

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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January 23, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Tomorrow, January 24th is the feast of our patron, St. Francis De Sales. He was born on August 21, 1567 at Thonon, near Annecy in France. He was ordained a priest on December 18, 1593 and a bishop on December 8, 1602. He worked among the Calvinists, faced much opposition, including attempt on his life and converted the whole district of Chablais to the catholic faith.

He founded a contemplative religious order, "The Sisters of the Visitation" on June 6, 1610. This order was to accept as members the poor, the weak in health, the handicapped and the widows whom ordinarily religious orders did not admit. He wrote two books, Spiritual Classics: "The Introduction to Devout Life" and "A Treatise on The Love Of God". He died at the age of 55 on December 28, 1622 and was canonized a saint the year 1665.

Francis De Sales is foremost among those who were consistently and visibly human in his relationship to God and people. His spirituality was so human that those without theological insights could understand and follow his spirituality. He radiated divine light through humanness like his master Jesus. He was very human and gentle, optimistic and positive about life and the world, strong in character and compassionate in ministry and most of all he had a harmonious and peaceful spirit.

He advised people to "Go courageously to do whatever you are called to do." He encouraged people to find holiness in every day matters, emphasizing the freedom each one has to choose to be good and to do good, to live noble and virtuous lives and reject what is bad and harmful. In whatever state of life men and women find themselves, they can discover the way to God, joyfully and without fear. God can be found anywhere, everywhere and by everyone. The hours we spend in our daily chores need not be spiritually empty or useless. It is in the daily chores that we live out our life of faith. He advises us today, "Be who you are and be that well so that you may bring honor to the master craftsman whose handiwork you are!"

I encourage you take a few moments each day of this week to reflect on how your day has been, how you have tried to be who you are, who God made you to be and found joy and fulfillment as you went about doing your daily chores and fulfilling your responsibilities.

May God bless you and keep you faithful and joyful on your journey.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Third Week in Ordinary Time

January 23-28, 2023

January 23 – Monday, Third Week in Ordinary Time

**God's love is always there, perfect and unchanging,
forever loving...steadfast!**

Hebrews 9:15, 24-28

Christ is the mediator of a new Covenant. Christ has entered the eternal sanctuary and he appears before God on our behalf. Through Christ we receive the promised eternal inheritance.

Psalm 98 - Sing to the Lord a new song...

Mark 3:22--30

Jesus was accused of being possessed by Beelzebul. Jesus asked them how Satan could expel Satan...internal dissention, disintegration within would cause kingdoms to fall. Jesus had to be in harmony with goodness, with truth, with love, with God to stand against evil forces.

Harmony within is a necessary condition for overcoming enemy forces, whatever the enemy may be! Reflect on need for unity, integrity, harmony!

In Jewish thought (not as we understand it today), the Holy Spirit had two great functions: the revelation of God's truth and enabling men to recognize that truth when it is revealed. This Gospel passage (Mk.28-30) should be understood in light of this concept of the Holy Spirit. If a man, by repeated refusal of God's guidance (Holy Spirit's revelation) has lost the ability to recognize goodness when he sees it and if he has got his moral values so twisted (inverted) that evil to him is good and good to him is evil - then he is not conscious of sin, he can not repent and therefore he can not experience forgiveness. And that is the sin against the Holy Spirit.

This passage speaks more about the need for recognizing evil and evil forces; repenting of ones' failures and accepting forgiveness...than about not being forgiven of a particular sin. Reflect on the need to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for the gift of discernment. Pray for those who have not been enlightened, those who have not come to know the truth, those who have not experienced Forgiveness and Grace.

Saint of the day, January 23 – St. Marianne Cope and 17 other saints are remembered this day.

Marianne was born to Peter and Barbara Cope of Hessen-Darmstadt, Germany on January 23, 1838. Two years later the Cope family emigrated to the United States and settled in Utica, New York. Young Barbara worked in a factory until August 1862, when she went to the Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis in Syracuse, New York. After profession in November of the following year, she began teaching at Assumption parish school.

Marianne held the post of superior in several places and was twice the novice mistress of her congregation. A natural leader, three different times, she was superior of St. Joseph’s Hospital in Syracuse, where she learned much that would be useful during her years in Hawaii.

Elected provincial in 1877, Mother Marianne was unanimously re-elected in 1881. Two years later the Hawaiian government was searching for someone to run the Kakaako Receiving Station for people suspected of having leprosy. More than 50 religious communities in the United States and Canada were asked. When the request was put to the Syracuse sisters, 35 of them volunteered immediately. On October 22, 1883, Mother Marianne and six other sisters left for Hawaii where they took charge of the Kakaako Receiving Station outside Honolulu; on the island of Maui they also opened a hospital and a school for girls.

In 1888, Mother Marianne and two sisters went to Molokai to open a home for “unprotected women and girls” there. On Molokai she took charge of the home that Saint Damien de Veuster had established for men and boys. Mother Marianne changed life on Molokai by introducing cleanliness, pride, and fun to the colony. Bright scarves and pretty dresses for the women were part of her approach.

Mother Marianne came to be known as Mother Marianne of Molokai. Awarded the Royal Order of Kapiolani by the Hawaiian government and celebrated in a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson, Mother Marianne continued her work faithfully. Her sisters have attracted vocations among the Hawaiian people and still work on Molokai. Mother Marianne died on August 9, 1918 and was beatified in 2005 and canonized seven years later.

January 24 – Saint Francis de Sales

God is steadfast love. “Can a mother forget her baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands” (Isaiah 49:15-16)

Ephesians 3:2-12

Jews regarded Gentiles as unclean, unholy and worthless in God's eyes. In this excerpt, the author of Ephesians describes the equal status of Jews and Gentiles in Christ as a "mystery" being revealed through him. The author says that Gentiles and Jews are Co-heirs, members of the same body and sharers of the promises of God. This was the vision of the prophets, a vision of universal salvation, realized in the person of Jesus.

Pray for a broader, clearer and cosmic vision of the freedom and salvation offered to us in and through Jesus.

Psalm 112 - Happy the Man who fears the Lord...

John 15:9-17

“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...

Love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12-17) 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, January 24 - Saint Francis de Sales and 20 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Francis De Sales was born on August 21, 1567 at Thonon, near Annecy in France. He graduated from the University of Padua with Doctorate in both civil law and ecclesiastical law. He was ordained a priest on December 18, 1593. He worked among the Calvinists, faced much opposition, including attempt on his life and converted the whole district of Chablais to the catholic faith.

He was ordained a bishop on December 8, 1602. He was a good shepherd, caring for all with a special love for the poor. He founded a contemplative religious order, "The Sisters of the Visitation" on June 6, 1610. This order was to accept as members the poor, the weak in health, the handicapped and the widows whom normally religious orders did not admit.

He wrote two books, Spiritual Classics: "The Introduction to Devout Life" and "A Treatise on The Love Of God". He died at the age of 55 on December 28, 1622. He was canonized a saint by Pope Alexander VII on April 19, 1665 and declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius IX on November 16, 1877.

January 25 – The conversion of Saint Paul

**God is steadfast Love. He said to Moses, and He says it to us today,
"When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock
and cover you with my hand until I have passed by"
(Exodus 33:22)**

Acts 9:1-22

Saul was on his way to Damascus while persecuting the Christians. He had a great fall and lost his sight. He heard a voice instructing him to go to the city for further directions. In the city, he met Ananias who prayed over him. With this, Saul experienced a radical transformation of his life and began a new life proclaiming the risen Lord.

Trust in the transforming power of the faithful and praying community.

Psalm 117 - Praise the Lord, all you nations...

Mark 16:15-18

This is an amazing story. In verse 16:14, we read about Jesus taking the disciples “to task for their disbelief and their stubbornness since they had not put faith in those who had seen him after he had been raised”. In verse 15, the excerpt of today, we read about Jesus trusting the same men with all their “disbelief and stubbornness” and sending them with his mission of bringing good news to the world.

Today, we, with all our limitations and inconsistencies are trusted with this good news and called to bring this good news of Jesus to the world.

Saint of the Day, January 25 - Conversion of St. Paul and 14 other saints are remembered this day.

Paul was a highly educated and zealous Jewish Pharisee, who, like many of his peers, wanted to erase the notion that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God. Paul witnessed and supported the stoning of St. Stephen for his belief, faith and mission in Christ. Paul’s own mission was to find, arrest, and imprison all who believed and followed Christ’s teachings.

However, in 36 C.E., Paul’s life changed forever. While he was on his way to Damascus to find and capture more of Jesus’ followers, Paul had a personal encounter with Jesus in which Jesus called Paul to bring the Gospel to all people, including the gentiles. Paul’s hatred turned to joy and devotion to the Lord. He wrote that it is “for this reason that I labor and struggle, in accord with the exercise of his power working within me” (Colossians 1:29).

Paul’s ministry and writings bringing Christ’s redeeming salvation spanned 32 years. Paul traveled through Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia and Rome where he proclaimed the richness and power of God’s love. Paul suffered for the sake of Christ, too. He endured beatings, imprisonments, and finally martyrdom in Rome in 68 C.E. through the order of the Roman Emperor Nero.

January 26 – Saints Timothy and Titus

**God is steadfast Love. The Psalmist tells us, “He will cover you
with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart”**

(Psalm 94:4)

2 Timothy 1:1-8

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy to inspire and strengthen him for his mission at Ephesus. In this excerpt, Paul affirms his confidence in Timothy and appreciates his family’s heritage. Then

he encourages Timothy to cultivate qualities of courage, strength, love, and self-discipline as essential for any Christian teacher.

Psalm 96 - Sing to the Lord a new song...

Luke 10:1-9

Jesus said to his disciples, "Look, there is a rich harvest....." Jesus looked at a crowd and saw a rich harvest while the Pharisees looked at the same people and found only sinful, unfaithful people worthy of judgment and condemnation. Jesus found people to be gathered, to be brought in and not shut out.....

The disciples of Jesus are called to maintain a positive attitude toward the world around them and gather people in rather than alienate them.....

Disciples of Jesus are called to live a simple life, travel light and not be burdened with stuff that weighs them down.....

Disciples of Jesus are called to be bearers of good news, of peace, of God's forgiving love, of God's healing presence and never to become a burden to others.

Saint of the Day, January 26 - Saints Timothy and Titus and 9 other saints are remembered this day.

Timothy

Timothy had a Greek father and a Jewish mother named Eunice. Being the product of a "mixed" marriage, he was considered illegitimate by the Jews. It was his grandmother, Lois, who first became Christian. We do not have much more information about his birth and early days. Timothy was a convert of Paul around the year 47 and later joined him in his apostolic work. He was with Paul at the founding of the Church in Corinth. During the 15 years he worked with Paul, he became one of his most faithful and trusted friends. He was sent on difficult missions by Paul—often in the face of great disturbance in local churches which Paul had founded.

Timothy was with Paul in Rome during the latter's house arrest. At some period, Timothy himself was in prison (Hebrews 13:23). Paul installed him as his representative at the Church of Ephesus. Timothy was comparatively young for the work he was doing. "Let no one have contempt for your youth," Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:12a. Several references seem to indicate that he was timid. And one of Paul's most frequently quoted lines was addressed to him: "Stop drinking only water, have a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent illnesses" (1 Timothy 5:23). He, probably died around the year 97 C.E.

Titus

We do not know much about the birth and early days of Titus. He has the distinction of being a close friend and disciple of Paul as well as a fellow missionary. He was Greek, apparently from Antioch. Even though Titus was a Gentile, Paul would not let him be forced to undergo circumcision at Jerusalem. Titus is seen as a peacemaker, administrator, great friend. Paul's second letter to Corinth affords an insight into the depth of his friendship with Titus, and the great fellowship they had in preaching the gospel: "When I went to Troas...I had no relief in my spirit because I did not find my brother Titus. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.... For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way—external conflicts, internal fears. But God, who encourages the downcast, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus..." (2 Corinthians 2:12a, 13; 7:5-6).

When Paul was having trouble with the community at Corinth, Titus was the bearer of Paul's severe letter and was successful in smoothing things out. Paul writes he was strengthened not only by the arrival of Titus but also by his encouragement and devotion to Paul. The Letter to Titus addresses him as the administrator of the Christian community on the island of Crete, charged with organizing it, correcting abuses and appointing presbyter-bishops. Titus probably died around 94 C.E.

January 27 – Friday, Third Week in Ordinary Time

God is steadfast Love.

The Psalmist meditates and invites us to join him in meditation,

"I have stilled my soul, hushed it like a weaned child.

Like a weaned child on its mother's lap, so is my soul within me."

(Psalm 131:2)

Hebrews 10:32-39

The author encourages his reader not to surrender their confidence. He says...you will find confidence rewarding..... Be patient and do God's will..... God will reward you for your faithfulness.

Psalm 37 - Commit to the Lord your way; trust him and he will act...

Mark 4:26-34

The Kingdom of God is like..... a man sows, the seed sprouts and grows. This short parable

reminds us of the “helplessness and insufficiency of man”. The farmer does not make the seed grow. He does not even understand how it grows. It has a secret of life and growth of its own. No man ever possessed the secret of life and its mysteries. Man neither creates nor invents – he only discovers.

Man does not create the Kingdom of God. He only participates in the Kingdoms’ life and growth. Human efforts are spasmodic with increase and decrease, health and ill health. The growth of the Kingdom is constant and imperceptible from day to day – the growth goes on because it is God’s work, God’s ongoing creative activity. Nature’s growth is imperceptible; growth is constant; growth is inevitable; harvest time will come.

The kingdom is like a grain of mustard seed...A small grain of seed grows into a tree that can shelter and feed the birds of the sky.

So be prepared, be patient, be optimistic. Do all you can, to nurture growth of the Kingdom. Never be afraid or ashamed of small beginnings.

Saint of the Day, January 27 – St. Angela Merici and 19 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Angela Merici was born on March 21, 1474 in Desenzano, a small town in Lombardy, Italy. Angela and her older sister became orphans at the age of 10 and went to live with their uncle in Salo. There they led a quiet and devout Catholic Christian life. After the untimely death of her sister, Angela dedicated herself to the Lord and give her life in service to the Church to help everyone grow closer to the Lord. She joined the Third Order of St. Francis where she also pledged to remain a consecrated virgin, forsaking marriage to one man to be married to the Lord and His Church.

When Angela was 20 years old, her uncle died, and she returned to Desenzano. She found that around her hometown there were many young girls who had no education and no hope. Her heart was moved. She also became distressed by their ignorance and upset at the parents who had not educated them. Angela became convinced that there was great need for a better way of teaching these young girls. So, she opened her own home to them and began to teach them herself. She devotedly taught them the Catholic Christian faith. By her example and instruction, she taught them to pray and participate in the sacramental life of the Church. She evangelized and catechized these young girls, opening them up to the life of grace.

On November 25, 1535, Angela gathered together 12 young virgins and laid down the foundation for the Order of the Ursulines. Her goal was to elevate family life through Christian education for women. The community she founded was different than many of the religious orders of women which existed in her day. She believed it was important to teach the girls in

their own homes with their own families. One of her favorite sayings was, "Disorder in society is the result of disorder in the family."

Though the women in the community wore no special religious habit and took no formal vows, Angela wrote a Rule of Life for those who lived and served in the community of women. They did pledge to live a life of consecrated celibacy, poverty and obedience. They lived this Rule of Life within their own homes. This was the first group of consecrated women to work outside of a formal cloister or convent in her day and became the first teaching order of women in the Catholic Church. The community existed as what is called a "secular institute" until years after Angela's death.

Angela Merici died on January 27, 1540. She was beatified on April 30, 1768 by Pope Clement XIII and canonized May 24, 1807 by Pope Pius VII. Her Rule was officially approved by Pope Paul III in 1544 and the Ursulines became a recognized religious community of women with a teaching ministry.

January 28 – Saturday, Third Week in Ordinary Time

God is steadfast Love.

**The Psalmist muses, "If I flew to the point of sunrise or far across the sea,
your hand would still be guiding me, your right hand holding me."**

(Psalm 139)

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

This excerpt expresses absolute certainty that what faith affirms is true and that what faith hopes or expects will come. It is not the hope of wistful longing, but the hope that looks forward with utter conviction. Christian hope is such that it dictates the behavior of the Christian, his conduct...he lives and dies in it. The author remembers Abraham and Sarah as examples and models of this certain faith which guided, governed, and protected them on their journey and helped them to look beyond this world, which empowered them to believe the impossible.

Luke 1:69-75 - He has raised a horn of saving strength for us...

Mark 4: 35-41

Mark presents Jesus asleep on a pillow in the boat with his disciples. Jesus trusted his disciples to carry him through the lake and went to sleep. This is the kind of trust that we place in those

who drive our vehicles, fly our planes, do our cooking, dispense our medicines and so on. Trusting one another is a freeing experience.

Learn to trust God and learn to trust one another and learn to be trustworthy.

The disciples woke up their master when they faced the storm. They trusted him to wake up and calm the storm for them and he did. Jesus took away the fear, the anxiety, the worry, and the doubts of those who trusted him. The Psalmist says, "Even when I walk in the valley of darkness, I shall not fear, for you are at my side" (Ps.23) and again "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear" (Ps.27).

Trust in the Lord and turn to him who is at your side. He will make you free and unafraid.

Saint of the Day, January 28 - St. Thomas Aquinas and 20 other saints are remembered this day.

Thomas was born into a wealthy family in the castle of Roccasecca in the Kingdom of Sicily, Italy, in 1225. At the age of five, he was given to the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino in his parents' hopes that he would choose that way of life and eventually became abbot. In 1239 he was sent to Naples to complete his studies. It was here that he was first attracted to Aristotle's philosophy. By 1243, Thomas abandoned his family's plans for him and joined the Dominicans. On his mother's order, Thomas was captured by his brother and kept at home for over a year.

Once free, he went to Paris and then to Cologne, where he finished his studies with Albert the Great. His greatest contribution to the Catholic Church is his writings. The unity, harmony and continuity of faith and reason, of revealed and natural human knowledge, pervades his writings. Unlike many others, Thomas saw reason as a divine gift to be highly cherished.

The Summa Theologica, his last and, unfortunately, uncompleted work, deals with the whole of Catholic theology. He stopped work on it after celebrating Mass on December 6, 1273. When asked why he stopped writing, he replied, "I cannot go on.... All that I have written seems to me like so much straw compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me." He died March 7, 1274. In his younger days he was known as "dumb ox" because he was big, shy and didn't say much. He proved himself different. In him we find a unity of great intelligence, learning, wisdom, humility and holiness. He even died leaving his great work unfinished.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Don't sow your desires in someone else's garden;
just cultivate your own as best you can; don't waste time doing anything else.
(St. Francis de Sales)**

