

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the third Sunday of Easter. Our Scripture readings of today's mass speak of the disciples giving witness to the risen Christ. The first reading speaks of Peter proclaiming, "This is the Jesus God has raised up and we are his witnesses." The Psalmist proclaims, "Yahweh is all I have" and "Yahweh will lead me to life" (Responsorial Psalm). The second reading speaks of Peter proclaiming, "our life has been redeemed by the life and death of Christ." And the Gospel speaks of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus meeting the risen Lord and returning to Jerusalem and giving witness to the resurrection.

Witnessing was a command, not a choice... "You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The disciples boldly testified, "we were eyewitnesses from the beginning" (Luke 1:2). Pope Francis said, "Christianity is not a school of ideas or a collection of beautiful temples and lovely art; it is a living people who follow Jesus and gives witness to him every day. We are not a religion of ideas, of pure theology, of beautiful things and commandments. No, we are a people who follow Jesus Christ and gives witness to Jesus Christ - and this witness sometimes ends up being giving one's life."

A witness testifies to what is seen or heard and verifies what is true. In court, a witness must swear to "tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God." Isaiah says, "the Lord says, I will make you a light to the nations." He witnesses to what he heard. John the Baptist says, "I saw the spirit come down like a dove from heaven and rest upon him." He witnesses to what he saw. It takes humility and courage to step aside and give witness to someone else and to let another have the first place.

Several factors may prevent us from witnessing. Cultural pressure makes people hesitant. Many assume that witnessing creates intolerance. Witnessing about the cross of Christ is foolishness to those who don't believe. The fear of losing friends silences a witness. The insecurity of not having the right answers for other religions prevents some from sharing their faith. In many parts of the world, persecution is a threat. Other times a lack of conviction prevents us from witnessing. The failure to live a consistent Christian life negates a convincing witness. We must pray that God make us all faithful witnesses and have the courage to give witness.

If you were on trial and needed character witnesses, you would want people who would speak favorably of you and who were capable of describing experiences in which they saw your traits,

virtues, and character in action. You would want them to speak from the heart. You would want them to share stories in which they were personally impacted by you. You would want people who could convince a jury that you were someone who could be trusted and whose witness could be trusted. We need conviction, courage and humility to be effective witnesses.

We have the witness of Jesus to inspire us. Jesus stepped aside and gave honor and praise to the Father. He said that his will was the Will of the Father. After the miracle of the loaves, feeding the five thousand, he withdrew from the situation where people were going to force him to be their king (John 6: 15). He did not wait around to be honored, praised or thanked. He kept moving from place to place proclaiming good news, forgiving sinners, healing the sick, casting our demons, etc. Even in the midst of proclaiming the kingdom, he became aware of the hunger of people and asked the disciples to feed them (John 6:5ff).

Jesus prayed to the Father, “forgive them, they know not what they do” - making excuses for his persecutors. All his visits after the resurrection are examples of being other-centered. He wanted to strengthen the faith of his men and get them out of their fears. There is much more we can reflect on the kindness, generosity and “other-centeredness” of Jesus that gave witness to the Father’s love for us.

We have the witness of Mary to inspire us. Mary had just received the amazing news, from the angel, that she was going to have a baby through the power of the Holy Spirit and that she was to name him Jesus (Luke 1:26ff). The angel also told her about her cousin Elizabeth having a baby in her old age. Mary did not blow the trumpet to get attention for this unbelievable gift. Instead, she left her house, went to her cousin and cared for her. At the marriage feast in Cana, Mary stepped into the disappointment of the family as they ran out of wine and invited them to listen to her son. Throughout her life, Mary stepped aside for her son and for her people.

We also have the witness of Joseph, John the Baptist, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Lawrence, St. Josaphat and many others who gave amazing witness to Jesus Christ. St. Josephat, for example, was the first Byzantine-rite saint to be formally canonized. As Bishop, he worked for better understanding, acceptance and fair treatment of Byzantine Catholics in Poland. One day, he offered himself in the place of the servants being beaten by an angry crowd and the crowd hit him with an ax, shot him and threw him in the river. He gave witness to his faith and stirred into flame the faith of many others. His witness was costly!

I want to encourage you to take a few moments each day of this week to be still and to reflect on how your day has been. Reflect on how you have been giving witness to your faith as you went about doing your daily chores and fulfilling your responsibilities.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Scroll down to read the reflections on the Scripture readings of today’s mass....

Third Sunday of Easter

April 19, 2026

“You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

(Acts 1:8)

Collect

**May your people exult forever, O God,
in renewed youthfulness of spirit,
so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption,
we may look forward in confident hope
to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection.
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.

Third Sunday of Easter

April 20 - 25, 2026

Serenity is not freedom from the storm, but peace amid the storm.

Acts 2:14, 22-33

Peter makes very bold proclamations about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The man who denied knowing Jesus has now risen to great courage and freedom that he can now affirm who Jesus is for him and for the world. The man who was afraid to give witness to Jesus now says: “This is the Jesus God has raised up and we are his witnesses”.

The risen Jesus gives us a new power and freedom to be his witnesses in the world.

Psalm 16

This Psalm is probably composed by a convert confessing that he has found the God of Israel his “rock” and he is taking refuge in this God. He has also found the people of God, the faithful

ones, to be a delight. He muses, “how wonderful...what pleasure” to know faithful people! And he promises not to associate with the ungodly. He affirms his faith in the God of Israel as everything for him. He says, “Yahweh is all I have” and “Yahweh will lead me to life”.

**Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge,
I say to the Lord, “My Lord are you.”
O Lord, my allotted portion and my cup,
you it is who hold fast my lot.**

1 Peter 1:17-21

This excerpt should be read from verse 14 to 25 to gain good insight into the thoughts of Peter. He speaks of a life without Christ, characterized by ignorance and futility and dominated by desire. Then he goes on to describe a Christ-centered or Christ-filled life as a life of holiness, obedience, reverence and brotherly love.

This excerpt focuses on the life of “reverence” as an attitude of mind, a quality of presence, a quality of awareness of being in the presence of God. The reason for this reverence is that we are pilgrims living in the shadow of eternity, life in this world is leading to the life beyond and our life has been redeemed by the life and death of Christ. Life is precious, of infinite value and it cannot be wasted away, but must be revered.

Learn to live a Christ-centered, Christ-filled life, a life of holiness, obedience, reverence and love.

Luke 24:13-35

We read about two disciples on the road to Emmaus, discussing all the events surrounding the death of Jesus. Jesus came along and began to walk with them. The disciples did not recognize him. They were preoccupied with the events and failed to see anything beyond.

Look beyond what you see and what you hear...the disciples had to learn to look beyond to see their Savior and Lord.

Jesus and the disciples entered into a deep conversation about the events surrounding the death of Jesus. Jesus explained to them about how the Scriptures were fulfilled in his death, stayed with them and shared their bread. He opened their eyes and they saw and they believed. And they said, “Were not our hearts burning inside us as he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures?” There was a longing, an urgent longing in their hearts...there was a passion, and they became aware of it and their hearts were set on fire and they returned to tell the others their experience...

Learn to listen to your heart...listen to the gentle whispers of the Spirit...get in touch with the longing in your heart!

Saint of the Day, April 19 - St. Gianna Beretta Molla and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

Gianna Beretta was born in Magenta near Milano on October 4, 1922, the 10th of Alberto and Maria Beretta's 13 children. When she was three the Berettas relocated to Bergamo where she grew up. Beretta made her First Communion on April 4, 1928 and received her Confirmation in the Bergamo Cathedral on June 9, 1930. The Berettas moved to Genoa where she attended school and became an active participant in parish life in the parish of Saint Peter. In 1938, she made the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius.

In 1942 she began her studies in medicine in Milan. Outside of her schooling she was an active member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and a leader in the Catholic Action movement. She earned degrees in medicine and surgery from the University of Pavia, eventually specializing in pediatrics. In 1952, Gianna opened a clinic in the small town of Mesero, where she met engineer Pietro Molla and got married. In the next four years they had three children, two pregnancies following ended in miscarriage.

Early in her sixth pregnancy, doctors discovered that Gianna had both a child and a tumor in her uterus. She allowed the surgeons to remove the tumor but not to perform the complete hysterectomy that they recommended, which would have killed the child. Seven months later in April 1962, Gianna Emanuela Molla was born at the hospital in Monza, but post-operative complications resulted in an infection for her mother. The following week, Gianna Molla died at home in Mesero, where she was buried. Gianna Emanuela went on to become a physician herself. Gianna Beretta Molla was beatified in 1994 and canonized 10 years later.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Failure is not the end. It is not the last word.
It means, take a break, be still and take a deep breath.
Renew and redirect your energy.
And try again.**



