

# **Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality**

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Yesterday, we reflected on what Jesus offered as his new commandment, “love one another as I have loved you.” The disciples were to love as the master loved - not as others love them, not as they wish to be loved and not as they love themselves, but as the master himself loved! Let us continue to reflect on this call to love as Jesus loves, as God loves.

John 15:9-17 describes the boundless and limitless love of Jesus. The reason for such love is: “you are my friends,” Jesus says. He lays down his life because he loves his followers. The disciples are called to follow the way of the master. Friends of Jesus must become friends of one another. Jesus gathers a community of followers not based on certain set of rules, but founded on friendship, on self-sacrificing love, on total giving - “love one another as I have loved you” is the standard. Jesus said, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.”

We are called 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 make our own choices in response. 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. We meet people who are hurting and bleeding and needing a “transfusion” of love. We can and we must be channels of God’s love for all.

St. Paul advised the Ephesians (5:1-21) to be imitators of God as His dear children - “Be imitators of God...follow the way of love.....live as children of light.....discern what pleases the Lord.....try to discern the will of God.....Defer to one another out of reverence for Christ,” (Ephesians 5:1-21). To defer is to put the other first - to let our love become other-centered!

Paul advised the Colossians, “put to death whatever in your nature is rooted in earth.” We must avoid sinful ways and embrace ways of virtue and honor and nobility. We must set aside anger, jealousy, greed, foul language and all that degrades and lowers our dignity and that of others and “clothe ourselves in garments of heartfelt mercy, forgiveness, kindness, meekness, patience, and put on love which binds all virtues together and makes them perfect. We must let Christ’s peace reign in our hearts.” (Colossians 3:5-17, paraphrased) Keep your heart in a good place, a place of love and peace. Put your best foot forward!

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

## **Fifth Week of Easter**

**May 19-24, 2025**

**Every Christian must be convinced of his fundamental  
and vital duty of bearing witness  
to the truth in which he believes  
and the grace that has transformed him.**

**(Pope John XXIII)**

**May 19 – Monday, Fifth Week of Easter**

**A person achieves fulfillment only through purposeful engagements  
and by dedicated service.**

### **Acts 14:5-18**

Paul healed a crippled man at Lystra. The people, including their priests, came to honor Paul and Barnabas with garlands and oxen to offer them sacrifice. Paul explained to them that they were only men and that the healing was done through the power of Jesus.

**May all you do give honor and glory to God!**

### **Psalm 115**

**Not to us, O Lord, not to us  
But to your name give glory  
Because of your kindness, because of your truth.....  
May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth**

### **John 14:21-26**

There is much about love in this Gospel passage – Jesus and the Father, the disciples and Jesus, the disciples and other disciples – all in one communion of love and fellowship.

Obedience is presented as the only sign of Love – faithfulness to the word of Jesus is faithfulness, obedience to the word of the Father.

**Keep listening and be obedient to the word of Jesus. The word of Jesus is the word of the Father and it is the word of love.**

This faithfulness to the word deepens the relationship of love and it facilitates further revelation. Fidelity not only maintains relationship but also deepens it. Jesus promised that those who are faithful will experience the indwelling of God, that he and the father will make a dwelling place within. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, he said, would teach us all things and help us understand the teachings of Jesus

**Fidelity, Obedience and loyalty are not values lived out in monasteries and religious houses. They are lived out where we are - where we live and work - where God has placed us. God is faithful where God is. We are called to be faithful where we are.**

**Saint of the day, May 19 - St. Celestine and 17 other saints are remembered this day**

According to tradition, Pietro di Morrone was born in 1215 in the town of Sant'Angelo Limosano, in the Kingdom of Sicilia (Sicily). After his father's death he began working in the fields. He became a Benedictine monk at Faifoli in the Diocese of Benevento when he was 17. He showed an extraordinary disposition toward asceticism and solitude, and in 1239 retired to a solitary cavern on the mountain Morrone, hence his name (Peter of Morrone). Five years later he left this retreat and went with two companions to a similar cave on the even more remote Mountain of Maiella in the Abruzzi region of central Italy, where he lived as strictly as possible according to the example of John the Baptist.

In 1244 he founded the order, which was eventually named after him, the Celestines (the name he took when he became Pope). A new religious community was formed, and Pietro gave them a rule formulated in accordance with his own practices which was eventually approved by Pope Gregory X, making it a branch of the Benedictines and following the rule of Saint Benedict, but adding to it additional severities and privations.

In July 1294, three eminent dignitaries, accompanied by an immense multitude of monks and laymen, ascended the mountain, and announced that Pietro had been chosen as the new Pope by a unanimous vote of the Sacred College and humbly begged him to accept the honor. Such an event has never happened in the history of the Church. Reluctantly accepting this honor, Pietro took the name of Celestine V.

Pope Celestine made many serious mistakes in five short months. Troubled by the many mistakes and his desire for the ascetic and contemplative life, Celestine began to think of resigning as Pope. This had never happened in the history of the Church. On December 13, 1294, Celestine announced his resignation as Pope and proclaimed that the cardinals were free to proceed to a new election.

Celestine was not allowed to become a hermit once again. The new Pope Boniface VIII imprisoned him in the castle of Fumone near Ferentino in Lazio, attended by two monks of his order, where Pietro died on May 19, 1296.

Celestine is a saint who will always be remembered for the unique manner in which he was elected Pope, for his spectacular incompetence in that office, and for the distinction of being the first pontiff ever to have resigned.

## **May 20 – Tuesday, Fifth Week of Easter**

**The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost,  
to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience.**

**(Eleanor Roosevelt)**

### **Acts 14:19-28**

Some Jews from Antioch and Iconium stoned Paul and dragged him out of the town. Paul's disciples formed a circle around him and protected him. Paul and Barnabas continued their missionary journey, instructing people and encouraging them to stand strong in the face of difficulties.

**Be strong and be faithful even in the face of difficulties!**

### **Psalms 145**

**Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord,  
And let your faithful ones bless you.  
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom  
And speak of your might.**

### **John 14:27-31**

Jesus gave his disciples his farewell gift: PEACE. He said that this was not the kind of peace the world would give. It is enduring peace, lasting peace, eternal peace. The word for peace used in this context is "shalom" and shalom means "total well-being", "the highest good", "that which befits God". It is not the absence or the end of war or conflict. It is the presence of shalom, even in the midst of tension. This is the kind of peace, shalom that Jesus experienced in loving and fulfilling the Father's will.

## **Pray for:**

- **respect for the individual**
- **respect for all persons; unity in families; fellowship in communities; communion of cultures; respect for diversity and tolerance of differences**
- **hunger for brotherhood, justice, righteousness and peace in the world.**
- **recognition of the hunger of people and the willingness to share from the abundance we have received, food for the body as well as food for the spirit.**

## **Saint of the Day, May 20 – St. Bernadine of Siena and 12 other saints are remembered this day.**

Bernardine was born on September 8, 1380 in a noble family in Massa Marittima, Italy. He was orphaned at six and was raised by a pious aunt. In 1397, after a course of civil and canon law, he joined the Confraternity of Our Lady attached to the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala church. When he was 20, the plague was at its height in his hometown of Siena. Sometimes as many as 20 people died in one day at the hospital. Bernardine offered to run the hospital and, with the help of other young men, nursed patients there for four months. He escaped the plague but was so exhausted that a fever confined him for several months. He spent another year caring for a beloved aunt whose parents had died when he was a child, and at her death began to fast and pray to know God's will for him.

At the age of 22, he entered the Franciscan Order. He was ordained a priest in 1404 and was commissioned as a preacher the next year. He always traveled on foot, sometimes speaking for hours in one place, then doing the same in another town. Most preachers of the time either read a prepared speech or recited a rhetorical oration. Instead of remaining cloistered and preaching only during the liturgy, Bernardine preached directly to the public. For more than 30 years, he preached all over Italy and played a great part in the religious revival of the early fifteenth century. Although he had a weak and hoarse voice, he is said to have been one of the greatest preachers of his time. His style was simple, familiar, and abounding in imagery.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Bernardine chose his themes not from the daily liturgy, but from the ordinary lives of the people of Siena. He selected biblical themes to focus on the immediate interests of his audience. He travelled from place to place, remaining nowhere more than a few weeks. These journeys were all made on foot. In the towns, the crowds assembled to hear him were at times so great that it became necessary to erect a pulpit in the marketplace. The sermons often lasted three or four hours.

He was especially known for his devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. He devised a symbol—IHS, the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek—in Gothic letters on a blazing sun. This was

to displace the superstitious symbols of the day. The devotion spread, and the symbol began to appear in churches, homes and public buildings.

Opposition arose from those who thought it a dangerous innovation. Three attempts were made to have the pope take action against him, but Bernardine's holiness, orthodoxy, and intelligence were evidence of his faithfulness. He died on May 20, 1444 at L'Aquila in the Abruzzi and is buried in the Basilica of San Bernardino. He was canonized on May 24, 1450 by Pope Nicholas V

## **May 21 – Wednesday, Fifth Week of Easter**

**Being purposeful is the starting point of all achievements  
and accomplishments.**

### **Acts 15:1-6**

The number of Christians continued to increase and many gentile converts joined the community. Some converted Pharisees demanded that the gentile converts follow the Mosaic Law. This created dissension in the early Church. Paul and Barnabas were delegated to consult the apostles and the elders on this matter.

### **Psalm 122**

**I rejoiced because they said to me,  
"We will go up to the house of the Lord."  
And now we have set foot  
Within your gates O Jerusalem.**

### **John 15:1-8**

**I am the vine, you are the branches...remain in me, you will be fruitful...you can do nothing  
without me...**

Fruitfulness of the branches depends on their union, connection with the vine. The branches become fruitful only in the vine. The vine itself doesn't bear the fruit. Vine bears the branches and feeds the branches, and the branches bear the fruit.

**Abide in Christ....be united with him...live in his spirit.....you will bear much fruit!**

**Be constantly fed by the “word” of Jesus and the “bread” of life and “cup” of compassion that Jesus offers. You will be fruitful.**

Fruitfulness also depends on the branches being trimmed, pruned and cleaned. We could rephrase it to read “fruitfulness depends on being tamed, disciplined, controlled, directed, channeled, etc. – wild branches do not yield...they become unyielding!”

**Be open and docile to the Holy Spirit! Be open to being pruned, trimmed, cleansed, disciplined, tamed.....be docile to the pruning process of the heavenly father...wild branches become unyielding! Be yielding...Be fruitful!**

**Saint of the Day, May 21 - St. Eugene de Mazenod and 30 other saints are remembered this day.**

Eugene de Mazenod was born on August 1, 1782 in Aix-en-Provence, France. Because of the French revolution, the family was forced to flee to Italy. In spite of the upheaval of the French Revolution, he entered the seminary and was ordained a priest at Amiens in 1811. Soon after his ordination, he organized missionaries to go to rural parts of Provence, instructing the people whose religious training had been disrupted for many years by the French Revolution and its aftermath. Eugene directed his ministry toward the poorest of the poor. Others joined his labors, and became the nucleus of a religious community, the Missionaries of Provence.

Eugene began the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1816, obtaining papal approval for them 10 years later. From rural preaching, they soon moved into running seminaries to improve the quality of the clergy. Their first foreign mission was in Canada in 1841; soon they were in Africa, Asia, Australia, and Latin America.

Eugene became Bishop of Marseille, following his uncle. There he built churches, founded parishes, cared for his priests, and developed catechetics for the young. After a life dedicated to spreading the Good News, Eugene died on May 21, 1861 and was canonized in 1998.

**May 22 – Thursday, Fifth Week of Easter**

**The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion  
and the will to help others.**

**(Albert Einstein)**

**Acts 15:7-21**

The apostles discerned that the regulations of the Old Testament were meant to be a

preparation for Christ and that the Old had passed away giving way to the New. At the close of the discernment process, James encouraged them to be patient and considerate to all converts and not to make the new life difficult for them.

**Be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Be open to new ways, opportunities and possibilities.**

## **Psalm 96**

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

## **John 15:9-11**

**“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 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.....Speak to the Lord from the depth of your heart.....**

**Saint of the Day, May 22 – St. Rita of Cascia and 23 other saints are remembered this day.**

Rita was born in 1386 in Roccaparena, Umbria, Italy. She was married at the age of 12 to a violent and ill-tempered husband. He was murdered 18 years later and she forgave his murderers, praying that her twin sons, who had sworn to avenge their father’s death may also forgive. She was granted this grace, and her sons, who died young, died reconciled to God.



After the death of her husband and sons, Rita tried to join the Augustinian nuns in Cascia. She was refused at first because she was a widow but eventually allowed to enter the convent where she lived the last 40 years of her life in prayer, mortification and service to the people of Cascia. Rita was bedridden for the last four years of her life, consuming almost nothing except for the Eucharist. She died of tuberculosis at the age of 70 on May 22, 1456 and was canonized in 1900 by Pope Leo XIII.

## **May 23 – Friday, Fifth Week of Easter**

**The soul which has no fixed purpose in life is lost;  
to be everywhere, is to be nowhere.**

**(Blaise Pascal)**

### **Acts 15:22-31**

The apostles and the elders came to the following decision regarding the Mosaic Law, “It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and ours too, not to lay on you any burden beyond that which is strictly necessary.....” They sent representatives to the different communities with a letter announcing the decision and the people accepted it with delight. Great respect was paid to the apostles and the elders and their decisions.

**Be docile to the Holy Spirit! Listen and be obedient to the Spirit’s promptings! Do not let your standards, plans and projects get in the way of the movement of the Holy Spirit!**

### **Psalm 57**

**My heart is steadfast, O Lord, my heart is steadfast;  
I will sing and chant praise.  
Awake, O my soul; awake, lyre and harp!  
I will awake the dawn.**

### **John 15:12-17**

Love one another as I have loved you, said Jesus. 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 joyful, unconditional, unconquerable, invincible, non-possessive, self-sacrificing, enduring, 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, May 23 - St. John Baptist de Rossi and 25 other saints are remembered this day.**

John Baptist de Rossi was born into a poor family on February 22, 1698, in Genoa. When his father died, he lived with his cousin, Lorenzo de Rossi, who was the canon at St. Mary's in Cosmedin. He began his studies at the Collegium Romanum under the guidance of the Jesuits. He then studied philosophy and theology at the Dominican College of St. Thomas. During this time, it was discovered that he had epileptic seizures.

John wanted to become a priest, but his epilepsy was an impediment for becoming a priest. However, John was given a dispensation and was ordained a priest on March 8, 1721.

As a priest, he worked in Rome, caring for the homeless who wandered the streets of the city. He tended to the needs of the sick and assisted in helping find a hospice for homeless women. He aided prisoners, helped workers, and literally touched thousands of needy people—the sick, the homeless, prostitutes, transient cattle drivers who came to market in Rome, and other rough sorts. By day he devoted himself to the sick poor in Rome's hospitals. By night he ministered to street people at a refuge. He did this for over forty years.

From around 1748, his health began to deteriorate, and his epileptic seizures became more violent and he was confined to the sick bed. He died on May 23, 1764 and was canonized on December 8, 1881 by Pope Leo XIII

### **May 24 – Saturday, Fifth Week of Easter**

**The most important thing is that you are doing something  
that you believe in and that you are passionate about.**

### **Acts 16:1-10**

Paul made a long missionary journey with great success. He took Timothy along as a

companion. Paul has a special gift of welcoming good men from the community to accompany him on his missionary journey. He was a good pastor, recognizing and affirming the goodness and generosity of faithful people in the community and calling them to share their gifts with others.

The Church continued to grow and become stronger in faith in spite of many hardships. Paul continued to discern and respond to the movement of the Holy Spirit and proclaimed the good news in many new towns and territories.

## **Psalm 100**

**Sing joyfully to the Lord all you lands;  
Serve the Lord with gladness;  
Come before him with joyful song.**

## **John 15:18-21**

Jesus warned his disciples that they cannot conform to the world's standards and they would be hated for not conforming to the ways of the world. He told them that they did not belong to the world and that the world would not recognize them because they live a different standard and have a different life-style.....

The price of non-conformity is alienation. Christians throughout the centuries have experienced alienation from the world in many different ways. In fact, any one, who chooses a different life-style from that of the world, at any particular time, is disliked, alienated, even hated and persecuted for it. Socrates was killed just because he challenged men to think and reason and come to certain logical conclusions for themselves.

**It is dangerous to be different. The disciples of Jesus must choose to be different, think different, see different, live different and even die different. This is the challenge that Jesus offered his disciples.**

**Saint of the Day, May 24 - Feast of Mary Help of Christians and 16 other saints are remembered this day.**

Saint John Chrysostom was the first person to use this Marian title in the year 345 as a devotion to the Virgin Mary. In 1572, during the expansion of the Islamic Ottoman Empire intended to invade Christian Europe, Pope Pius V invoked Christian armies and its victory achieved was consequently attributed to the intercession of Mary under this title.

Saint Don Bosco and Saint Vincent Pallotti also promoted Marian devotion under this title. Don Bosco built a huge basilica in her honor in 1868 and founded a religious congregation for women, under the title of, "The Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians". The title of Mary Help of Christians is associated with the defense of Christian Europe, the north of Africa and the Middle East from non-Christian peoples during the Middle Ages.

The feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians as we have it today, was instituted by Pope Pius VII. When Napoleon returned to Paris and Murat became king of Naples in March 1815, Pope Pius VII fled to Savona. After the Congress of Vienna and the battle of Waterloo, the pope returned to Rome in July 1815. To give thanks to God and Our Lady, he declared May 24, the anniversary of his return to be henceforth the feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**In God's eyes, love is never absent.  
In God's heart, forgiveness is never impossible.  
In God's embrace, no one is ever alone or forgotten.**

