

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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September 26, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Tomorrow, September 27th we celebrate the feast of Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-1660). He was born on April 24, 1581 in the village of Pouy, in the Kingdom of France, to peasant farmers. At the age of 15, his father sent him to a seminary, managing to pay for it by selling the family's oxen. From this humble beginnings as the child of peasant farmers St. Vincent became a priest at the age of nineteen, contrary to the regulations established by the Council of Trent which required a minimum of 24 years of age for ordination; became an adviser to the Queen of France; founded an order of priests who would continue preaching mission all over the world; spend two years as a slave in Tunisia; became a missionary to prisoners in Paris and Marseille; helped ransom over 1,000 Christian slaves from North Africa; began hospitals; founded communities where the poor could work to support themselves; set up homes for orphans; became the patron of charitable organizations and he is called the "Apostle of Charity."

St. Vincent de Paul had accomplished much and had every reason to be proud. Being the "Apostle of Charity," one might assume, that charity was the virtue St. Vincent De Paul valued most in his life, but it was not. In a letter to a friend he once wrote, "Simplicity is the virtue I love most, the one to which in all my actions I pay most heed." He often said that simplicity was his "gospel." His life shows that charity and simplicity defined who he was.

St. Vincent wanted his priests, nuns and others who followed him to be simple in the sense that they did everything out of love of God. He wanted them to be single-minded in their intentions and in their pursuit of God's will. He did not want them to do things to impress their superior or out of human respect. Too often, our intentions are not pure, and we act according to our own will, instead of God's.

For St. Vincent simplicity was sincerity in one's words and actions. He tried to always say things as they truly were, and to avoid any duplicity or deceit. He taught his followers, "the heart must not think one thing, while the mouth says another." He said that God speaks to the simple, and that simplicity is the spirit of Jesus. He wanted his communities to practice this virtue because the world is filled with so much duplicity. He advises us today, as he did his followers, to have the courage and humility to be seen as we truly are, to speak the truth in love, and to do everything with authenticity as our guide. Let us strive to be authentic in all we say and do.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Twenty sixth Week in Ordinary Time

September 26 – October 1, 2022

If there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person.
If there is beauty in the person, there will be harmony in the house.
If there is harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.
(Chinese proverb)

September 26 - Monday, Twenty Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

God's truth, God's goodness, God's love, God's justice, God's forgiveness, God's peace – all that is of God and from God are pure and simple.

Job 1:6-22

Job faced four tragedies one after the other. He lost his cattle, his sheep, his camels and finally his own family. He was a good and just man. He did not do anything to deserve such treatment. Through all these, Job remained faithful to his God, never saying anything disrespectful of God.

Psalm 17 - Hear O Lord, a just suit; Attend to my outcry...

Luke 9:46-50

The disciples wanted to know who was of greatest importance in the kingdom. Jesus responded: 'unless you turn and become as children, you will not enter the kingdom of God. You are going in the wrong direction, not in the direction of the Kingdom'. You are aiming at personal power, prestige, etc. which is the opposite of the Kingdom.

Humility is the quality of a person who belongs in the kingdom. Child's trust, dependence, innocence and purity are all qualities of people of the kingdom. Reflect on turning toward the Kingdom, away from personal power, prestige, etc.

Jesus invited his disciples and he invites us today to be childlike and be willing to surrender in loving and generous service. He invites us to have a new vision of "greatness" as service, humility, and self-surrender, different from what the world seems to offer. Those of us, who choose to follow Jesus and be his disciples, must learn to redefine greatness as humility, service, and self-surrender.

Change your vision: it is a privilege, an honor and blessing to be the last and to serve the least.

Saint of the Day, September 26 - Saints Cosmas and Damian and 15 other saints are remembered this day

Nothing is known of their lives except that they suffered martyrdom in Syria during the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian. According to traditions, the twin brothers were born in Arabia and became skilled doctors.

Saladino d'Ascoli, a 15th century Italian physician, claims that the medieval electuary, a pasty mass consisting of a drug mixed with sugar and water or honey suitable for oral administration, known as opopira, a complex compound medicine used to treat diverse maladies including paralysis, was invented by Cosmas and Damian.

During the persecution under Diocletian, Cosmas and Damian were arrested by order of the Prefect of Cilicia, who ordered them under torture to recant. However, according to legend they stayed true to their faith, enduring being hung on a cross, stoned and shot by arrows and finally suffered execution by beheading. Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepus, their younger brothers, who were inseparable from them throughout life, shared in their martyrdom.

September 27 - Saint Vincent de Paul

It was the simple and the humble who could understand God's self-revelation.

Job 3:1-3, 11-17, 20-23

Job, the faithful, virtuous and holy man broke down and cursed his day and began questioning the reason for his birth and wished that he had died at his birth. After expressing all his frustration, he concluded that the path of life is hidden from men, but known to God.

Trust in the Lord and His plan and purpose for you.

Psalm 88 - O Lord, my God, by day I cry out...

Luke 9:51-56

This excerpt gives us the response Jesus made to those who did not welcome him and to those who wished to follow him. It also tells about how he challenged them to remain resolute and faithful to their mission and surrender themselves in service. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem through Samaritan territory. The Samaritans did not welcome him. James and John wanted to do something about it. They asked him if they could call down fire from heaven and destroy them. It was another way of saying, "Shall we beat their brains out?" Jesus said: Let them be. Let's go on to fulfill our mission. Jesus journeyed into hostile territory without fear and without security measures and invited others to follow him without turning back.

Cultivate values of the Kingdom, nonviolent attitude, love of enemies, love for the "reign" of God above earthly matters, tenacity in fulfilling chosen mission...

Saint of the day, September 27 - St. Vincent de Paul and 16 other saints are remembered this day

Vincent de Paul was born on April 24, 1581 in the village of Pouy, in the Kingdom of France, to peasant farmers. At 15, his father sent him to a seminary, managing to pay for it by selling the family's oxen. For two years, Vincent received his education at a college in Dax, France, adjoining a monastery of the Friars Minor where he and others resided. In 1597, he began his studies in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Toulouse. He was ordained a priest on September 23, 1600, at the age of nineteen. This was against the regulations established by the Council of Trent which required a minimum of 24 years of age for ordination, so when he was appointed parish priest in Tilh, the appointment was appealed in the Court of Rome. Rather than respond to a lawsuit in which he would probably not have prevailed, he resigned from the position and continued his studies. On October 12, 1604, he received his Bachelor of Theology from the University of Toulouse. Later he received a Licentiate in Canon Law from the University of Paris.

In 1605, while on a ship traveling from Marseilles to Narbone, he was captured, brought to Tunis and sold as a slave. Two years later he and his master managed to escape, and both returned to France. St. Vincent went to Avignon and later to Rome to continue his studies. While there he became a chaplain to the Count of Goigny and was placed in charge of distributing money to the deserving poor. He became pastor of a small parish in Clichy for a short period of time, while also serving as a tutor and spiritual director.

From that point forward he spent his life preaching missions to and providing relief to the poor. This work became his passion. He later extended his concern and ministry to convicts. The need to evangelize and assist these souls was so great that he founded the Ladies of Charity, a lay institute of woman, to help, as well as a religious institute of priests - the Congregation of Priests of the Mission, commonly referred to now as the Vincentians.

This was at a time when there were not many priests in France and what priests there were, were neither well-formed nor faithful to their way of life. Vincent helped reform the clergy and the manner in which they were instructed and prepared for the priesthood. He did this first through the presentation of retreats and later by helping develop seminaries. At one point his community was directing 53 seminaries. His retreats, open to priests and laymen, were so well attended that it is said he infused a "Christian spirit among more than 20,000 persons in his last 23 years."

The Vincentians remain with us today with nearly 4,000 members in 86 countries. In addition to his order of Vincentian priests, St. Vincent cofounded the Daughters of Charity along with St. Louise de Marillac. There are more than 18,000 Daughters today serving the needs of the poor in 94 countries. He was eighty years old when he died in Paris on September 27, 1660. He was canonized on June 16, 1737 by Pope Clement. He had "become the symbol of the successful reform of the French Church". St. Vincent is sometimes referred to as "The Apostle of Charity" and "The Father of the Poor".

September 28 - Wednesday, Twenty Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

**Simplicity in essence is purity, sincerity, genuineness, authenticity,
and integrity.**

Job 9:1-12, 14-16

Job says to his taunting friends that God is wise in heart and mighty in strength and that he must beg God for what is due to him.

Be humble before God and seek His wisdom.

Psalm 88 - Daily I call upon on your Lord...

Luke 9:57-62

This excerpt tells us about the response Jesus made to those who wished to follow him. It also tells about how he challenged them to remain resolute and faithful to their mission and surrender themselves in service. Someone in the crowd expressed his desire to follow Jesus and

he was asked to count the cost. Jesus called others to follow him and they had various excuses and he challenged them to seize the opportunity to be involved in the kingdom.

Count the cost before you make choices and decisions. Don't get carried away with feelings and ideas of the moment..... Learn to prayerfully discern choices.

Seize the opportunity when it comes. There is tragedy in "unseized" moments. May God give us strength to make choices and decisions that will save us from the tragedy of "unseized" moments.

When you have come to know the urgency of getting out of a situation or into a situation, choose to do so now. Do not wait for tomorrow. Now is the moment of Grace...Now is the kingdom.

Make a clean break from all the binding forces for discipleship. Stay focused on the Lord and His purpose for you..... do not look back or get side-tracked..... stay focused... no turning back.

Saint of the day, September 28 - St. Wenceslaus and 31 other saints are remembered this day

Wenceslaus was born around 911 near Prague in Bohemia. He was the son of Vratislaus I, the Duke of Bohemia. His grandfather, Bořivoj I of Bohemia, was converted to Christianity by Saints Cyril and Methodius. His mother, Drahomíra, was the daughter of a pagan tribal chief of the Havelli, but was baptized at the time of her marriage.

In 921, when Wenceslas was about thirteen, his father died and his grandmother became regent. Jealous of the influence that Ludmila wielded over Wenceslas, Drahomíra arranged to have her killed. Ludmila was at Tetín Castle near Beroun when assassins murdered her on September 15, 921. She is said to have been strangled by them with her veil. She was at first buried in the church of St. Michael at Tetín, but her remains were later removed, probably by Wenceslas, to the church of St. George in Prague, which had been built by his father.

Drahomíra then assumed the role of regent and immediately initiated measures against the Christians. When Wenceslas was 18, those Christian nobles who remained rebelled against Drahomira. The uprising was successful, and Drahomira was sent into exile and Wenceslaus assumed leadership of the government.

His rule was marked by efforts toward unification within Bohemia, support of the Church, and peace-making negotiations with Germany, a policy which caused him trouble with the anti-Christian opposition. His brother Boleslav joined in the plotting, and in September of 929 invited Wenceslaus to Alt Bunzlou for the celebration of the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian. On the way to Mass, Boleslav attacked his brother, and in the struggle, Wenceslaus

was killed by supporters of Boleslav. Although his death resulted primarily from political upheaval, Wenceslaus was hailed as a martyr for the faith, and his tomb became a pilgrimage shrine. He is hailed as the patron of the Bohemian people and of the former Czechoslovakia.

September 29 - Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, Archangels

Simplicity in practice involves a personal choice of lifestyle that is simple.

Revelation 12:7-12

The war between good and evil, breaks out between Michael and the Dragon. The powers of good prevail and rule of the lamb is established – a great cause for rejoicing.

Psalm 138 - You answered me when I called to you...

John 1:47-51.

Philip told Nathanael that he believed that he found the Messiah in Jesus, the man from Nazareth. Nathanael had problems accepting the idea that The Messiah could come from such insignificant place like Nazareth. Philip simply invited him, “come and see”. Philip did not give a lecture to his friend, did not offer any logical, philosophical, theological or any other scientific explanation. He just invited his friend to see for himself.

Today, we are invited to meet Christ, to encounter him in person, to walk with him, to dine with him, to listen to him.....to let Christ be our teacher and our master. It is not knowledge about Christ that matters. What really matters is knowing Christ as a person, to experience his presence in our life, to let his way and truth and life become ours.

Jesus looked into the heart of Nathanael and declared that he was man without deceit. Nathanael was surprised at the words of Jesus. The words of Nathanael were not impressive, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”...what can you expect from such an insignificant place. These words could have been taken as offensive. Jesus saw beyond words.....into the heart that was sincere, honest, without deceit. This is what really matters...sincerity of heart, purity of purpose, single-mindedness.

May your heart be in a good place...pure, honest, sincere, unmixed, simple!

Saint of the Day, September 29 - Saints Michael, Gabriel, & Raphael and 14 other saints are remembered this day.

The three great messengers of God are remembered together and celebrated as one joyful feast. Although angels are mentioned many times in the Bible, only these three are mentioned by name. Each one has a powerful presence in our history and in our heritage of faith. Each of them is God's messenger and in some way represents God's presence to the believer.

Michael is remembered as the great defender and protector of all God's people. The name "Michael" means, "Who is like God?" The Book of Revelation describes Michael casting out of heaven those angels who presumed they were like God. The Book of Daniel speaks of Michael as one who will lead the dead to God on the day of the resurrection. Michael is considered a special protector of Israel and the Church.

Michael reminds us of God's unchanging, enduring, everlasting presence with us, guiding us, protecting us, defending us and keeping us safe. Pray with those whose lives are unsafe and pray for a growing confidence in his presence in your life.

The name Gabriel means "hero of God". Gabriel brought the good news of the birth of John the Baptist to Elizabeth and the birth of Jesus to Mary. The book of Daniel says that Gabriel announced the end of exile in Babylon. According to certain traditions, Gabriel will sound the trumpet to awaken the dead on the day of judgment.

Gabriel reminds of God's Good News. He is the bearer of hope and the realization of the Hope in the birth of Jesus. Remember and pray with those whose hopes are shattered and those who need to keep hope alive. Pray that we may be a people of Hope and be signs of hope for the world.

The name Raphael means "God has healed". In the book of Tobit, we read about Raphael guarding a young man on his journey and restoring sight to the man's elderly father. He described himself as one of the seven angels standing in the presence of God. Raphael is said to have stirred the waters of the pool of Siloam where people found healing.

Raphael reminds us of the healing and reconciling presence of God in his "steadfast love". Remember and pray with those who need healing and reconciliation. Pray that we may grow in the "steadfast" love of God.

September 30 – Saint Jerome

Simplify your life! Getting rid of everything that does not matter allows you to remember who you are.

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Paul reminds Timothy to have faith in his teachers and trust in the Scriptures, the inspired word of God.

Psalm 119 - How can the young keep his way without fault...?

Mathew 13:47-52

Once again, Jesus used examples from daily work situations to speak about the kingdom and the things of heaven. The kingdom was compared to a net cast into the sea which gathers all kinds of things. The net was drawn to land and the catch was separated – the good was put into containers and the useless material thrown away.

The net thrown into the sea cannot discriminate...it draws all kinds of things, its contents will be a mixture... it is the nature of the kingdom on earth...all kinds of people, the good, the bad, the useful, the useless and so on. It describes the nature of the kingdom and the nature of the Church as all inclusive. The Church must remain open to all.

The parable also teaches us that eventually, separation will happen...good will be separated from the bad. Jesus said, “Angels will come” for the separation. Judgments must be left to God and it is not ours to make.

Cultivate non-judgmental attitude! Reflect on the all-embracing love God.

Saint of the Day, September 30 - Saint Jerome and 17 other saints are remembered this day

Jerome was born in Dalmatia, along the coast of the Adriatic Sea around the year 347 and was educated in Rome. He had developed a passion for books and began a collection of expensive books. After completing his education, he lived as a hermit in the Syrian Desert for five years. Pope Damasus invited him to be his secretary. In Rome he preached many sermons which made the wealthy uncomfortable and angry. He began a Bible study group for women, which was the

first Bible study group that we know of. He believed that contact with Scripture would transform the lives of people.

After the death of Pope Damasus, he went to the Holy land and settled in Bethlehem where he lived for the rest of his life. Paula, from the first bible study group, became a brilliant scholar and followed Jerome to Bethlehem. Many others also followed them and settled in Bethlehem. Paula and Jerome founded two monasteries, one for men and the other for women and a Church shared by both.

In Bethlehem, Jerome devoted his life to study and meditation. Assisted by Paula and others, he translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. This translation was called the Vulgate, from the Latin word for "the common people". This translation was used for many centuries.

Jerome was always kind to the needy. When Rome was attacked in the year 410, many refugees came to the East to the monasteries. Jerome laid aside his studies to serve them saying, "Today, we must translate the words of scripture into deeds and instead of speaking saintly words, we must act on them."

He died in Bethlehem around the year 420.

October 1 – Saint Therese of the Child Jesus

**Simplicity is a spiritual discipline that tames
and trains us to choose to live simply.**

Isaiah 66:10-14

The power of the Lord will be revealed in and through his servants. They are to rejoice and exult in the fulfillment that he gives them. He will give them comfort and prosperity.

Psalm 131 - Lord, my heart is not proud...

Mathew 18:1-5

The disciples wanted to know who was of greatest importance in the kingdom. Jesus responded: 'unless you turn and become as children, you will not enter the kingdom of God.

You are going in the wrong direction, not in the direction of the Kingdom'. You are aiming at personal power, prestige, etc. which is the opposite of the Kingdom.

Humility is the quality of a person who belongs in the kingdom. Child's trust, dependence, innocence and purity are all qualities of people of the kingdom.

Reflect on turning toward the Kingdom, away from personal power, prestige, etc.

Saint of the Day, October 1 - St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and 34 other saints are remembered this day

Marie Françoise Martin was born on January 2, 1873 in Alençon, France to pious parents, both of whom were canonized saints in October 2016. Her mother died when she was four, leaving her father and elder sisters to raise her. At the age of fifteen, she joined the Carmelite convent and was given the name Therese. She lived a life centered on the Gospel. She believed that any life could be a holy one. "To pick up a pin for love can convert a soul" reflected her attitude and she did her daily chores joyfully with love.

Theresa is known as "Little Flower" because she lived her life in a "little way", always ready and willing to do humble, small things without complaining. Greatness lies also in doing little things and doing it well with love. Life of holiness is open to all and it doesn't have to include spectacular events! Just before her death at the age of 24, suffering from tuberculosis, she said, "I promise to spend my heaven doing good on earth".

Thérèse offered herself as a sacrificial victim to the merciful Love of God on June 9, 1895, the feast of the Most Holy Trinity and the following year, on the night between Holy Thursday and Good Friday, she noticed the first symptoms of Tuberculosis, the illness which would lead to her death on September 30, 1897 in Lisieux, France

She was canonized a saint on May 17, 1925 by Pope Pius XI and was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by Pope John Paul II in 1997 - 100 years after her death at the age of 24. She is only the third woman to be so proclaimed, after Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Teresa of Avila.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Simplicity leads us to tell things candidly, and just as they exist in our hearts.
(St. Vincent de Paul)**