

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During the past several weeks, our Sunday Scripture readings have been calling us to form and shape our character in the image of Jesus and live as he lived. It is not enough to know the doctrines and beliefs and be a member of a church. Our character, our lifestyle, our values, our relationships, the way we live and the way we treat others are the most important matters and not our affiliation to groups and organizations. The first readings of our mass for the rest of this month are excerpts from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians Chapters 2-6. These excerpts give us more insights into the nature of this formation and transformation in Christ. I encourage you to read these chapters, especially Chapter 5 of the letter to Ephesians.

Paul encouraged the Ephesians to “be imitators of God, as His beloved children. Follow the way of love, even as Christ loved you.” He further instructed them, “defer to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:1-2 & 21) To defer means to submit or yield. We are called, as the Ephesians were, to yield to one another in service out of reverence for Christ. We are the body of Christ and every member in the Body is special and important in the Body. One member is not more important or significant than the other. In a body each member yields to other members out of respect. Members are at the service of one another. Love must be expressed in generous service.

Paul teaches us as he taught the Ephesians that we belong in the household of God, that we are not aliens and that we are fellow citizens with the saints. We are fitted together with the apostles, prophets and all the saints to become a dwelling place for God in the spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22). That is why St. Paul teaches us to “defer to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Jesus gave us his own example of how this deference could be practiced. During his last supper with his disciples, he humbled himself and washed the feet of his disciples and called them to follow his example in gracious and self-sacrificing service. We must learn to live other-centered lives, look out for the needs of others, and go beyond the call of duty to help and serve others. It takes a lifetime to learn to live authentic lives...but it takes only a minute to offer your love, your kindness, your understanding - your gift of service to those around you.

God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

## **Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time**

**October 28 - November 2, 2024**

**If the heart wanders or is distracted, bring it back quite gently  
and place it tenderly in God's presence. And if you do nothing else while at prayer  
but bring your heart back again and again and place it in God's presence,  
though it went away every time you brought it back,  
your time of prayer would be very well spent.  
(St. Francis De Sales)**

### **October 28 – Apostles Simon and Jude**

**Forbearance gives us the opportunity to stop judging,  
to stop condemning.**

### **Ephesians 2:19-22**

Paul tells the Ephesians that they belong in the household of God...they are not aliens; they are fellow citizens with the saints. We are fitted together with the apostles, prophets and all the saints to become a dwelling place for God in the spirit.

**Reflect on the “dignity and honor” of being called to belong in the household of God with all the saints.**

### **Psalm 19**

**The heavens declare the glory of God,  
And the firmament proclaims his handiwork.....**

**May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart,  
Find favor in your sight O, God.....**

### **Luke 6:12-16**

Jesus, after a night in prayer, chose a group of twelve men and trusted them with his mission. His Life and Message must be lived out in fellowship. The Pharisees always isolated themselves

from the people –Pharisee meant “separated”. The message of Jesus is to be lived in fellowship, in Community.

Jesus chose a strange group of 12. A group of extremes met and shared their Master’s Vision and Mission. With Jesus they could transcend cultural, ideological, etc. barriers and live in fellowship and communion.

**The most diverse type of people must live together in fellowship and fulfill a mission, which is far greater than all of them put together.**

He chose very ordinary people, men without any special qualification. Jesus called them to be with him and to be sent out on his mission. He gave them a message, a power, a lifestyle, a presence and community to live in and care for. He gave them his mission to complete and fulfill. Today, we are called to complete His mission!

**Saint of the Day, October 28 - Apostles Simon and Jude and 15 other saints are remembered on this day.**

Scriptures tells us very little about these two apostles. Luke’s Gospel tells us that Simon was a zealot. Zealots were a group of radicals who hated the Romans and were fanatic nationalists. Jesus chose him to be an apostle and legend tells us that he proclaimed the Gospel in Egypt. In the Gospel of Mathew and Mark, Jude is called Thaddeus. We call him Jude to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus. Legend has it that he went to Persia to proclaim the Gospel.

Thaddeus (from Greek Thaddaios and from Aramaic Taddai) means a heart or courageous heart. As of the 1990 Census, 'Thaddeus' was the 611th most popular male name in the United States, while 'Thad', its diminutive version, was the 846th most popular

Today’s feast comes just before “All Saints Day”. There used to be a custom today to go from door to door begging for the ingredients of “soul cakes” which were eaten in early November as a way of sharing a meal with the dead. People would sing, “For the love of Simon and Jude, give us fixings for our food”.

**It would be wonderful if we could listen to the same song today, “give us fixings for our food”. Many of our brothers and sisters sing this song out of their desperate need. Let “All Saints Day” become a joyful day for us and let it bring us into communion with those whose lives are not as joyful as ours.**

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## **October 29 - Tuesday, Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Forbearance is not retaliating even when we are treated mean and ugly.**

### **Ephesians 5:21-32**

This is one of the often misunderstood and misinterpreted excerpts from the letter to the Ephesians. The exhortation in this excerpt seems to contradict common understanding about women and their role in family and society. I know many who take offense at the ideas expressed in this excerpt. However, I believe, we will have better insights into the meaning and value of the letter, if we see verse 21 as the basis of the whole chapter. Verse 21 says, "Defer to one another out of reverence for Christ."

To defer means to submit or yield out of respect/reverence. We are called to yield to one another in service out of reverence for Christ. We are the body of Christ and every member in the Body is special and important in the Body. One member is not more important or significant than the other. In a body each member submits to other members out of respect. Members are at the service of one another.

### **Psalm 128**

**Blessed are you who fear the Lord,  
Who walk in his ways!  
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;  
Blessed shall you be and favored.**

### **Luke 13:18-21**

Jesus speaks about a tiny mustard seed which when planted sprouts and grows into a shrub, yields more seeds and becomes a shelter for the birds of the air...He says, the Kingdom of God grows in similar ways...Great things happen from small beginnings.

**Let your life grow and become fruitful...it has the power within it to become fruitful! Give your life a chance, tenderly care for it, nurture it...let the Lord make it fruitful in his time!  
Let the birds of the air find shelter, a home...be approachable, be available, be hospitable, be welcoming and non-threatening...let people find you safe to be with...**

Jesus also speaks about a little yeast in the flour which has the power to change, transform the whole dough and give it a chance to be bread for others...

**Be open to change and be transformed by the Grace poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit.....Trust in the power of God's grace to transform you....**

**Saint of the Day, October 29 - St. Narcissus of Jerusalem and 180 other saints are remembered this day.**

St. Narcissus was born towards the end of the first century around the year 99. He was almost 80-years-old when he was placed at the head of the church of Jerusalem, making him the 30th bishop of that see. In the year 195, he and Theophilus, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, presided together in a council of the bishops of Palestine held at Caesarea regarding the time Easter is celebrated. It was then decreed that the feast of Easter is to be kept always on a Sunday.

Three persistent sinners, fearing Narcissus' severity in the observance of religious discipline, accused him of an unimaginable crime. The sinners maintained they were telling the truth by adding additional security into their claims. If they were not speaking the truth, one wished he might perish by fire, another, that he might be struck with a leprosy, and the third, that he might lose his sight.

Nevertheless, their accusations were found to be false and Divine Retribution was called upon them. The first was burnt in his house, along with his whole family, by an accidental fire in the night. The second was struck with a universal leprosy; and the third, terrified by these examples, confessed the conspiracy and slander, and by the abundance of tears which he continually shed for his sins, lost his sight before his death.

Soon after, Narcissus decided to leave Jerusalem for a life of solitude. His reasons for doing so weren't clear. Some believed he left because he could not bear the shock of the bold slander, and others believed leaving had always been a wish of his. He spent several years undiscovered in his retreat, where he enjoyed all the happiness and advantage which a close conversation with God can bestow. After he departed, the neighboring bishops chose a new pastor for Narcissus' church until he decided to return.

Once Narcissus returned, years later, the faithful rejoiced and convinced Narcissus to once again assume the administration of the diocese. He accepted. As Narcissus started to reach an extreme old age, he made St. Alexander his coadjutor. A coadjutor is a bishop appointed to assist a diocesan bishop, and often also designated as his successor. St. Narcissus continued to serve his flock, and even other churches, by his diligent prayers and his earnest exhortations to unity and concord, as St. Alexander testifies in his letter to the Arsinoites in Egypt, where he says that Narcissus was at that time about 116 years old. St. Narcissus passed away soon after in AD 216, at the age of 117.

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## October 30 – Wednesday, Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

**Forbearance is suffering through an injustice  
with patience and kindness.**

### **Ephesians 6:1-9**

This is a continuation of Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians on what it means to "defer to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21-32). To defer means to submit or yield out of respect/reverence. We are called to yield to one another in service out of reverence for Christ. This excerpt describes what this means, in practice, for children, parents, slaves and masters.

### **Psalm 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.**

### **Luke 13:22-30**

Jesus was asked whether only a few would be saved. Behind this question was the belief that only Jews would be saved and not the Gentiles. Jesus responded by telling them that entrance into the kingdom is not automatic...membership in the Jewish community or any faith community did not guarantee entrance into the kingdom. He called them to make difficult choices and make the difficult journey...the door is narrow, he said. He himself was making his way to Jerusalem to face rejection and eventual death.

**Jesus challenges us to make difficult choices, make the difficult journey, walk the path of trials, face testing times, enter through the narrow door...the way to the kingdom is not easy, but it is just the right way, the way made to fit our needs!**

From the beginning of scriptures, we read about great men and women called to make these difficult choices and they in turn called their people to make hard choices. Moses and the prophets and finally Jesus offered people choices between life and death; way of the just and way of the wicked; good and bad; foolishness and wisdom.

**Pray for wisdom to discern and make good and wise choices and the courage to be faithful to the choices you make.**

**Saint of the day, October 30 - St. Alphonsus Rodriguez and 18 other saints are remembered this day.**

Born in Spain in 1533, Alphonsus inherited the family textile business at 23. Within the space of three years, his wife, daughter, and mother died; meanwhile, business was poor. Alphonsus stepped back and reassessed his life. He sold the business, and with his young son, moved into his sister's home. There he learned the discipline of prayer and meditation.

At the death of his son years later, Alphonsus, almost 40 by then, sought to join the Jesuits. He was not helped by his poor education. He applied twice before being admitted. For 45 years he served as doorkeeper at the Jesuits' college in Majorca. When not at his post, he was almost always at prayer, though he often encountered difficulties and temptations.

His holiness and prayerfulness attracted many to him, including Saint Peter Claver, then a Jesuit seminarian. Alphonsus' life as doorkeeper may have been humdrum, but centuries later he caught the attention of poet and fellow-Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins, who made him the subject of one of his poems. Alphonsus died in 1617.

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**October 31 – Thursday, Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Forbearance unburdens us from the burden that we carry  
and brings us peace.**

**Ephesians 6:10-20**

Paul encouraged the Ephesians to draw strength from the Lord and stand firm against evil designs. The struggle is not with human forces, but with the powers of darkness. So, he says, "stand fast with truth as the belt around your waist and justice as the breastplate and zeal as your footgear". Let your faith be your shield in all circumstances. And pray at every opportunity.

**Stand your ground and let your faith carry you through all testing and trying moments.**

## **Psalm 144**

**Blessed be the Lord, my rock,  
Who trains my hands for battle, my fingers for war,  
My refuge and my fortress, my stronghold, my deliverer,  
My shield in whom I trust.**

## **Luke 13:31-35**

The Pharisees were hostile to Jesus. But some of them came to warn him about how Herod was trying to kill him. This shows us that all Pharisees were not hostile and unsympathetic to Jesus. We tend to put all people together into one category and pass judgments about them.

**Be open and non-judgmental. Look beyond what you see and hear! Each person is unique. Learn to know, appreciate and respect each person as he/she is!**

This excerpt is one of the passages that show how little we know about Jesus and how little even the Gospels tell us about him. Here, we find him deeply disturbed, distressed, disappointed, sad, hurt, even angry.....and pouring out from what is deeply inside of him.....we find his courage, compassion and tenderness...all expressed in real lament for Jerusalem.

**Be in touch with your passions! Listen to your heart! Discern your passions!**

## **Saint of the Day, October 31 – St. Wolfgang of Regensburg and 8 Other saints are remembered this day.**

Wolfgang was born in Swabia, Germany, and was educated at a school located at the abbey of Reichenau. There he encountered Henry, a young noble who went on to become Archbishop of Trier. Meanwhile, Wolfgang remained in close contact with the archbishop, teaching in his cathedral school and supporting his efforts to reform the clergy.

At the death of the archbishop, Wolfgang chose to become a Benedictine monk and moved to an abbey in Einsiedeln, now part of Switzerland. Ordained a priest, he was appointed director of the monastery school there. Later he was sent to Hungary as a missionary, though his zeal and good will yielded limited results.

Emperor Otto II appointed him Bishop of Regensburg, near Munich. Wolfgang immediately initiated reform of the clergy and of religious life, preaching with vigor and effectiveness and always demonstrating special concern for the poor. He wore the habit of a monk and lived an austere life.



The desire for a life of solitude and monastic life never left him. At one point he left his diocese so that he could devote himself to prayer, but his responsibilities as bishop called him back. In 994, Wolfgang became ill while on a journey; he died in Puppington near Linz, Austria. He was canonized in 1052. His feast day is celebrated widely in much of central Europe.

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## **November 1 – All Saints Day**

**Ever Loving Father, bless me, form me, shape me  
and transform me with forbearance.**

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## **Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14**

The Author of this book tries to encourage the Christians who suffered persecution. He says, before the great tribulation happens, the faithful are to be marked with the seal of the “living God”. The angel has the seal of the living God, as distinct from the “dead gods” of the pagans. Only in the living God can one find fulfillment.

## **Psalm 24**

Psalm 24, probably about 3000 years old, focuses on the significance of worship and raises many questions about worship and answers them as well. It has taught people the importance of worship in their lives down through the ages. The Jews recited it on the first day of the week as their first prayer. Many Christian denominations sing it on Ascension Day and many sing it before communion, especially verses 7-10. In our Catholic tradition, this is one of the invitatory psalms of the morning prayer of the Church and often it is sung during the Mass.

It was, probably, sung as a processional song when priests carried the Ark of the Covenant into the sanctuary during festivals. The Ark signified God’s presence among his people. The Ark was also the symbol of God’s special, unique relationship in love, loyalty, fidelity to Israel and her kings. So, the psalm actually sings a song of loyalty to God, who is King.

The Psalm raises the question about who may worship the Creator of all things, not a local god, but the creator of all; who may go up to the Holy City to worship the God who ruled the world from there? It is important to recognize that the qualifications for worship are not keeping the

law or performance of required rituals. It has all to do with the “heart” of persons who gather for worship - “clean hands and pure heart” - such people are welcome to the holy place for worship.

**The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness  
the world and all its peoples.  
It is he who set it on the seas;  
on the waters he made it firm.**

### **1 John 3:1-3**

The author of this letter tells us that we are God’s very dear and beloved children. It also tells how excited and amazed we should be about our status as God’s beloved children who are not recognized by the world. The world, that does not recognize Jesus, does not recognize God’s children either.

**Rejoice! Be happy! You are God’s very dear and beloved children! And be grateful and be faithful to this calling!**

### **Mathew 5:1-12**

In the Beatitudes, we have the essence of Christ’s message. Mathew says, Jesus “opened his mouth” and began to teach. This simply means that he opened his heart and poured out his spirit. This means that it is intimate, personal teaching without barriers. “Blessed” is a special word in Greek. It describes the joy that has its secret within itself, the joy/bliss, which is serene, self-contained - the joy which shines through pain, sorrow, disappointment, loss, etc. This is inherent, pure joy.

Jesus articulated for his followers certain attitudes they must cultivate if they are to live as a kingdom people...certain disposition toward themselves and the world around them. We have come to know them and love them as the “Beatitudes”. We are called to cultivate these attitudes.....they are to shape our character...the quality of our presence must become “Be-Attitudes.”

Noble people must have noble attitudes.... God’s people must have godly attitudes...The Beatitudes are for people who have their hearts set on the reign of God, the kingdom of God.....They are not doctrines.....not policies of a Church...not rules legislated by an authority...they are for those who want to live nobles lives, for those who want their lives to be a blessing for themselves and for the world around them...they are for kingdom people, and we are a kingdom people...

**The Beatitudes tell us that the Reign of God is already in our midst if and when we bless the world with living lives transformed with the beatitudes...People of the kingdom, noble people, virtuous people, kingdom people have “God’s Reign” in their hearts and their hearts cannot rest until the whole world is striving to be just, compassionate, single-hearted, peace-filled, harmonious... They call us to live lives transformed in Christ!**

Remember, they came straight from the heart of Christ...Jesus sat down, opened his mouth and spoke: Blessed are you when poor, merciful, gentle, thirsting for justice, single-hearted, peacemaking, blessing the enemies.....they reflect the quality of the heart of Christ.....

**Take a moment.... prayerfully reflect on which of the beatitudes you can identify with and what they mean to you personally. Which of them is most inspiring, challenging and calling forth response from you? And how do you respond?**

## **Saint of the Day, November 1 – All Saints Day**

From the first centuries after Jesus, Christians who died a martyr’s death were considered saints, who live in God’s presence forever. A martyr is a person who voluntarily suffers death as the penalty of witnessing to faith and refusing to renounce a religion. Every year, on the anniversary of the martyrs’ deaths, Christians would visit their tombs and celebrate the Eucharist. This practice grew throughout the centuries to include remembering other outstanding Christians on the days they died. Soon the entire calendar was filled with memorials of the saints. In the ninth century, Pope Gregory IV designated November 1 as the day to remember all the saints living in God’s presence.

When we learn about the saints, we must remember that they were ordinary people just like us. Like us, the saints had to figure out who they were in the eyes of God and then live out that vision. They give us examples of how people dedicate their lives to God. Learning from them, we can figure out how to dedicate our lives to God, each in our own way. We can use each saint’s life as a model for living as God wants us to live.

Abraham was 175 years old when he died; Moses died at the age of 120; Jesus was 30 when he was crucified; Agnes and Maria Goretti were only 12 years old when they were martyred; Antony of the desert died at the age of 105.

Saints of God come in every age, in all size, shape, color and age. Some are remembered by name and many are unknown to us. Known or unknown, honored or forgotten, they have one thing in common: during their lives they helped proclaim the presence and love of God, the kingdom of God. Bernard of Clairvaux said, “calling to mind the saints arouses in us, above all else, a longing to enjoy their company.” Their communion is our longing and that’s what we celebrate.

All Saint’s day is truly a harvest festival. As we come to the close of the agricultural year, we

celebrate God's great harvest of all people throughout history, who have shown love, joy and service, who have proclaimed good news, who have made God's presence real and have surrendered to God in faithfulness and love. And that's why flowers, fruits and vegetables; apple-bobbing and pumpkin carving and other harvest games; trick-or-treating and funny faces - all because it's festival! It's all saints! It's great harvest! It's God's harvest! Remember the words of Jesus: Look there is a rich harvest, but no one to gather it in..... So, we remember, and we celebrate and we pray...Gather us in.....and hold us forever!

It's celebration! It's more than just remembrance of good and holy people. We rejoice in the communion of saints. We are part of this communion! All creation is united and is in harmony in the spirit! We connect and commune with all people of every time and place. We look forward to the day when all creation will be transformed and brought into communion, into holiness, into perfection. Our celebration is part of this great process!

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## **November 2 – COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED**

**Loving Father, fill me with your gift of patient endurance  
in moments of sorrow and suffering.**

**Our love and service and prayer are our blessing for those who have gone before us and their love and life their blessing for us who are still on the journey.**

### **Wisdom 3:1-9**

This excerpt from the Book of Wisdom reminds us that those whom we remember in prayer today are in the hands of God. The quality of their future depends on how they have lived their lives and not on their accomplishments. But they are in the hands of a loving God. They have entered into a new life with God.

### **Psalm 23**

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;  
Beside restful waters he leads me;  
He refreshes my soul.**

## **Romans 6:3-9**

Paul reminds us that the life we long to live has already begun in our baptism. In baptism, we are immersed into the death and resurrection of Jesus...we die with him so as to rise to a new life with him.... we walk in the newness of life with him. To walk with Christ means to emulate his character, his virtues, his lifestyle...to live the way he lived and die the way he died, giving himself totally in love. Paul calls us today to reflect on how we have been walking with Christ.

## **John 6:37-40**

Jesus had fed five thousand men with five loaves and a couple of fish. He, then, invited them to believe in him and in believing, have eternal life. He said to them that it was God's will that all should inherit eternal life. He affirmed that it was to do God's will that he came from heaven; that it was God's will that he should not lose anything that had been given to him; that it was God's will that all who believe in him should have eternal life. Believers in Jesus are offered a share in eternal life.

## **Saint of the Day, November 2 - All Souls' Day**

All Souls' Day is dedicated to prayers for the dead. Many western churches annually observe All Souls' Day on November 2 and many eastern churches celebrate it prior to Lent and the day before Pentecost. Many Christians visit cemeteries where their loved ones are buried. Some cemeteries offer candles to be placed on these graves. The candles are blessed and marked with the names of the deceased to be placed at the designated grave sites. The Catholic Church remembers deceased members of the congregation on this day.

All Souls' Day was first instituted at the monastery in Cluny in 993 CE and quickly spread throughout the Christian world. People held festivals for the dead long before Christianity. It was Saint Odilo, the abbot of Cluny in France, who in the 10th century, proposed that the day after All Saints' Day be set aside to honor all the departed and not just recognized as saints. Although All Souls' Day is observed informally by some Protestants, it is primarily a Roman Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox holy day.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Sing and play music in your hearts to the Lord,  
always giving thanks for everything  
to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.  
(Ephesians 5:19-20)**

