and to put aside evil ways and receive His mercy and forgiveness.

The Psalmist sings, "the Lord is just in all His ways and gracious and merciful" (Responsorial Psalm). St. Paul says that the very purpose of his life is the final union with Christ by the grace of God and not because of anything he has done (second reading). So, he instructed his readers to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel. Jesus tells us a parable that reveals God as a gracious, benevolent, merciful, and compassionate person. It is a story of Grace. Whether we have served from sunrise to sunset or only the last hour of the day, God gives because He is generous and full of mercy and not because we have earned or merited his favors (Today's Gospel). His generosity is not dependent on our deservedness.

Our Scripture readings of today call us to be grateful for the generosity of our God and be generous to all as God is generous to us. They proclaim the greatness of our God, the abundance of his love, the generosity of his heart and the compassion that flows from a heart of Love. Generosity is being mindful of others and looking out for the needs of others! It is "other-centeredness." St. Paul advises us as he advised the Ephesians, "defer to one another

out of love for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21). The generosity of our God and that of others call us to be generous with all that we are and have. Our lives must reflect the generosity of our God.

I remember the story of two brothers who worked together on their family farm. One was married and had a large family. The other was single. At the day's end, the brothers shared everything equally, produce and profit. Then one day the single brother said to himself, "It's not right that we should share equally the produce and the profit. I'm alone and my needs are simple." So each night he took a sack of grain from his bin and crept across the field between their houses, dumping it into his brother's bin.

Meanwhile, the married brother said to himself, "It's not right that we should share the produce and the profit equally. After all, I'm married, and I have my wife and my children to look after me in years to come. My brother has no one, and no one to take care of his future." So each night he took a sack of grain and dumped it into his single brother's bin. Both men were puzzled for years because their supply of grain never dwindled. Then one dark night the two brothers bumped into each other. Slowly it dawned on them what was happening. They dropped their sacks and embraced each other. They lived other-centered lives and that is what generosity means.

Jesus lived an other-centered life and called the disciples to do the same. Even as he hung on the cross, Jesus was thinking about others – about his mother, about his beloved disciple, about the thief hanging on a cross by his side and praying for forgiveness for those who condemned him. This is the kind of love that the followers of Jesus are called to practice...love that is generous, other-centered and sacrificial. Generosity is not something that happens because we have become wealthy. It is our lifestyle, the way we live, think and act. It is the way we approach the world. Generous people in our culture today are no different from the generous people mentioned in the Bible. Generosity must permeate all our lives and relationships.

Let us choose to be grateful, joyful and generous with the abundance that is available to us and be mindful of those who are less fortunate than we are. Let us rethink our needs, downsize our appetites, share with the hungry and the needy and share from the abundance that we have received, food for the body as well as food for the spirit. Let us especially be generous in forgiving those who have hurt us or offended us. And let us not forget to be generous in forgiving ourselves as God has forgiven us.

I encourage you to take a few moments each day and reflect on how your day has been and how loving, generous, other-centered and sacrificial you have been in loving God and others as you went about doing your daily chores.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Scroll down to read the reflections on the Scripture readings of today's mass....

Twenty-fifth Sunday In Ordinary Time

September 20, 2026

**I encourage all of you to discover ever more fully in the Eucharist,
the sacrament of Christ's sacrificial love, the inspiration and strength needed
to work ever more generously for the spread of God's Kingdom
and the growth of the civilization of love.
(Pope Benedict XVI)**

Collect

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law
upon love of you and of our neighbor,
grant that, by keeping your precepts,
we may merit to attain eternal life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Liturgy of the Word

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

**Good humor is a tonic for body, mind and spirit
and the way to serenity and peace.**

Isaiah 55:6-9

This excerpt is taken from the concluding chapter of Deutero-Isaiah's book of Consolation. The Prophet had repeated over and over again his assurance of God's unconquerable love, constant, forgiveness and mercy. He also had promised his people that God would bring them home from exile and this return would be more glorious than their exodus from Egypt.

Despite the many assurances of the Prophet and despite the feelings of repentance of his people, many of them continued to feel burdened by the guilt of their wrongdoings. They had not learned that God's forgiveness was unconditional; that forgiveness meant new beginnings; that guilt and shame and regret should be replaced with faithfulness to God's law of love. They

had problems understanding how God could forgive and accept a people who had repeatedly offended him, how he could love so tenderly and graciously.

It is to them that this chapter is addressed. The Prophet told them that sinners must turn to God for mercy, not because they deserve but because God is generous in forgiving. God's way is radically different from that of men: "My thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." God's ways are not vindictive or vengeful or mean or petty. God's will to forgive is unfathomable and his mercy immeasurable and his love unconquerable. So, the Prophet challenged his people to turn to God, seek God and call upon God here and now and not just in liturgy and worship in the temple.

Rejoice! Be happy! Be grateful! God's way is radically different from that of men! God's will to forgive is unfathomable and his mercy immeasurable and his love unconquerable.

Psalm 145

This is a psalm composed for public worship. It is an acrostic (alphabetic) poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The Psalm focuses primarily on God's compassion., especially for the underprivileged and depressed. A daily reminder of praising the unfathomable greatness of God, which goes beyond all our theologies, philosophies and doctrines.

Verse 4 invites us to meditate on the Wondrous acts of God and to pass on this memory to the future generations. Verses 8-9 express the most basic faith of the O.T. about the very nature of God: "steadfast love", "compassion"all-embracing love, abundant love. Verses 9-10 – All God's works give thanks because of the "all-embracing love".

**I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.**

Philippians 1:20-27

Paul had special affection for the converts of Philippi. He wrote to them about how he was caught between two personal and intense desires – one to live for the Gospel and the other to die to live with Christ. In the excerpt referenced above, Paul tells the Philippians that the most important thing in his life was to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus.

Paul continued to insist that it did not matter to him if he died. Death would mean glory in Christ. He expressed his deepest desire to live for Christ even if it meant death for him.

All that mattered was that Christ was proclaimed because salvation would result from preaching Christ and his Gospel. He instructed his readers to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel. For Paul, Christ was the end, the purpose of his life and all his energies were directed to the final union with Christ.

Stay focused! Direct your energies toward proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus.

Mathew 20:1-16

This is one of the greatest parables that reveals God as a gracious, benevolent, merciful and compassionate person. It is a story of Grace. Whether we have served from sunrise to sunset or only the last hour of the day, God gives because He is grace-filled and not because we have earned or merited.

The favor and mercy of God are not reserved for the meritorious and the saints, but for all, including sinners.

This parable is about a master who chose to reward the workers equally regardless of the length of time they spent in service. All people, no matter when they come, are equally precious to God. The first are not necessarily first and the last not necessarily last. All are precious. In God's plan, there is no "most favored people or nation" status. Some come into the kingdom in an hour, others in a lifetime - some enter at the beginning of their life and others at the close of their life.

No matter when a person comes to Christ, he/she is equally dear to him.

This parable also contains elements of compassion and generosity. It reminds us that the spirit in which work is done is more important than anything else. "What do I get out of it?" is not a praiseworthy attitude.

Do all you do with love!

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.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**What we need is a cup of understanding, a barrel of love,
and an ocean of patience.**
(St. Francis de Sales)

