

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time. We continue our journey with Jesus through the Gospel of Mathew. On the first Sunday, we met Jesus as he was being baptized, identified and affirmed as the beloved son of God and empowered with the Holy Spirit. On the second Sunday, we heard John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus being the one God sent to baptize with the Holy Spirit. On the third Sunday, we met Jesus leaving Nazareth, taking up residence in Capernaum to begin his ministry and beginning to call his disciples... Simon, Andrew, James and John followed him. On the fourth Sunday, we listened to and reflected on the most important, the central and the core of his message, the Beatitudes. (Mathew 5:1-12)

After giving us the essence of the teaching of Jesus, Mathew gives us the great command of Jesus to all his followers: "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned?" "You are the light of the world...your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father." (Mathew 5:13-16) Each of us must become the salt and the light - witnesses to God's Light, Truth, Life, Peace and Steadfast Love.

Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned?" (Mathew 5:13) Salt is a flavoring, cleansing, purifying, healing, preserving, and stabilizing agent. And that is what disciples of Jesus are called to be in the world! Take a few moments and reflect on being the salt of the earth – the flavoring, cleansing, purifying, healing, preserving, and stabilizing agents in the world. What does this mean for you at home, in your work place, in the supermarket and other places where you find yourself? And what would a Christian be in the world without these qualities of Christian living?

A certain church had the names of ten families scheduled to receive food baskets on the eve of Thanksgiving Day. A local merchant donated hams, and groceries were purchased from the local food bank. As the boxes were being packed in the fellowship hall, these families were getting excited over the food they were taking home. It would be the best meal many had enjoyed in months. As they were picking up their boxes, another family arrived - Father, mother and three children piled out of an old pickup truck and came inside the hall. This was a new family, not on our list. They had just heard there was food being distributed by a church.

The pastor of the Church explained that they did not have enough for an extra family. He tried to assure them that he would do what he could to attend to the needs of this new family. Then an amazing thing happened. With no suggestion from anyone, a woman put down the box she

was carrying and quickly found an empty box to place beside it. She began removing items from her box and put into this empty box. Soon others followed her lead, and these poor people created an eleventh box for the new family. I like call it the “Witness of the Eleventh Box.”

This is an outstanding example of Christian living. This is truly being salt of the earth and light of the world too. Ten people brought the Christian flavor into a difficult situation, healing into a sad and uncomfortable experience and preserved the dignity of a family that came uninvited. What an amazing witness of generosity...real salt of the earth and light of the world!

Jesus said, “You are the light of the world...your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” (Mathew 5:14-16) Light makes things visible, gives us warmth, brings us comfort, makes us feel safe, and it has the power to heal. And that is what disciples of Jesus are called to be in the world!

Let us reflect on being the light of the world – making things visible, bringing warmth and comfort to those around, making others feel safe, and helping to heal the brokenness of the world. Think about enlightening the ignorant, bringing truth where lies seem to be the norm, light into darkness, peacefulness into fearful situations, joy into sorrow, etc. What does this mean for you at home, in your work place, in the supermarket and other places where you find yourself? What would a Christian be in the world without these qualities of Christian living?

An American tourist bought a special jewelry box in France with the assurance that it would glow in the dark. He took it home and put it on his dresser, but it didn’t live up to the promise he was given. A friend, who was able to read French, looked at the instructions and read, “Put me in the sunshine during the day and then I will glow in the dark.” Put yourself in the light of Christ and see what happens! We must be in his light to be light of the world! We must also remember that we cannot all be shining bright in the sky. But we can all twinkle a little and that is what makes the difference.

I encourage you to take a few minutes each day of this week to be still and reflect on how your day has been and on how you have tried to be the “salt of the earth and the light of the world” as Jesus called us to be. And pray when you have a moment.....

Lord, You are the light in which I see all truth,  
even the truth that is hard to see,  
truth about myself, my character, my strengths, my weaknesses,  
truth about the world and all that is in it.  
Lord, help me to walk in your light and be your light for others.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

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

# **The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**February 8, 2026**

**God loves us. This is the great truth of our life.**

**It is what makes everything else meaningful. We are not the product of blind chance or absurdity; instead our life originates as part of a loving plan of God.**

**(Pope Benedict XVI)**

## **Collect**

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care,  
that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace,  
they may be defended always by your protection.  
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.

**Great tranquility of heart is his who cares for neither praise nor blame.**

**(Thomas A. Kempis)**

## **Isaiah 58:7-10**

The Prophet Isaiah invites us to change not only our behavior but also our heart. True worship includes caring for the needs of the poor, the oppressed and the homeless. The document of Vatican II says, “the poor cry for a change of heart and mind” (ES) and that is what Isaiah calls for. An attitudinal change, change of heart is what brings about genuine change in the person and the world around the person.

**Justice and the care of the orphans, the poor and the widows are integral part of covenant relationship. They are also our Christian responsibility.**

## **Psalm 112**

The Psalmist proclaims, “Happy are those who fear the Lord”. The Greek word for “fear”, phobia, is found in more than seventy-five compound words in English. Most of the terms have been coined by psychologists and moral philosophers to cover the many aspects of modern

man's basic fear of life. The fact is that fear is one of the great threats to mental health today. Our children are constantly exposed to many things such as war and violence that makes them afraid. Does "fear of the Lord" mean one of these phobias? Is it the "hell-fire" that was instilled into some of us during our early formation?

Hebrew verses very often employ two lines in parallel, the one-line interpreting or adding to the thought in the other line. So here, if our poet declares "Happy" the one who fears the Lord and if he delighted in the Lord's commandments, then his "fear of the Lord" must have been a glad awareness of the awe-filled mystery of God's loving kindness. This "fear" should be translated as "reverential awe" or "awe-inspiring" – it is fear that frees and not freezes. This "fear" cannot be translated into one single English word. The word captures all that happens inside of a person who has become aware of the awesome presence of God, the tremendous and fascinating mystery that God is.

**Light shines through darkness for the upright;  
He is gracious, merciful and just.  
Well for the man who is gracious and lends,  
Who conducts his affairs with justice.**

### **I Corinthians 2:1-5**

Paul taught the Corinthians to trust the wisdom of God and not any philosophical arguments. He did not come with any particular eloquence or "wisdom" but with the message of Jesus, crucified. Faith, he said, rests not on the wisdom of men but on the wisdom of God and this wisdom is revealed in Jesus, in his death on the cross.

**Let your faith come to life...let it be visible in the way you relate to one another.**

### **Mathew 5:13-16**

You are the salt of the earth...What if the salt loses its taste? What if it loses its quality to flavor and to cleanse and to purify and to preserve and to stabilize? Disciples of Jesus are called to be the "salt" of the earth! To be the "salt" is to be the cleansing, purifying, healing, preserving and stabilizing agent.

**Disciples of Jesus must remain "flavoring, cleansing, purifying, healing, preserving, stabilizing" agents. What would a Christian be in the world without the qualities of Christian living?**

You are the light of the world. Your light must shine before all so that they see goodness in your actions and give praise to your heavenly Father. Light dispels darkness, light makes things visible, light gives warmth, light heals, light makes the way visible...

**This is what the disciples are called to be for the world...to be men and women whose**

**presence dispels darkness, reveals the truth, encourages warmth of affection, facilitates healing of brokenness, awakens the sleeper, shows the way...**

**Darkness never feels at home with light! Light shines in the darkness! Darkness cannot shine in the light! Lean toward the light that God sends... Let God's light dispel all the darkness inside and out and around and about.**

## **Saint of the Day, February 8 - St. Jerome Emiliani and 13 other saints are remembered this day.**

Jerome was born in Venice in 1486. His father died when he was a teenager and he ran away at the age of 15 to join the army. He was appointed governor of a fortress in the mountains of Treviso, and while defending his post he was taken prisoner. In prison Jerome had a lot of time to think, and he gradually learned how to pray. He had not cared about God, but he attributed his escape to the intercession of the Mother of God; and he made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Treviso, in fulfillment of a vow, and left his chains as an offering. When he escaped, he returned to Venice where he took charge of the education of his nephews and began his own studies for the priesthood. In the years after his ordination, events again called Jerome to a decision and a new lifestyle.

All his spare time was devoted to the study of theology and to works of charity. In the year of plague and famine (1528), he seemed to be everywhere and showed his zeal, especially for the orphans, whose number had so greatly increased. Jerome began caring for the sick and feeding the hungry at his own expense. He rented a house for them near the church of St. Rose and, with the assistance of some pious men, ministered to their needs. In 1531 he went to Verona and persuaded the citizens to build a hospital. He opened orphanages, for boys and for girls in Brescia, Bergamo, Milan and other places in northern Italy. At Bergamo, he also founded a hostel for repentant prostitutes.

Around 1532, Jerome and two other priests established a congregation, the Clerks Regular of Somasca, dedicated to the care of orphans and the education of youth. Jerome died on February 8, 1537 from a disease he caught while tending the sick. He was canonized in 1767. In 1928, Pope Pius XI named him the patron of orphans and abandoned children.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**"Be steadfast, persevering, my beloved brothers,  
fully engaged in the work of the Lord"  
(1Corinthians 15:58)**

