

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Brothers and Sisters,

Today is Labor Day in the United States. Many countries celebrate International Workers' Day on May 1 (May Day). Throughout the 20th century this day became associated with the rise of communism, atheism, and socialism. Because of the connection to communism, the U.S. does not observe May 1st as a day to honor workers. Congress chose the beginning of September to honor and recognize the American labor movement and the contributions of all laborers in building up our nation. On Labor Day the Church in the U.S. suggests that mass be celebrated for the Sanctification of Human Labor, recalling the dignity all kinds of work and workers.

Labor Day reminds us of our interdependence and interconnectedness. We need one another to survive and to fulfill our purpose. We bless others and contribute to their survival and their fulfillment, and we benefit from the labor of others. We are beneficiaries of the hard work of many whom we will never meet and of many who are no longer with us. We are blessed by the hard work of people thousands of miles away and by those who lived hundreds of years before us. We are interdependent beings, and we are interconnected! Thanks be to God for human labor! We help each other to survive and fulfill our God-given purpose!

Be still for a moment and think of a simple can of tomatoes that you take from the shelf of your friendly neighborhood grocery store. Thousands of people stand behind that can of tomato: men and women who stock the shelves; the truck drivers who transport the product to the store; those who maintain the warehouse; the farmers and harvesters; those who supply fertilizers; those who build and maintain our roads; those who supply gasoline for the trucks; the coal miners and others who work hard to generate and provide electricity; the bankers and other financial institutions who supply the funds to run the farms and the food distribution businesses; the local grocers who keep the store open at odd hours..... The list of people who are behind that can of tomato can go on endlessly. They work hard and so we get to take home a can of tomato.

Take a few minutes each day of this week to go to a quiet place, be still and remember the many people out there who are working for you whom you may never meet. Bless and thank all those people who keep blessing you and serving you without even knowing you! Be grateful! God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

September 7-12, 2026

**Christian life is not a loyalty to certain doctrine or philosophy,
but faithfulness in relationship to Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life.**

September 7 – Monday, Twenty Third Week in Ordinary Time

Serenity is the calm acceptance of the unknown.

1 Corinthians 5:1-8

Paul speaks of Christ as a mystery within, a powerful force within, the force that transforms you. Just as a little yeast has its effect all through the dough, the Spirit within transforms the whole being. In this excerpt, Paul says, “Get rid of the old yeast to make yourselves fresh dough, unleavened loaves.... celebrate with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”.

Search your hearts and discover the treasure, the gift of the Holy Spirit within and let it transform you!

Psalms 5

**The Lord is just in all his ways,
and holy in all his works.
The Lord is near to all who call upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.**

Luke 6:6-11

There was a man with a withered hand. He was prepared to attempt the impossible. Jesus said: “Stretch out your hand” and he did without arguments or doubt.

The difference between difficult and impossible is that the difficult is outside and the impossible is inside....it is an attitude, a disposition of mind and heart. Change your attitude and attempt the impossible! With God all things are possible!

One of the apocryphal Gospels tells us that this man was a stone mason, and he asked Jesus healing for his hand so that he could work. He was a man who wanted to work. It is this attitude that made it possible for him to attempt the impossible. **Do you want to be well? Then, with confidence in the power of God within you, attempt what seems impossible!**

Jesus was prepared to take the risk of taking the displeasure and even the anger of the Pharisees to do good for others. The Pharisees loved the prescriptions of their religion more than the God of their religion. Their religion, in effect, had become their God.

Be watchful! Values get reversed. God first. Religion is at the service of God. Religion is a vehicle - not the destination!

Saint of the Day, September 7 - St. Eleutherius and 18 other saints are remembered this day

Saint Eleutherius was born in Nicopolis, Epirus, Roman Empire (now in Greece) sometime after 100 C.E. His name means "frank, honest, free-spirited". Whether that is his real name, or a description of the man is unknown. Eleutherius was Bishop of Rome from about 175 to May 24, 189 AD. It is said that he was martyred at that time.

The biggest problem Eleutherius had to face was the continuing problem of the Montanists, also known as the "New Prophecy" and the Marcionists. These were groups of people who described themselves as Christians but tended to claim that the Holy Spirit was directing them to do and say things not adopted by the orthodox church. In many ways, they were similar to the Pentecostals of today. However, with their fasting and ascetic ways, it was difficult to piece together whether they were actually heretical or not. The most embarrassing activities they held were their large public displays of ecstatic prophesying.

In 177, Eleutherius received a letter from the Church at Lyon, France, asking him to consider carefully the Marcionists, to show mercy but to not compromise in his dealing. The letter was delivered by the deacon, Ireneus, who shortly became the bishop of Lyon. Many of the bishops in Asia Minor, where the heresy began, were totally against the sect early on. They had synods and wrote letters, disclaiming the followers. Eventually, the followers of Montanus claimed that he, himself was the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, sent from Jesus to guide and direct the Church. That was the beginning of the end for this heresy.

Some references say Eleutherius was martyred, others that he died a natural death. In either case, Pope Eleutherius was buried on Vatican Hill after his death, near other popes.

September 8 - Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Serenity nurtures prayerfulness and contemplation.
And Prayerfulness and contemplation nurtures serenity.**

Romans 8:26-30

Paul tells the Christians in Rome that God knows all our weaknesses, even how difficult it is for us to pray. So, he gives us his spirit to help us in our weakness. Since we do not know how to pray as we should, the spirit prays in us, expresses our innermost longings.

God makes all things work together for the good of those whom he has called. So, listen to the spirit and move with the spirit as the spirit moves.

Psalms 13

**Let my heart rejoice in your salvation;
Let me sing of the Lord,
He has been good to me.**

Matthew 1:1-23

Matthew gives us the genealogy of Jesus. The Jews placed great importance on the purity of lineage. Today, it reminds of our connection to our heritage, our rootedness in “purity” and “simplicity” of faith”, our connection to a tradition that has been tested and proved to be good and true. We have roots and ground to stand on! We have something and someone to remember! We have our story - our story of birth, life, and death.

Be Grateful! You have roots! You have your story! You have your tradition!

The story is arranged in three sections, reflecting three great stages in Jewish history. The first section takes the history down to David, the second to Exile and the third to Jesus. We can even recognize something symbolic about the whole of human life in the way the three stages are arranged: (1) Man was birthed for greatness; (2) Man lost his greatness; (3) Man was restored to greatness. Matthew tells of our call to royalty (greatness); the tragedy of lost royalty; and the glory of royalty restored.

Reflect on your call to greatness, your loss of that greatness and your regaining that greatness.

Matthew's genealogy is interesting, extraordinary, unlike any other in Jewish traditions. He includes women, the gentiles and even sinners in his genealogy. The barrier between Jew and gentile, male and female, saint and sinner is broken. Rahab was a harlot of Jericho; Ruth was not a Jewess but a Moabite; Tamar was a deliberate seducer and an adulteress; Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, was the woman whom David seduced. This is an incredible ancestry of Jesus.

Reflect on this incredible revelation of “all-embracing Love” of God revealed in Jesus!

This Gospel passage calls forth “Obedience” to God and His plans. Joseph and Mary surrendered to God’s plans and were even put to great testing times as they learned to surrender. Surrender is a difficult and demanding word! The Gospel demands a response of obedience.

What are your reflections on this call to obedience, to surrender? Can you think of examples of the call to surrender?

The birth of a baby is always an act of trust, much more so the birth of the divine baby. Any baby born into the world is an act of trust in the future of humanity. The birth of Jesus called forth even greeter trust than could be imagined. The circumstances of his birth were extraordinary and even mysterious. Mary had to trust, Joseph had to trust, Elizabeth had to trust, Zechariah had to trust - And God himself trusted...trusting a young Galilean girl with a baby to be the messiah is an amazing story of “TRUST”!

What are your reflections on this call to trust?

Saint of the Day. September 8 - Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and 27 other saints are remembered this day

According to tradition, this feast probably began with the consecration of the basilica of St. Ann in Jerusalem. The September birth was chosen because the Eastern Church begins its Church year in September. The Birth has been assigned to September 8, both in the East and in the West, which is nine months after the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8. The feast was brought to Rome toward the end of the 7th century by Eastern monks. Gradually, it spread to the other parts of the West.

Scripture does not give us an account of Mary’s birth. However, according to the apocryphal Gospel of James, Anna and Joachim, the parents of Mary, were infertile but prayed for a child. They received the promise of a child who would advance God’s plan of salvation for the world. Although it is not an actual birthday, it is a way of honoring the gentle and holy woman who said “yes” to God’s call and let God’s word of love become flesh in her and make a gift of the “word-made-flesh” to the world. It is also a challenge and an inspiration for us to welcome God’s word of love into our hearts and let it transform our life. Let us make this a joyful day for us and a day of blessing and grace for all we meet.

September 9 - Wednesday, Twenty Third Week in Ordinary Time

Serenity is a certain quality of mind which no condition or fortune can alter.

1 Corinthians 7:25-31

Paul challenged the Corinthian converts to set their priorities in light of the fact that “the world in its present form is passing away”. At the time he wrote this letter to the Corinthians, Paul was convinced of the imminence of the return of Jesus. In light of the expectation of Christ’s return, Paul invited his readers to reassess their priorities and align them with their commitment to Christ. The expectation of Christ’s return should shape and direct their thoughts, plans, choices and actions. Christians should not invest themselves into the issues and affairs of the world. Their life should characterize their expectation of the coming of Christ.

Though the exhortation of Paul was to a community that expected Christ’s immediate return, it still has meaning and value for our times. Paul’s teaching invites us even today to set our priorities straight, to invest our life into the enduring and the eternal rather than the passing realities of life, to be cautious of the standards of the world and to live our life in the context of the eternal existence of love and truth.

Psalms 45

**Hear, O daughter and see, turn your ear,
Forget your people and your father’s house.
So shall the king desire your beauty;
For he is your lord, and you must worship him.**

Luke 6:20-26

Jesus proclaims a new set of values, each of which is a challenge and radically different from what the world has to offer. He takes the accepted standards and values and turns them upside down. “Woe to you rich because you have all the comfort you are going to get”. The word Jesus uses for “have” is the word used for receiving payment in full for an account. It simply means that if we set our heart and bend all our energies to get the things which the world values, we may get them, but that’s all we may ever get.” It’s another way of saying: “You have had it!”

If you set your hearts on things of the “Kingdom” and channel your energies to being loyal to God, you may get into trouble, but “eternal joy” will be yours - “eternal” - not in the sense of lasting or everlasting, but in the sense of “what befits God”, joy that is characteristic of God. We are offered a choice: the ways of the world or the ways of God.

Saint of the Day, September 9 - St. Peter Claver and 14 other saints are remembered this day

Peter Claver was born on June 26, 1580 into a devoutly Catholic and prosperous farming family in the Catalan village of Verdú in Spain. He was born 70 years after King Ferdinand of Spain set

the colonial slavery culture into motion by authorizing the purchase of 250 African slaves in Lisbon for his territories in New Spain. Peter was distressed by the number of captive African slaves brought in to port each month and the cruelty they suffered. At early age, he wrote these words in the notebook he kept throughout his life: "I must dedicate myself to the service of God until death, on the understanding that I am like a slave."

After his ordination in 1616 and for the next 38 years, he dedicated himself to the service of the slaves Cartagena, which began in the cargo hold of the slave boat after it docked. Peter Claver showed them abundant kindness, offered them nourishment, and cared for the sick and dying. He followed them to the plantation or other sites where they were sent and became their advocate for humane treatment by their masters. With the help of other Africans as interpreters, he was able to bring Jesus to them and prepare them for the sacraments.

As time passed, Father Claver became a moral force for all the people of Cartagena. He preached in the city square and gave missions to sailors and traders. The people named him "Apostle of Cartagena." Father Claver died on September 8, 1654 after four years of serious illness. During his life's work, he baptized three hundred thousand black African slaves. Pope Leo XIII canonized Saint Peter Claver on January 15, 1888.

September 10 – Thursday, Twenty Third Week in Ordinary Time

Serenity is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of inner peace.

I Corinthians 8:1-7, 11-13

Paul tells the Corinthians that love must dominate their lifestyle and not knowledge. Knowledge is good, but it has a way of "inflating" while love has a way of "up-building". To know God is to love God and to love God is to know God. There is only one God, Paul says, the God of love. And this God made everything through his Son Jesus. Paul also taught them the principle that however safe the strong and enlightened Christian may feel, he must do nothing to hurt or scandalize or confuse those who are less enlightened and those who are weak in their faith.

Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus and do it with love.

Psalms 139

**O Lord, you have probed me and you know me;
You know when I sit and when I stand;
You understand my thoughts from afar.
My journeys and my rest you scrutinize,
With all my ways you are familiar.**

Luke 6:27-38

Jesus taught his disciples to love and be compassionate even when there is no return or reward for loving. He told them, “Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who maltreat you”. He told them that their standard must be more noble than that of the Scribes and the Pharisees and that their spirituality must be deeper than that of the unbeliever.

Be benevolent. Let your love be invincible, unconquerable, unyielding, steadfast, befitting your call, befitting your character as “sons of God”.

Be compassionate as your father is compassionate!

Be generous. Give without measure!

Saint of the Day, September 10 - St. Thomas of Villanova and 55 other saints are remembered this day.

Thomas of Villanova was born Tomás García y Martínez in Fuenllana, Spain, in 1488. His father was a miller, who regularly distributed food and provisions to the poor, as his mother did. He grew up and was educated in Villanueva de los Infantes, in the Province of Ciudad Real, Spain, therefore the name Thomas of Villanueva. In spite of his family's wealth, as a young boy he often went about naked because he had given his clothing to the poor.

At the age of sixteen years, Thomas entered the University of Alcalá de Henares to study Arts and Theology. He became a professor there, teaching arts, logic, and philosophy, despite a continuing absentmindedness and poor memory. In 1516, he decided to join the Augustinian friars in Salamanca and in 1518 was ordained a priest.

He became renowned for his eloquent and effective preaching in the churches of Salamanca. Within the Order, he successively held the positions of prior of his local monastery, Visitor General, and Prior Provincial for Andalusia and Castile. In 1533, Thomas sent out the first Augustinian friars to arrive in Mexico.

In 1544 he was nominated as Archbishop of Valencia and he continued to refuse the position until ordered to accept by his superior. Given a donation to decorate his residence, he sent the money to a hospital in need of repair. He began his episcopacy by visiting every parish in the Archdiocese to discover what the needs of the people were. Aided by his assistant bishop, Juan Segriá, he put in order an archdiocese that for a century had not had direct pastoral government. He organized a special college for Moorish converts, and in particular an effective plan for social assistance, welfare, and charity.

He was well known for his great personal austerity (he sold the straw mattress on which he slept in order to give money to the poor) and wore the same habit that he had received in the novitiate, mending it himself. Thomas was known as “father of the poor.” His continual charitable efforts were untiring, especially towards orphans, poor women without a dowry, and the sick. He established boarding schools and high schools. Thomas died in Valencia on September 8, 1555 of angina at the age of 67 and was canonized on January 15, 1888.

September 11 – Friday, Twenty Third Week in Ordinary Time

Serenity is the peaceful surrender to the flow of life.

I Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-27

In this excerpt, Paul speaks of himself as a servant of all. He says that he has been serving the community out of an inner urge and not from compulsion from anyone else and not for profit or prestige. The only thing that he has to boast about is the Gospel of Jesus. He also says that he had disciplined himself to be faithful to what he preaches.

Be faithful to who you are and to what you preach and teach.

Psalm 84

**My soul years and pines
for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my flesh
cry out for the living God.**

Luke 6: 39-42

Jesus taught his disciples to keep their eyes open, not to be blind to their own weaknesses and shortcomings, not to be misled and not to mislead....

Try to deepen your vision of yourself. Have a clearer vision of who you are, what your strengths and weaknesses are.

It is not difficult to find fault with others, to criticize others, to point out other’s mistakes. But remember: “there is so much bad in the best of us and so much good in the worst of us that it ill becomes any of us to find fault with the rest of us” (Francis Bacon)

Jesus calls us to be compassionate, to develop a non-blaming, non-judgmental attitude, to have a generous heart, to be sensitive to other's feelings and needs, to be mindful of others in their weaknesses and limitations and failures.....and not be judgmental of others.

Saint of the Day, September 11 - St. Cyprian and 18 other saints are remembered this day.

Cyprian was born into a rich, pagan, Roman African Carthage family sometime during the early third century, between 200-210. He was baptized when he was thirty-five years old. After his baptism, he gave away a portion of his wealth to the poor of Carthage. Not long after his baptism he was ordained a deacon, and soon afterwards a priest. Sometime between July 248 and April 249 he was elected bishop of Carthage,

Christians in North Africa had not suffered persecution for many years. Cyprian complained that the peace the Church had enjoyed had weakened the spirit of many Christians and had opened the door to converts who did not have the true spirit of faith. When the Decian persecution began, many Christians easily abandoned the Church. It was their reinstatement that caused the great controversies of the third century and helped the Church progress in its understanding of the Sacrament of Penance.

The Emperor Decius issued an edict ordering sacrifices to the gods to be made throughout the Empire. Jews were specifically exempted from this requirement. Cyprian chose to go into hiding rather than face potential execution. Novatus, a priest who had opposed Cyprian's election, set himself up in Cyprian's absence and received back all apostates without imposing any canonical penance. Cyprian held that those who had actually sacrificed to idols could receive Communion only at death, whereas those who had only bought certificates saying they had sacrificed could be admitted after a more or less lengthy period of penance.

During a plague in Carthage, Cyprian urged Christians to help everyone, including their enemies and persecutors. A friend of Pope Cornelius, Cyprian opposed the following pope, Stephen. He and the other African bishops would not recognize the validity of baptism conferred by heretics and schismatics. This was not the universal view of the Church, but Cyprian was not intimidated even by Stephen's threat of excommunication. He was exiled by the emperor and then recalled for trial. He refused to leave the city, insisting that his people should have the witness of his martyrdom.

On September 13, 258, Cyprian was imprisoned on the orders of the new proconsul, Galerius Maximus. After trial, Cyprian was sentenced to be executed with the sword. The execution was carried out in an open place near the city. A vast multitude followed Cyprian on his last journey. He removed his garments without assistance, knelt down, and prayed. After he blindfolded himself, he was beheaded by the sword on September 14, 258 in Carthage.

September 12 – Saturday, Twenty Third Week of the Year

Serenity is the ability to stay centered, no matter what life throws at you.

I Corinthians 10:14-22

Paul lays down the norm: “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and likewise the table of demons”. This is another way of saying that a person who has handled sacred things cannot soil his hands with mean and unworthy things. You cannot choose the way of grace and at the same time the way of sin.

Psalm 116

**How shall I make return to the Lord
for all the goods he has done for me?
The cup of salvation I will take up,
and I will call upon the name of the Lord.**

Luke 6:43-49

This excerpt from Luke offers us several important teachings of Jesus:

Your fruitfulness reflects your character. True character of a person is reflected in his actions. Fine words do not take the place of fine deeds. Fine words can never be a substitute for fine deeds. Proclaiming (teaching, preaching) truth and values happens through your personality.

Faith without practice is a contradiction in terms. It is not difficult to recite the creed, but it could be difficult to live a Christian life.

Response must follow the listening. Hearing is not enough - obedience to what is heard is just as important. Knowledge becomes relevant only when it is translated into action.

Knowledge must become action. Theory must become practice. Theology must become life. Spirituality must become incarnation.

Only a house whose foundations are strong can withstand the storm - only a life whose foundations are solid can survive the testing times. Be strong! Be grounded in faith!

Saint of the Day, September 12 - Most Holy Name of Mary and 13 other saints are remembered this day.

The Feast of the Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary is an optional memorial celebrated on September 12. This feast began in Spain in 1513 and in 1671 was extended to all of Spain and the Kingdom of Naples.

It has been a universal Roman Rite feast since 1684, when Pope Innocent XI included it in the General Roman Calendar to commemorate the victory at the Battle of Vienna in 1683. In 1683, John Sobieski, king of Poland, brought an army to the outskirts of Vienna to stop the advance of Muslim armies loyal to Mohammed IV of Constantinople. After Sobieski entrusted himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, he and his soldiers thoroughly defeated the Muslims. Pope Innocent XI extended this feast to the entire Church in memory of this victory. It was removed from the Church calendar in the liturgical reform following Vatican II but restored by Pope John Paul II in 2002, along with the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus.

In Hebrew, the name Mary is "Miryam". In Aramaic the language spoken in her own time, the form of the name was "Mariam". Based on the root "merur", the name signifies "bitterness". This is reflected in the words of Naomi, who, after losing a husband and two sons lamented, "Do not call me Naomi ('Sweet'). Call me Mara ('Bitter'), for the Almighty has made my life very bitter." There are over seventeen interpretations of the name Mary.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Some use their faith like a bus – they ride on it only when it is going their way.
Be faithful even when things are not going your way.**

