

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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November 21, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thursday of this week is Thanksgiving Day in USA. The Psalmist muses, "How can I repay the Lord for all the good he has done for me?" (Psalm 116:12). Words are inadequate to express our gratitude to God for all that he has been doing for us and with us. Gratitude is our "return gift" to the Lord for all His blessings. We have much to be grateful for and we have many people to be grateful to. We must take a moment to remember the blessings, rejoice and be grateful to God and to all who are part of our life.

While there may be many things wrong in our world, many people irresponsible and unfaithful to their commitments, many projects incomplete and imperfect, there definitely are many things right with our world, many people doing the best they can, many projects contributing to the growth and stability of our communities and country. We often take for granted things that work well most of the time and people who live decent and virtuous lives. There are so many people who work for us, whom we will never meet – just think of those who bring groceries to our grocery stores, the farmers who work very hard, those who pick up our garbage, the policemen who patrol our streets and so many others like them working for us while we go about doing our daily chores.

So, the next time you are tempted to feel that things are bad, remember, there are some things that work very well; there are some people who work very well; there are some things that are dependable and reliable; there are some people who are dependable and reliable; above all, there is the Lord, our God, who is ever present and ever faithful! Just be grateful!

Gratitude showers many blessings. It dissolves negative feelings: anger and jealousy, fear and anxiety and so on. Gratitude deflates the barriers to love. Gratitude creates joy, which is itself a blessing that heals and empowers. I believe, that is why Saint Paul urged us to "Rejoice always...Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Gratitude brings light and warmth into our hearts, spreads joy and radiates positive energy into the world.

Let us take a few moments each day of this week to thank God for all His blessings, to thank all who touched our lives and to thank those who serve us whom we may never meet. God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

# Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

November 21 – 26, 2022

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.  
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.  
(Philippians 4:6-7)**

## November 21 - The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Greatness lies also in doing little and simple things  
and doing it well with love.**

### Revelation 14:1-5

This excerpt contains another vision of John where he sees the faithful survive the anger of hostile powers. He sees the faithful survivors, 144,000 of them (signifying completeness, perfection and inclusiveness), as pure, without deceit, without flaw, with names of the Lamb and of his father written on their forehead (identified as God's own) rejoicing and singing hymns before the throne of God.

### Psalm 24 - The Lord's is the earth and its fullness...

### Luke 21:1-4

In the court of the women in the temple, there were thirteen collection boxes known as the trumpets. They were shaped like trumpets with the narrow part at the top and the wider part at the foot. Each was assigned to offerings for a different purpose - for the wood that was burned for sacrifice, for the incense burned on the altar, for the upkeep of the vessels and so on. It is into these that the rich were flinging their coins. Among them was a poor widow who put in "two lepta". A lepton was the smallest of coins; the name means "the thin one". Jesus said, this "thin one" outvalued all the other offerings because it was all she had. She gave from her want and not from her surplus. **She was in her gift, and she was her gift.**

**The value of any gift is in the spirit in which it is given and the sacrifice which it involves and above all the presence of the giver in the gift. The gift must carry something of the giver. It is not the size or the weight or the shape or the color or glitter or the glamour, but the presence of the giver in the gift that makes the gift a GIFT.**

**Walk softly. Give generously. Listen intensely. Speak tenderly. Pray fervently.**

## **Saint of the Day, November 21 - Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and 11 other saints are remembered this day.**

The feast of the presentation of Mary dates back to the 6th century in the East and the 15th century in the West. It is based on an ancient tradition that Mary was taken to the temple in Jerusalem when she was 3-years-old and dedicated to God. A church was built there in honor of this mystery. The Eastern Church was more interested in the feast, but it does appear in the West in the 11th century and became a feast of the universal Church in the 16th century.

We read about Mary's birth and of her presentation in the temple only in apocryphal literature. The Gospel of James (unrecognized as historical) tells us that Anna and Joachim offered Mary to God in the Temple when she was 3 years old. This was to carry out a promise made to God when Anna was still childless. Though it cannot be proven historically, Mary's presentation has an important theological purpose. It continues the impact of the feasts of the Immaculate Conception and of the birth of Mary. It emphasizes that the holiness conferred on Mary from the beginning of her life on earth continued through her early childhood and beyond.

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## **November 22 – Saint Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr**

**It takes simplicity to trust and rely on one single thread of grace!**

### **Revelation 14:14-19**

John had his vision of the Parousia. In this vision, he saw one like the Son of Man reaping a fully ripe and rich harvest and the angel reaping those destined to be judged. Several symbols are used in this excerpt to describe the Parousia as God's judgment over the whole land rather than a few chosen people. Be confident and be faithful! God will gather in the good and faithful.

### **Psalm 96 - Say among the nations: The Lord is king...**

### **Luke 21:5-11**

Jesus had just pointed to a widow and her simple offering as an example and inspiration for all. The widow's simple gift involved great sacrifice. She gave out of her want and not from the surplus. Even as they listened to the call for simplicity, generosity and sacrifice, they could think only about the glory of the temple adorned with expensive stones and ornaments. The pillars of the porches in the temple were made of single blocks of white marble, forty feet high. The most famous among the ornaments was the great vine made of solid gold.

Their comment on the splendor of the temple moved Jesus to prophecy. He told them that these stones and ornaments would not endure. They would all be pulled down and destroyed. To the Jews it was unthinkable that the glory of the temple would be shattered to dust. Jesus called his listeners to be watchful and learn to read the signs of the time.

**Do not seek glory in things that do not last. Seek glory in the enduring and the lasting that are of God and from God!**

**Be alert! Stay awake! Be watchful! Read the sign of the times! Prayerfully listen and discern what God is saying to you now!**

**Saint of the Day, November 22 - Saint Cecilia and 11 other saints are remembered this day.**

St. Cecilia was a young Roman Christian who made a vow of virginity (around second century). Her parents, however, insisted that she marry Valerian, a pagan. On her wedding night, she courageously told her new husband about her vow and that an angel was with her to protect her. Valerian was skeptical and told her he wanted proof of the angel. Cecilia sent him to the future Pope Urban. Valerian found Pope Urban and explained why Cecilia sent him. Pope Urban baptized Valerian, and when he returned to Cecilia, he saw an angel sitting beside her. So strong was Valerian's conversion that his brother Tibertius also wanted baptism. The brothers then began to serve Christ by burying Christians who were martyred.

Cecilia spent her time preaching the Word of God, and she converted up to 400 persons. Eventually, the brothers were arrested and put to death for refusing to worship pagan gods. Cecilia buried them, and she, too, was soon arrested and was to die for her faith. The official ordered her death by suffocating heat in her own bathhouse. That attempt failed. Then the official ordered the executioner to decapitate her. The executioner struck Cecilia's neck three times, but he could not completely sever her head. He left her on the floor, bleeding profusely. She lived like that for three days before she died. Cecilia was declared a saint by the early Christians because of her martyrdom. Cecilia is the patron saint of musicians.

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**November 23 – Wednesday, Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Simplicity means giving a straightforward opinion about things in the way we honestly see them, without needless reservations.**

## **Revelation 15:1-4**

This vision of John describes the calamities that surround the final judgment. It also reveals that the victory and glory of the redeeming Lamb is the apex and the goal of the history of salvation. Those who have come through the battle and the suffering into blessedness sing the song of Moses; “Mighty and wonderful are your works Lord...Righteous and true are your ways O King...” John had the vision of the saints marching into victory, into blessedness and glory and singing the praises of God.

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

## **Luke 21:12-19**

Jesus told his disciples that they will be arrested and persecuted, even delivered over by their own families; that they will be hated, but not a “hair on their head will be lost”. Jesus encouraged them to stand strong and not be afraid.

## **Trust in the Lord! Stand strong and be not afraid!**

Jesus told them to trust and not be worried about defending themselves. He promised to give them words to speak and wisdom to know what to say to the adversaries. He said to them “by patient endurance, you will save your lives”. **Pray for the gift of “patient endurance”.**

**Pray for the gift of wisdom to listen and discern what God is saying to you now and for the courage to respond to God’s call.**

## **Saint of the Day, November 23 - Saint Clement and 11 other saints are remembered this day.**

Clement of Rome was the third successor of Saint Peter, reigning as pope during the last decade of the first century. He’s known as one of the Church’s five “Apostolic Fathers,” those who provided a direct link between the Apostles and later generations of Church Fathers.

Clément’s First Epistle to the Corinthians was preserved and widely read in the early Church. This letter from the bishop of Rome to the Church in Corinth concerns a split that alienated a large number of the laity from the clergy. Deploring the unauthorized and unjustifiable division in the Corinthian community, Clement urged charity to heal the rift. According to tradition, Clement was imprisoned under the Emperor Trajan and during this time led a ministry among fellow prisoners. Thereafter he was executed by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the sea. He was Pope, probably, from the year 88 till his death in 99.

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## **November 24 - Thursday, Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Simplicity is doing everything out of love of God,  
and not for other reasons.**

The fourth Thursday of November is Thanksgiving Day in U.S.A. We wish all visitors to our website in USA a very happy and joyful day. May God bless you, your families and all in U.S.A. with grateful hearts, generous and joyful sharing, and optimistic spirits. May this day be a day of blessing and grace for you and for all.

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

### **Revelation 18:1-2, 21-23; 19:1-3, 9**

The author describes the fall of the great city of Babylon with all its evil forces and being thrown into the depth of the sea not to be found again. Then he describes the joy of the great multitude in heaven singing "Alleluia, Salvation and Glory" at the feast of the lamb. Mighty kingdoms will fall, but God's kingdom will stand, and His people will rejoice.

### **Psalm 100 - Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth...**

### **Luke 21:20-28**

They admired the beauty and glory of their temple - gazed at it with amazement! They thought they were privileged to be in the presence of a beautiful and enduring reality, the construction of which took over 80 years. Besides its obvious beauty, the fact that the temple was revered as God's dwelling place on earth made it a permanent structure in Jewish life and spirituality. So, they were shocked at the prediction Jesus made! Even angry! When Luke wrote his Gospel, the prediction of Jesus had come true! The temple was gone! Titus and his troops had conquered Jerusalem and leveled the temple in 70 C.E. But God had not gone from there, nor was he gone from the hearts of the believers! The harsh realities that Jesus predicted did come true and believers faced them with courage.

Jesus encouraged the disciples to accept these hardships as opportunities to bear witness to him and to the good news of salvation. He says: "stand up straight and raise your heads for your ransom is near at hand" - remember his teachings, trust his word and not give over to apocalyptic anxiety. He encourages us not to worry about fearful omens and not give in to the dread of suffering that could come as a result of following him.

**Our faith today is being tested. We need to stand our ground - be deeply rooted in our faith tradition. Our faith must be true, our witness must be authentic and continuous, our hope must be our strength, our love must be forgiving and gracious and benevolent.....**

## **Saint of the Day, November 24 - St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions and 146 other saints are remembered this day.**

Andrew was born Trần An Dũng in 1795 in Vietnam, taking the name Andrew at his baptism (Anrê Dũng) and was ordained a priest on March 15, 1823. During persecution, Andrew Dũng changed his name to Lạc to avoid capture, and thus he is memorialised as Andrew Dũng-Lạc (Anrê Dũng Lạc).

Andrew Dung-Lac was one of 117 people martyred in Vietnam between 1820 and 1862. Members of the companions group gave their lives for Christ in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, and received beatification during four different occasions between 1900 and 1951. All were canonized during the papacy of Saint John Paul II.

Christianity came to Vietnam through the Portuguese. Jesuits opened the first permanent mission at Da Nang in 1615. They ministered to Japanese Catholics who had been driven from Japan. Severe persecutions were launched at least three times in the 19th century. During the six decades after 1820, between 100,000 and 300,000 Catholics were killed or subjected to great hardship. Foreign missionaries martyred in the first wave included priests of the Paris Mission Society, and Spanish Dominican priests and tertiaries.

In 1832, Emperor Minh-Mang banned all foreign missionaries, and tried to make all Vietnamese deny their faith by trampling on a crucifix. Like the priest-holes in Ireland during English persecution, many hiding places were offered in homes of the faithful. Persecution broke out again in 1847, when the emperor suspected foreign missionaries and Vietnamese Christians of sympathizing with a rebellion led by one of his sons. The last of the martyrs were 17 laypersons, one of them a 9-year-old, executed in 1862. That year a treaty with France guaranteed religious freedom to Catholics, but it did not stop all persecution

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## **November 25 – Friday, Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Each of us should take care to behave always in the spirit of simplicity,  
remembering that God likes to deal with the simple.**

(St. Vincent de Paul)

## **Revelation 20:1-4, 11 – 21:2**

In this vision, John sees the ancient dragon being chained and hurled into the abyss which is then closed and sealed. He saw the reign of Christ following the resurrection of the dead and

the final judgment. He saw new heavens and the new earth. The communion and the celebration of the saints have begun.

**Be confident. Be awake and alert and prepared! The Lord is breaking into your personal history!**

**Psalm 84 - My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the Lord...**

**Luke 21:29-33**

Jesus had talked about the “Day of the Lord” and the terrible events that surround that day. He talked about what he himself had to face and what his disciples eventually would face. Hearing all this, the disciples wanted to know what they should do and what signs they should be looking for.

Jesus used familiar imageries of sun, moon, stars, gathering of clouds, budding fig tree, etc. to describe the reality of God breaking into history. Jesus encouraged them to recognize the coming of God in all happenings and not look for God in extra-ordinary events.

**Be alert, stay awake and continue to fulfill the mission of Jesus in whatever situation you may be.....recognize the presence and movement of God in all you do!**

**Saint of the Day, November 25 - St. Catherine of Alexandria and 6 other saints are remembered this day**

Saint Catherine of Alexandria, or Saint Katharine of Alexandria, also known as Saint Catherine of the Wheel and The Great Martyr Saint Catherine, is, according to tradition was martyred in the early 4th century at the hands of the pagan emperor Maxentius. According to her hagiography, she was both a princess and a noted scholar, who became a Christian around the age of 14, converted hundreds of people to Christianity, and was martyred around the age of 18. More than 1,100 years after Catherine's martyrdom, Joan of Arc identified her as one of the saints who appeared to and counselled her.

The Eastern Orthodox Church venerates her as a Great Martyr and celebrates her feast day on November 24 or 25, depending on the regional tradition. In Catholicism she is traditionally revered as one of **the Fourteen Holy Helpers\*\*\***. In 1969 the Roman Catholic Church removed her feast day from the General Roman Calendar; however, she continued to be commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on 25 November. In 2002, her feast was restored to the General Roman Calendar as an optional memorial.

**\*\*\*Fourteen Holy Helpers.** Saints Acacius, Barbara, Blaise, Christopher, Cyriacus, Catherine of Alexandria, Denis, Erasmus of Formiae, Eustace, George, Giles, Margaret of Antioch, Pantaleon, and Vitus. The Fourteen Holy Helpers are a group of saints venerated together in Roman Catholicism because their intercession is believed to be particularly effective, especially against various diseases.

In the middle of the 14th century, the plague - also called “The Black Death” - also called “The Greatest Catastrophe Ever” - ravaged Europe, killing 50 million people, or about 60% of the population (a vastly higher death rate than coronavirus), within a few years. Lacking the advances of modern medicine , and layering dead bodies in pits like “lasagne with layers of pasta and cheese,” the people had no choice but to cling to their faith. It was at this time that the Fourteen Holy Helpers - Catholics saints, all but one of whom were early martyrs - came to be invoked by Catholics against the plague and other misfortunes.

According to New Liturgical Movement, devotion to these 14 saints started in Germany at the time of the plague, and they were called “Nothelfer,” which in German means “helpers in need.” As bouts of the plague resurfaced over the decades, devotion to the Holy Helpers spread to other countries, and eventually Nicholas V declared that devotion to the saints came with special indulgences.

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## **November 19 – Saturday, Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time**

**God conceals the secrets of heaven from the wise  
and prudent of this world and reveals them to little ones.**

(St. Vincent de Paul)

### **Revelation 22:1-7**

John describes the heavenly Jerusalem as the abode of the divine life, the very dwelling place of God. The throne of God is the center of this place which replaces the temple. The river of life flows there, and fruit bearing trees grow on the bank of this river. All who have been welcomed into this presence will have no need for the light from the lamp or the sun. God will give them light, and they will reign forever.

**The saints of God will enjoy the eternal presence of life, light, joy, and love in the very presence of God.**

**Psalm 95 - Come let us sing joyfully to the Lord...**

## **Luke 21:34-36**

Jesus continued to call his disciples to be alert and awake and to stand strong. He told them about the difficulties ahead. Throughout his ministry, Jesus emphasized that the suffering of persecution for the sake of the Kingdom and for the cause of justice was an integral part of being a disciple. The “Day of the Lord” will come. No one knew the time or the day or the hour.

God will break in at the least expected moment, through least expected events, people, and situations. So, it is urgent to stay awake, alert and prepared. Jesus said to them, “Pray constantly for strength...”

**Be alert and awake and be prepared and continue to fulfill the mission of Jesus in proclaiming the kingdom of justice and peace for all.**

**Saint of the Day, November 26 - St. Columban and 14 other saints are remembered this day.**

Saint Columban, (Columbanus in Latin) was born around 540 in Leinster, Ireland. He was well-educated in the areas of grammar, rhetoric, geometry, and the Holy Scriptures. He was one of the greatest missionaries of the Celtic church, who initiated a revival of spirituality on the European continent. Educated in the monastery of Bangor, County Down, Columban left Ireland for Europe around 590 with 12 monks. They won wide respect for the rigor of their discipline, their preaching, and their commitment to charity and religious life in a time characterized by clerical laxity and civil strife. Columban established several monasteries in Europe which became centers of religion and culture.

Columban became unpopular because of his attacks on the degeneracy in the Burgundian court and among local clergy. He reproved the king for his licentious life, insisting that he should get married. Since this threatened the power of the queen mother, Columban was deported back to Ireland. His ship ran aground in a storm, and he continued his work in Europe, ultimately arriving in Italy, where he found favor with the king of the Lombards. In his last years he established the famous monastery of Bobbio, where he died in 615. His writings include a treatise on penance and against Arianism, sermons, poetry, and his monastic rule.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Be thankful for the struggles you go through.  
They make you stronger, wiser, and humble.  
Don't let them break you.  
Let them make you!**

