

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last thirteen Sundays, our Scripture readings called us to walk in faith, be men and women of hope, nurture a confident and trusting relationship with the Lord, have courage to face the challenges of following Jesus as his disciples, to listen to the voice of God, to go to a quiet place with the Lord, to show compassion in generous and sacrificial giving, to be strengthened by the bread of Life, to take Jesus in as our bread of life, to be disciples who are in a continuous process of transformation in Christ, to make wise choices, to choose God and God's way in Jesus, to give witness to our commitment to Christ, to be confident and unafraid, to follow the Lord and not get in his way, to offer humble service as we go about doing our daily chores and fulfilling our responsibilities....

Today, we celebrate the Twenty-sixth Sunday in ordinary time of the year. Our Scripture readings of today offer us many challenging and inspiring thoughts for reflection, prayer, and response, such as the way God comes to us, appreciation of differences, tolerance of others and their ways, respect for other traditions, caution about jealousy, intolerance, scandals, etc. (review the reflections on the Scripture readings below). The one that I want to invite you to reflect on is tolerance of and respect for all people and appreciate the good they do even when they don't meet our standards. In the first reading, we hear Moses telling Joshua and his friends that he had no monopoly over the spirit of God. God reveals himself through many channels, even through the most unexpected and insignificant people, places, and situations.

The responsorial Psalm speaks of the heavens declaring, the skies proclaiming and earth singing the glory of God, even without word or speech. In the second reading, James advises us to be attentive and sensitive to the needs of all people and treat all people with respect. In the Gospel, we hear Jesus teaching his disciples not to interfere with those who are doing good and to respect those who are doing good even if they are not in our family or friendship or ethnic or social or religious circles. It is not enough to avoid the occasions of sin and follow the rules. We must recognize the goodness in the world and the good people who do good and be inspired and challenged by them.

Moses, the Psalmist, James, and Jesus challenged their followers, listeners and readers and they call us today to recognize and appreciate the spirit-filled and spirit-moved people and not be jealous of them and get in their way. They teach us to appreciate the good being done and respect those who do good. There may be differences in thinking, ideologies, beliefs and doctrines, but we must be tolerant and appreciative of the good being done. Doctrines and

beliefs and churches and religions are judged by the people they hold, nurture, and sustain. Our character, our lifestyle, our values, our relationship – who we are and how we live, how good and noble our lives are – these are the most important factors and not our affiliation to groups and organizations.

In the movie Gandhi, the great Indian leader, Gandhi, is walking one day with a Presbyterian missionary, Charlie Andrews. The two suddenly find their way blocked by young thugs. The Reverend Andrews takes one look at the menacing gangsters and decides to run. Gandhi stops him and asks, “Doesn’t the New Testament say if an enemy strikes you on the right cheek you should offer him the left?” Andrews mumbles something about Jesus speaking metaphorically. Gandhi replies, “I’m not so sure. I suspect he meant you must show courage—be willing to take a blow, several blows, to show you will not strike back nor will you be turned aside.” Tolerance and a blessing attitude is what Jesus calls forth and not retaliation or running away in fear.

Jesus called the disciples, and he calls us today to recognize and appreciate the spirit-filled and spirit-moved people and not be jealous of them and get in their way. John said to Jesus, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not belong to us”. Jesus said to John, “Do not prevent him...anyone who gives a cup of water to drink...will not lose his reward.”

A soldier who was a Christian made it his practice to conclude every day with Bible reading and prayer. As his fellow soldiers gathered in the barrack and retired for the night, he would kneel by his bunk and offer prayers to the Lord. The other soldiers saw this and began to mock and harass him. But one night the abuse went beyond verbal assault. As the soldier bowed in prayer, one antagonist threw his boot and hit him in the face. The other soldiers snickered and jeered, hoping for a fight. But there was no retaliation. The next morning when the taunting soldier awoke, he was startled to discover something at the foot of his bed. For all to see there were his boots, returned and polished...that is the Christian spirit taught by today’s Gospel.

The Gospel of John tells us: “the wind blows where it wills...” (John 3:8). It is not up to us to dictate how the spirit should work and on whom the spirit should rest. We are called and blessed to remain open and docile to the spirit of God. Alfred Lord Tennyson says, “God fulfills himself in many ways.” We need to learn to respect the ways others have found to fulfill themselves in God. We must let God reveal himself and do His work the way he chooses to, in us, through us and through his creation!

During the coming week, take a few minutes each day of this week to go to a quiet place, be still and reflect on how you have been listening to God and God’s ways. Pray that the Holy Spirit help you discern God’s will and purpose for you and for the grace to respond to God’s will. Pray also that you have deep respect for the way God acts in the lives of those around you!

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

# Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 29, 2024

**O Lord, do not let us turn into “broken cisterns” that can hold no water, do not let us be so blinded by the enjoyment of the good things of earth that our hearts become insensible to the cry of the poor, of the sick, of orphaned children and of those innumerable brothers and sisters of ours who lack the necessary minimum to eat, to clothe their nakedness, and to gather their family together in one roof.**  
(Pope John XXIII)

## Collect

O God, who manifest your almighty power above all by pardoning and showing mercy, bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us and make those hastening to attain your promises heirs to the treasures of heaven.  
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.

**Be steadfast. Patiently endure your shortfalls.  
Forbear your unique flaws and imperfections.**

## Numbers 11:25-29

Joshua and his friends wanted the spirit-filled Eldad and Medad stopped from prophesying because they were not with the seventy when the Spirit descended on them. Moses made it clear to them that he had no monopoly over the Spirit of God. Although they were still on the journey, they had begun to trust certain structures and rituals through which the Spirit of God came to them.

They began to become suspicious and even jealous of the manifestations and revelations of the spirit through other channels and other people. There was a time when Miriam questioned whether God spoke only through Moses and she suffered because of it. They had, as often we do today, come to decide on how, when, where, and on whom God should send his spirit. Moses made it clear to them that the “Lord might bestow his spirit on all” and no one needs to be suspicious or jealous of God’s favor.

## **Psalm 19**

The psalmist gazes at the heavens and contemplates the mystery of creation. He “hears” the voice of God...the heavens declare, and the skies proclaim and the earth sings! No speech or word, but the whole marvel of creation speaks, proclaims “glory” of God! Behind every created reality is God’s word...no word or speech, creation proclaims! The whole creation, even without a word, spells out the divine word!

God has revealed himself through the marvel of creation. Our poet joined creation in singing the glory of God. Now he moves on to meditating and singing the word that came from the mouth of God, from the very heart of God, the word of Torah, the law of the Lord that keeps all creation in good order. Because, Torah, the Law of God is perfect for man. It revives his soul, refreshes his being and redeems his world. Our poet concludes his poem with a profound prayer: “May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

**The law of the Lord is perfect,  
refreshing to the soul;  
The decree of the Lord is trustworthy;  
giving wisdom to the simple.**

## **James 5:1-6**

James and his community believed that the Parousia and the judgment that came with it were immanent. There was an urgency to set things right. So, James called the community to prepare them for the coming of God’s kingdom. In this excerpt, the wealthy are challenged and blamed for exploiting their employees as well as the less fortunate in the community. James challenged the wealthy to reexamine their values and realign their priorities. He called them to be attentive and sensitive to the needs of the poor and the suffering and be just in their treatment of their employees.

## **Mark 9:38-48**

This excerpt from Mark calls us to be alert, awake, attentive and sensitive to the dangers and scandals that surround us. Mark tells us that Jesus used some harsh words to give us this warning. This warning must be taken seriously, not literally. It emphasizes our responsibility to

avoid the occasions of sin. People of the kingdom must remain open to the goodness of God and His love and live the values of the kingdom and not be misled by the values of the world around them.

While avoiding the occasions of sin, it is important to recognize the goodness in the world and the good people who do good and be inspired and challenged by them. Jesus called the disciples, and he calls us today to recognize and appreciate the spirit-filled and spirit-moved people and not be jealous of them and get in their way. John said to Jesus, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not belong to us”. Jesus said to John, “Do not prevent him.....anyone who gives a cup of water to drink...will not lose his reward”.

Jesus teaches tolerance. This is of great significance to us at this time in our history. Let the one, who lives a good life, live the good life.....let the one, who does a good work, do the good work.....there may be differences in thinking, ideologies, beliefs and doctrines.....be tolerant and appreciate the good you see!

Mark offers us several sayings of Jesus for reflection. To help, even in small ways, is to gather wealth into the eternal. But to hurt or to cause a weaker person to stumble is to lose the wealth. Take care to remove the stumbling blocks.

**It will cost you much if you chose to enter the Kingdom of God.....You will have to sacrifice everything that get in the way.....Ultimate goal in life is worth the sacrifice.**

**Be Still for a few moments!**

**Pray for your needs and those of your family and community.**

### **Spiritual Communion**

Lord Jesus, I believe in your real presence in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Altar. I place myself in your presence and adore you, worship you and glorify you. I am unable to receive you in Holy Communion at Mass today. I hunger and thirst for your way, your truth and your life. Come into my heart Lord and satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst. Bless me that I may give witness to your presence in my life. Amen

**Be Still for a few moments!**

## **Saint of the Day, September 29 - Saints Michael, Gabriel, & Raphael and 14 other saints are remembered this day.**

The three great messengers of God are remembered together and celebrated as one joyful feast. Although angels are mentioned many times in the Bible, only these three are mentioned by name. Each one has a powerful presence in our history and in our heritage of faith. Each of them is God's messenger and in some way represents God's presence to the believer.

Michael is remembered as the great defender and protector of all God's people. The name "Michael" means, "Who is like God?" The Book of Revelation describes Michael casting out of heaven those angels who presumed they were like God. The Book of Daniel speaks of Michael as one who will lead the dead to God on the day of the resurrection. Michael is considered a special protector of Israel and the Church. Michael reminds us of God's unchanging, enduring, everlasting presence with us, guiding us, protecting us, defending us and keeping us safe. Pray with those whose lives are unsafe and pray for a growing confidence in his presence in your life.

The name Gabriel means "hero of God". Gabriel brought the good news of the birth of John the Baptist to Elizabeth and the birth of Jesus to Mary. The book of Daniel says that Gabriel announced the end of exile in Babylon. According to certain traditions, Gabriel will sound the trumpet to awaken the dead on the day of judgment. Gabriel reminds of God's Good News. He is the bearer of hope and the realization of the Hope in the birth of Jesus. Remember and pray with those whose hopes are shattered and those who need to keep hope alive. Pray that we may be a people of Hope and be signs of hope for the world.

The name Raphael means "God has healed". In the book of Tobit, we read about Raphael guarding a young man on his journey and restoring sight to the man's elderly father. He described himself as one of the seven angels standing in the presence of God. Raphael is said to have stirred the waters of the pool of Siloam where people found healing. Raphael reminds us of the healing and reconciling presence of God in his "steadfast love". Remember and pray with those who need healing and reconciliation. Pray that we may grow in the "steadfast" love of God.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**We are all one family in the world. Building a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential through each of us respecting each other's dignity, rights and responsibilities makes the world a better place to live.**

(Pope John Paul II)

