

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

P. O. Box 440, Whitehouse, Texas 75791

www.wellspringcommunity.net

frgusmsfs@gmail.com

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Brothers and Sisters,

Today is “World Mission Sunday”, a day set aside for the Catholic Church throughout the world to renew its commitment to the missionary movement that Jesus began and called all his followers to continue to completion. It is celebrated on the Sunday before the last Sunday of October every year. It was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1926 as the day of prayer for missions. This year, October 18, 2026, marks the historic 100th anniversary of the global observance.

World Mission Sunday reminds us of our mission to continually proclaim the Gospel of Jesus, the good news of the all-embracing and steadfast love of God. Pope Francis says, “The Church is missionary by nature; otherwise, she would no longer be the Church of Christ but one group among many others that soon end up serving their purpose and passing away.” The Church must continue to fulfill the mission of Jesus by proclaiming the salvation of Christ to all people.

The first reading of this Sunday and the responsorial Psalm speak to the heart of the mission of the Church. Isaiah fulfilled his mission by speaking to a people who wondered how God could forgive a people who messed up their lives so many times. They were afraid that God would never forgive them for the infidelities of priests and people.

Cyrus, the Persian emperor, had defeated many nations and finally Babylon in 539 B.C. and had become the ruler of the then Middle East. He was very tolerant and understanding toward the exiles and helped them re-establish themselves in their homeland. Isaiah called his people to see how God used the hands of a pagan king, to deliver his people, though the king did not even know it. Such was the love God had for his people that He used even “pagan hands” to save His people. God is God of everlasting, constant, all-embracing, and steadfast Love. God continues to reveal his plan and purpose through the most unexpected people and situations.

In the second reading of today’s mass, we read about Paul thanking God for the response of the Thessalonians to the Gospel that he and his companions had proclaimed. He told them how they “became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in great affliction, with joy from the holy Spirit so that you became a model for all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.... from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth..... in every place your faith in God has gone forth...” (1 Thessalonians 1:1-8). The mission of proclaiming the Gospel is continued through the inspiring and faithful life of the Thessalonians.

In the Gospel reading of today, we hear Jesus challenging the Herodians to put their priorities in order. Jesus tells us just as he told the Herodians, that loyalty to God must take priority over all other priorities. Loyalty to God is faithfulness to what God made you to be, obedience to what God wants you to do, striving to become what God wants you to become and faithfulness to all that is of God and from God. Jesus said that his own mission was to do the will of his father who sent him to the world. "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:34) and "I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me" (John 6:38).

This is our mission today: to be what God calls us to be and to do what God calls us to do and be faithful to the way, the truth and the life that Jesus proclaimed. We are called and sent to proclaim the all-embracing, steadfast and unfailing love of God for all people and to call people to respond to his love. We cannot all go to distant lands to fulfill this mission. We can do so where we are now.

We live in confusing, difficult, troublesome and unsettling times. The war and violence around the globe, political unrest and racial tensions in our nation, violence in our cities, lack of confidence in leadership, conflicting theological positions and spiritual traditions in our Catholic Church and other disturbing, troubling and unhealthy events are happening all around us. Our world needs the Gospel of Jesus, the good news of the presence of a loving and compassionate God among us. Our world needs men and women of deep faith, rooted in Jesus Christ, inspired and moved by the Holy Spirit proclaiming the Gospel with their lives.

Pope Francis, in his message for World Mission Sunday (2020), reflected on the theme "Hearts on fire, feet on the move," based on the story of the disciples who met Jesus on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). He invited all followers of Jesus "set out once more, illumined by our encounter with the risen Lord and prompted by his Spirit..... with burning hearts, with our eyes open and our feet in motion..... to make other hearts burn with the word of God, to open the eyes of others to Jesus in the Eucharist, and to invite everyone to walk together on the path of peace and salvation that God, in Christ, has bestowed upon all humanity."

World Mission Sunday calls us to stand our ground in our faith and give witness to the constant, all-embracing, and steadfast Love of God during these troublesome and uncertain times. On this World Mission Sunday, let us resolve to support the mission of the Church through our prayers and financial support and through the witness of our faithfulness to the way, the truth and the life that we were baptized into.

I encourage you to take a few moments each day of this week to be still and to reflect on fulfilling your mission in the Church by living a godly, noble, virtuous, and holy life during these unsettling days. 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-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 18, 2026

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!**

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
grant that we may always conform our will to yours
and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.
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.

**Keep your house in order, your mind free of toxic thoughts
and your spirit free of clutter and you will find serenity and peace.**

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

Cyrus had defeated many nations and finally Babylon in 539 B.C. and had become the ruler of the then middle east. He was very tolerant and understanding toward the exiles and helped them reestablish themselves in their homeland. Isaiah reflected on the attitudes and accomplishments of Cyrus and saw that God was at work in and through him. He says God used the hands of a pagan king, to deliver his people, though the king did not even know it. Such was the love God had for his people.

This is really the “Amazing Grace” – God had used the hands of a pagan king, Cyrus, without even his knowing, and through this “pagan hands” saved His people, Israel. God is a God of everlasting, constant, steadfast Love.

God continues to reveal his plan and purpose even through the most unexpected people and situations. Be open to the surprises of the Spirit.

Psalm 96

This Psalm celebrates the return of the exiles from Babylon and the new beginning that God had offered them. The Psalmist calls the whole earth to sing to the Lord and tell the nations about the salvation God has won for His people, to glorify God for what He has done and to bring an offering of thanksgiving. This Psalm is a beautiful worship song, singing the praises of God who creates and renews and constantly makes new beginnings.

This Psalm also has a missionary dimension as it calls to proclaim God's salvation to all the nations. It proclaims the God of Israel as radically different from the gods of all other nations. Our God is a God of Holiness, who does marvelous things, who judges all peoples with righteousness and loving kindness and a God of unfailing faithfulness. All peoples are to be reached with this good news.

This Psalm also is a beautiful Poem calling the heaven to be glad, the earth to rejoice, the sea to roar, the field to exult, the trees to sing for joy because God has created, renewed and established the world and "it shall never be moved". This is the reason for singing a new song of joy. God makes all things new. Each day is a new day, and each day calls for a new song.

Every day that we wake up is a good day. Every breath that we take is filled with hope for a better day. Every word that we speak is a chance to change what is bad into something good. And so.....

**Sing to the Lord a new song;
Sing to the Lord, all you lands.
Tell his glory among the nations;
Among all peoples his wondrous deeds.**

I Thessalonians 1:1-5

Paul was a good pastor. Paul wrote to the Thessalonian community encouraging them and affirming them in their works of love. He praised them for their progress in living the Gospel challenge. He acknowledged that theirs was a dynamic faith, lived out in hope and expressed in love. He told them how much he appreciated their faith and how encouraged and supported he felt when he came to know of their faithfulness in love. He assured them of remembering them constantly in prayer.

Say a word of encouragement and support to someone today! Remember in prayer those who serve you in faithfulness and love!

Mathew 22:15-21

In response to a trick question from the Herodians, Jesus revealed a great truth. They sought his opinion on paying tax to the emperor. He invited them to look at the coin and identify the image on the coin. The image on the coin indicated ownership.

The coin belonged to the emperor since his image was on it. "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's". Pay him what is due to him. Then he taught another great truth: "give to God what is God's". The coin has the image of the emperor.....you have the image of God...give yourself to God. We are made in God's image and likeness, and we must be faithful to that image. The truth about every person is so incredibly rich and profound, beyond comprehension that the Scriptures have much to reveal to us.....

"in the divine image, He created him: male and female he created them" (Gen.1:27).

"made him less than the angels and crowned with glory" (Ps. 8:6).

"thank you God, for I am, fearfully, wonderfully made", (Ps139:14)

"you are the Body of Christ" (I Cor. 12:27)

"you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God - being built to become a dwelling place for God in the spirit" (Eph.2:19-22)

Loyalty to God takes priority over all else. Loyalty to God is fidelity to what God made you to be, obedience to what God wants you to do, striving to become what God wants you to become and faithfulness to all that is of God and from God.

Saint of the Day, October 18 - St. Luke, the Evangelist and 10 other saints are remembered this day.

Luke, a gentile and a doctor by profession, was born in Antioch. He wrote one of the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in Greece between 70-90 C.E. for Christians of Greek background. Luke's profile of Jesus was influenced by the fact that he wrote for the Gentiles, especially for the poor and the outcasts of the society. He stresses the concern of Jesus for the outcasts, the sinners and the "second class" citizens. Luke's profile is that of the compassionate Messiah/Savior.

Luke wrote his Gospel to a friend. We know him as Theophilus, "Beloved of God". To help his friend, Luke used traditional stories, memories of older people and collections of writings which were current in his community. Luke spoke to his friend in stories full of references to the hopes of the Jews which clarified for him the identity of Jesus.

He joined St. Paul in his ministry in the year 51 C.E. and his inspiration and information for his writings came from his close association with Paul and his companions. In his gospel, Luke stresses Jesus' compassion for sinners, the poor, and the suffering. Luke reveals Jesus performing six miracles and teaching 18 parables not found in the other gospels. Luke also has a special connection with the women in Jesus' life, especially Mary, the mother of Jesus.

It is only in Luke's gospel that we have the story of many of the major events in the life of Mary - the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Presentation, and the story of Jesus' disappearance in Jerusalem. Luke also provides the scriptural basis for parts of the "Hail Mary" - the Angel Gabriel's greeting at the Annunciation, 'Hail Mary full of grace' and her cousin Elizabeth's exclamation, 'Blessed are you and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus' at the Visitation. Luke wanted God's kingdom opened to everyone, and he saw hope in God's mercy for all. St. Luke died around 70 A.D. As one of the four gospel writers, St. Luke has traditionally been represented as a winged ox. He is the patron saint of physicians, surgeons, and artists.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**The preacher must keep preaching, the teacher must keep teaching,
the parent must keep loving, caring, educating and forming the character of
children and that is the challenge being faithful!**

