

# Wellspring

## Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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September 18, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the Twenty fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time. We continue to journey with Jesus and his disciples through the Gospel of Luke. Last week, we reflected on cultivating an attitude of forgiveness, healing and wholeness. Our Scripture readings of this Sunday call us to cultivate a healthy and wholesome attitude toward all our possessions.

In the past twenty four weeks of our journey with Jesus and his disciples through the Gospel of Luke, we learned much about raising the quality of our discipleship, about making difficult and tough choices leading to a final surrender to God's will and purpose for us. Last Sunday's Gospel was about the Prodigal Son who demanded his share of his father's estate and then went out and squandered it all.

This Sunday's Gospel is about a dishonest and wickedly clever steward who doctors the accounts of his master's books in order to win friends who, he believes, would care for him when he is fired from his job. Next Sunday, we will read about a wealthy man who dressed in purple garments and fine linens and dined sumptuously each day oblivious to the plight of the poor just outside his door. Gospel readings of these three Sundays are about the teachings of Jesus on material possessions, money and wealth and their use.

All possessions are God's gifts for our own good and the good of the community. We are at the service of God and possessions are at our service. We are called to use material possessions to build relationships, friendships, fellowship and communion with others and be honest and trustworthy in all relationships, even in dealing with material things.

Amos, the Prophet, lived around 780 B.C.E. He championed the cause of the poor, and the marginalized and indicted the rich and the affluent. He regarded the oppression of the poor by the rich as a breach of the covenant that Israel was privileged to share and described their behavior as not befitting the justice and mercy of God. In the first reading of today's mass (Amos 8:4-7), we hear Amos calling his people for conversion and change of their ways and become just in their dealings with all people. He called his people to use their wealth and not abuse it. He told them that if they didn't change their ways, they may not even hear God's word even if they listened because they were unjust to their neighbors.

This Sunday's Gospel tells us the parable of an enterprising manager who was about to be dismissed. The manager used his "practical wisdom" to deal with the crisis of being fired from his job. His employer praised him for being enterprising and Jesus held him out as an example to his disciples - not because he abused his employer's wealth, but because he used his wisdom to gain friends for himself for a future time of need.

Then Jesus called his disciples to higher values. He called them to use material possessions to build relationships, friendships, fellowship and communion with others. He called them to be honest and trustworthy in all relationships, even in dealing with material things. All possessions are God's gifts for our own good and the good of the community. We are at the service of God and possessions are at our service. Possessions have a way of possessing us and when that happens, we lose our freedom. Jesus calls us to be non-possessive.

Once a man asked Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life (Mark 10:17-27). Jesus told him to follow the commandments. The man claimed that he had been following them since his youth. Jesus then told him to sell all he had, give it to the poor and follow him. The man went away sad because he was not ready to part with his possessions...his possessions had hold on him. He was not free. We must strive to be free to use what we have as well as to give away what we have. Possessions belong to us, and we do not belong to the possessions.

We must make use of everything we have and do everything we can to be part of the Kingdom when the time comes. Jesus said, "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light." This means that the children of this world are more immersed or soaked to their bones for worldly things and ways than the children of light are immersed or soaked into spiritual matters or with God and God's ways. The shrewd manager, in the parable referenced above, knew how to use the way of the world to his advantage. He used his prudence to secure his future.

We are being challenged to immerse ourselves into the wisdom of God, the wisdom of Jesus, the wisdom of our ancient spiritual tradition – the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and guide our day to day activities, behavior patterns, relationships, and the choices that we make and set our life's direction in the kingdom of God. Our choices and actions reflect who we are and where we are grounded and whose wisdom we are using to guide our lives. If we are immersed in the wisdom of the world, we follow the direction of the world. If we are immersed in the wisdom of God, we follow the direction that the Lord sets for us and the Lord says, "I am the way, the truth and the life."

I want to encourage you to be still for a few moments each day of this week, reflect on how your day has been, how grateful you have been for your possessions and how you have used them for your own good and the good of others.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

## **Twenty fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### **September 18, 2022**

**I encourage all of you to discover ever more fully in the Eucharist,  
the sacrament of Christ's sacrificial love, the inspiration and strength needed  
to work ever more generously for the spread of God's Kingdom  
and the growth of the civilization of love.**

**(Pope Benedict XVI)**

### **Collect**

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law  
upon love of you and of our neighbor,  
grant that, by keeping your precepts,  
we may merit to attain eternal life.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments  
of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

### **Amos 8:4-7**

In this excerpt, Amos gives us a description of the way the rich in his time treated the poor. They  
looked for ways to oppress the poor and take advantage of them. The businessmen went so low  
as to sell even “the refuse of the wheat”. Amos warned them of the day famine will break upon  
the land if they did not repent and change their ways and become just in their dealings with all  
people. He said to them that they may not even hear God’s word even if they listened because  
they were unjust to their neighbors.

### **Psalm 113**

This is a beautiful Palm of praise. The Psalmist affirms the duty of the servant to praise the name  
of his master. Just the same way, it is the duty of man to praise the name his God. To praise the  
“name” of the Lord is to praise the very nature of God. God looks down into the depths. The  
transcendent God becomes immanent. The “exulted” God “looks far” and raises (exalts) the  
needy...the childless wife... God is here with us in time and in space. God does not stay home.  
God comes down to us and makes a home in us. We are His dwelling place.

**Praise you servants of the Lord,  
Praise the name of the Lord.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
both now and forever.**

### **I Tim. 2:1-8**

Paul urged Timothy to offer prayers for all, especially for those in authority. He encouraged prayer for “leading undisturbed and tranquil lives”.

He expressed his prayer wish that in every place man offer prayer with blameless hands and that they be free from anger and dissension.

**Let us pray today for all that God will bless all of us with the grace to lead “undisturbed and tranquil lives”.**

### **Luke 16:1-13**

Jesus told them the parable of an enterprising manager who was about to be dismissed. The manager used his “practical (economic) wisdom” to deal with the crisis of being fired from his job. His employer praised him for being enterprising and Jesus held him out as an example to his disciples - not because he abused his employer’s wealth, but because he used his wisdom to gain friends for himself for a future time of need.

Then Jesus called his disciples to higher values. He called them to use material possessions to build relationships, friendships, fellowship and communion with others.

He called them to be honest and trustworthy in all relationships, even in dealing with material things. He called them to be honest in using material things, which are God’s gifts. All possessions are God’s gifts for the good of the community.

**You cannot serve both God and possessions. We are at the service of God and possessions are at our service.**

Jesus taught his disciples to use material possessions to build relationships, to seal and cement friendships. He taught them to be honest and trustworthy in all relationships, even in dealing with material things. A man’s true wealth consists not in what he kept, but in what he gave away.

**Jesus taught them to be faithful, even to the smallest details of commitments. A man’s way of fulfilling small tasks is a sure sign of his being trustworthy. God has trusted you with many gifts. Be worthy of his trust.**

**Jesus taught them that serving God cannot be a part time job. All our energies are to be directed to the service of God.**

## **Saint of the day, September 18 - St. Joseph of Cupertino and 11 other saints are remembered this day**

Joseph Cupertino was born in the village of Cupertino, in the Kingdom of Naples on June 17, 1603. His father died before his birth. The family home was seized to settle the large debts that his father had left, and his mother was forced to give birth to him in a stable.

Joseph began to experience ecstatic visions as a child, which were to continue throughout his life, and made him the object of scorn. His life was not helped by his frequent outbursts of anger. He was soon apprenticed by his uncle to a shoemaker. Feeling drawn to religious life, in 1620 he applied to the Conventual Franciscan friars, but was rejected due to his lack of education. He then applied to the Capuchin friars in Martino, near Taranto and got accepted in 1620 as a lay brother. He was dismissed as his continued ecstasies made him unfit for the duties required of him.

After Joseph returned to the scorn of his family, he pleaded with the Conventual friars near Cupertino to be allowed to serve in their stables. After several years of working there, he had so impressed the friars with the devotion and simplicity of his life that he was admitted to their Order and was ordained a priest on March 28, 1628.

After this point, the occasions of ecstasy in Joseph's life began to multiply. It was claimed that he began to levitate while participating at the Mass or joining the community for the Divine Office, thereby gaining a widespread reputation of holiness among the people of the region and beyond. He was deemed disruptive by his religious superiors and Church authorities, however, and eventually was confined to a small cell, forbidden from joining in any public gathering of the community.

As the phenomenon of flying or levitation was widely believed to be connected with witchcraft, Joseph was denounced to the Inquisition. At their command, he was transferred from one Franciscan friary in the region to another for observation, where he lived under the supervision of the Capuchin friars. He practiced a severe asceticism throughout his life, usually eating solid food only twice a week, and adding bitter powders to his meals. He passed 35 years of his life following this regimen.

Finally, on July 9, 1657, Joseph was allowed to return to a Conventual community in Osimo, where he died on September 18, 1663. He was canonized in 1767.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**What we need is a cup of understanding, a barrel of love, and an ocean of patience.**  
(St. Francis de Sales)