

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Yesterday, we listened to Jesus advising his disciples to find joy in being accepted into the kingdom and being accepted as his disciples rather than in their accomplishments. We know that all we do may not be successful and all people may not appreciate us. We must find joy in being in Christ and fulfilling his mission with all our imperfections, failures, and shortfalls along with all our successful moments. We must strive to be what we are called to be and do what we are called to do and find joy in the striving.

Remember the parable of the Sower (Mark 4:3-20). A Sower went out to sow. Some seeds fell in places where they didn't have a chance to sprout, others in places where they had no chance to grow and still others fell in places where they came up, grew, and yielded a good harvest. All good farmers know that a good harvest depends on preparing the ground and sowing the seed, that they must be faithful in sowing and doing all the preparations that go with it. They must persevere in their efforts and be patient for the good harvest to happen!

The good farmer keeps sowing, knowing very well that some of the seeds will not sprout, others will sprout but will not yield, but some will sprout and yield a hundred-fold! The farmer must keep farming, the Sower must keep sowing, the teacher must keep teaching, the preacher must keep preaching, and the parent must keep caring, loving, and sacrificing. All the farming, sowing, teaching, preaching, caring, loving, and sacrificing may not meet our expectations...may not be successful according to our standard. Real success happens when we persevere without giving in to discouragement.

Jesus gave us another parable about a man scattering seed on the ground. "He goes to bed and gets up day after day. Through it all, the seed sprouts and grows without his knowing how it happens. The soil produces of itself first the blade, then the ear, finally the ripe wheat in the ear. When the crop is ready, he wields the sickle for the time is ripe for harvest." (Mark 4:26-29) The seed that is sowed in the field grows of itself without the Sower being aware of it. The farmer must wait patiently for a good harvest. He does all that needs to be done and waits patiently for harvest to happen!

Like the farmer, we must persevere, strive to be patient with ourselves and those around us and find joy in doing what we are called to do and wait patiently for results.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

## **Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**July 22-27, 2024**

**Peacefulness is not a garment to be put on and off at will.  
It is a quality of the heart and inseparable part of our being.  
Overcome prejudices, break down barriers, move beyond boundaries,  
treat all creation with respect...peacefulness will follow.**

**July 22 – Saint Mary Magdalene**

**We must be intentional about nurturing forbearance,  
it doesn't just happen.**

**2 Corinthians 5:14-21**

Paul says, “the love of Christ impels us” – the love of Christ became the moving force in the life of Paul. This love, he says, makes us a “new creation”, with a new life style. This is God’s gift of reconciliation and peace. In Jesus, God has reconciled us to himself so that we may become “the very holiness of God”. How awesome and how challenging!

**Be faithful to your calling! You have been reconciled and called to the “very holiness of God”!**

**Psalm 63**

**O God, you are my God whom I seek;  
For you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts,  
Like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.**

**John 20:1-2, 11-18**

Mary of Magdala wept, standing by the tomb of Jesus. She saw two angels through her tears.....behind her stood Jesus whom she did not recognize. She was afraid, she wept, she did not understand the scriptures.....But she recognized the voice of Jesus, the one she loved much.

**Our ability to recognize the voice of Jesus depends on how much we have listened to him, known him and loved him. We recognize the voice of the one we love!**

Jesus tells Mary not to hang on to him, but to go and announce the good news to the disciples. She went and she proclaimed: "I have seen the Lord".

**It is up to us, Easter people, people of the resurrection, people of hope to proclaim the good news today! We are called to deepen our experience of the risen Lord and are sent to share the good news with the world around us!**

**Saint of the day, July 22 - St. Mary Magdalene and 11 other saints are remembered this day.**

Mary was from Magdala, a fishing town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus healed her of physical and spiritual illness and that she was one of the women who traveled with Jesus and helped support his ministry "out of their resources" (Luke 8). According to the four canonical gospels, she traveled with Jesus as one of his followers and was a witness to his crucifixion and resurrection. She is mentioned by name twelve times in the canonical gospels, more than most of the apostles and more than any other non-family woman in the Gospels.

Many scenes from the Gospels tell us that Mary had an intense devotion to Jesus. The Gospel of John tells us that Mary was one those who stood by the cross as Jesus hung on the cross and that she went to the tomb of Jesus early in the morning on the first day of the week, found the tomb empty, ran to tell the disciples what she found, returned to the tomb and wept, met the risen Lord and became the messenger of the good news of the resurrection to the disciples of Jesus. All four gospels identify her as the first to witness the empty tomb and the first to witness Jesus's resurrection. For these reasons, Mary Magdalene is known in some Christian traditions as the apostle to the apostles.

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**July 23 - Tuesday, Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Strive to nurture forbearance as your virtue and let it form and shape and transform your character as a disciple of Jesus.**

## **Micah 7:14-15 & 18-20**

Micah asks God to “shepherd” his people just as he did when he brought them from the land of Egypt. He speaks of God as a God of kindness and compassion and expresses his confidence in God’s faithfulness to his people.

## **Psalm 85**

**You have favored, O Lord, your land;  
You have restored the well-being of Jacob,  
You have forgiven the guilt of your people;  
You have covered all their sins.**

## **Mathew 12:46-50**

Jesus was addressing the crowd when his mother and relatives came to speak with him. When someone told Jesus about it, he said, “who is my mother and who are my brothers.....whoever does the will of my Father is brother and sister and mother to me”.

Jesus spoke of a new kind of relationship...one that goes far beyond blood relationships. Nothing can break the “blood connection” and yet we know that “blood ties” don’t necessarily create a bond of love or dedication or affection. History has shown that often a man’s enemies were those with whom he had “blood ties.”

**Real relationships, true connections, bonds of love are established around shared goals, shared ideals, shared conflicts and pains, shared cause, shared obedience/fidelity.....“covenantal bond.”**

**Jesus calls us to enter into a relationship of love and obedience....an obedience that binds us together as brothers and sisters of Jesus, sons and daughters of the heavenly Father. Our common obedience makes us true brothers and sisters.**

## **Saint of the day, July 23 - St. Bridget of Sweden and 10 other saints are remembered this day.**

St. Bridget of Sweden was born as Birgitta Birgersdotter in 1303 in Uppland, Sweden. She was the daughter of the governor and provincial judge of Uppland, and of Ingeborg Bengtsdotter. From the time she was a child, she had a great devotion to the passion of Jesus. When she was 14, Bridget married an 18-year old man named Ulf. Like Bridget, Ulf had set his heart on serving

God. They had eight children, of whom one was St. Catherine of Sweden. Bridget and Ulf also served the Swedish court, Bridget as the queen's personal maid.

All her life, Bridget had marvelous visions and received special messages from God. In response to these messages, she visited many rulers and important people in the Church. She explained humbly what God expected of them. After her husband died, Bridget put away her rich clothes and lived as a poor nun. In 1346, she began the order of the Most Holy Savior, also known as Bridgettines.

In 1350, a year of jubilee, Bridget braved a plague-stricken Europe to make a pilgrimage to Rome. Although she never returned to Sweden, her years in Rome were far from happy, being hounded by debts and by opposition to her work against Church abuses. Shortly before her death, she went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. At the shrines there, she had visions of what Jesus had said and done in each place. All St. Bridget's revelations on the sufferings of Jesus were published after her death. St. Bridget died in Rome on July 23, 1373 and was canonized by Pope Boniface IX in 1391.

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## **July 24 – Wednesday, Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**God's forbearance is his kindness and mercy  
intended to call you to conversion, repentance and change of heart.  
(Romans 2:4)**

### **Jeremiah 1:1, 4-10**

Jeremiah protested that he was too young to be a prophet. But he heard the voice of God saying to him, "to whomever I send, you shall go and whatever I put in your mouth, you shall speak". So he responded to God's call which required of him to, "gird up your loins, stand up and tell them" what God had revealed. God promised to be with him and make him a "pillar of iron and a wall of brass" against whom none would prevail. Being empowered by God Jeremiah began his mission. He spoke and begged his people to change, reform and turn to God's ways....Jeremiah failed to reform his people. But he remained faithful to the mission God had given him.

**God calls and empowers us to respond and be faithful to his call through difficult times.**

## **Psalm 71**

**In you, O Lord, I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame.  
In your justice, rescue me and deliver me;  
Incline your ear to me and save me.**

## **Mathew 13:1-9**

Jesus began to teach them in parables. In this Gospel passage, we read about the parable of the farmer going out to sow seeds. The seeds, which fell on various kinds of unproductive soil, failed to yield and the seeds, which fell on good soil, yielded abundance. The farmer keeps sowing knowing well that some of the seeds may fall on the wayside or among thorns or on rocky ground and may become unproductive. But he knows that some will fall on good soil and will yield. He also knows that if he wants a good harvest, he has to prepare the soil, he has to choose good seeds, he has to sow and allow the seeds to sprout. He knows that if he wants a harvest, he has to sow even if some seeds may not meet his expectations.

**The preacher must keep preaching, the teacher must keep teaching, the parent must keep loving, caring, educating and forming the character of children...knowing well that all that is taught may not be learned, all the love may not be fruitful, all children may not learn, all efforts may not be successful.....**

**Be faithful to your calling! All you do may not be successful in your eyes. The real success lies in your fidelity to who you are and what you have come to know as your calling.**

## **Saint of the day, July 24 - St. Charbel Makhluf and 27 other saints are remembered this day**

Youssef Antoun Makhlouf was born on May 8, 1828. They lived in the village of Bekaa Kafra, possibly the highest in the Lebanese mountains. Youssef was raised by an uncle because his father, a mule driver, died when he was only three. His mother remarried a man who went on to seek Holy Orders and became the parish priest of the village.

Youssef was raised in a pious home and became drawn to the lives of the saints and to the hermit life, as was practiced by two of his uncles. As a young boy, he was responsible for caring for the family's small flock. He would take the flock to a grotto nearby, where he had installed an icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He would spend the day in prayer.

In 1851, Youssef left his family and entered the Lebanese Maronite Order at the Monastery of Our Lady in Mayfouq to begin his training as a monk, later transferring to the Monastery of St. Maron in Annaya, located in the Byblos District near Beirut. Here he received the religious habit

of a monk and took the name Charbel, after a Christian martyr in Antioch from the 2nd century. He made his final religious profession in the Order on November 1, 1853.

As a young monk Charbel began his study of philosophy and theology at the Monastery of Saints Cyprian & Justina in Kfifan, in the Batroun District of Lebanon, to prepare himself for receiving Holy Orders. He was ordained a priest six years later, on July 23, 1859. He was sent back to St. Maron Monastery, where he lived a life of severe asceticism in the monastery. In 1875, Charbel was granted by the abbot of the monastery the privilege of living as a hermit at the Hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul, a chapel under the care of the monastery. He spent the next 23 years living as a solitary hermit, until his death from a stroke on December 24, 1898.

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## **July 25 – Saint James, Apostle**

**Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.  
See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth,  
being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.**

(St. James 5:7)

## **2 Corinthians 4:7-15**

“We possess a treasure in earthen vessels to make it clear that it’s surpassing power comes from God and not from us”

## **Psalm 126**

**When the Lord brought back the captives of Zion,  
We were like men dreaming.  
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
And our tongues with rejoicing.**

## **Mathew 20:20-28**

The mother of James (and John) was curious about whether he would be able to sit beside Jesus in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus told her that “sitting beside” was a gift from the father. It is up to him now to surrender in service. First rank goes to those who surrender themselves in

service!!! “Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest and whoever wants to rank first must serve the needs of all”. Pray that you may have the courage and the wisdom to surrender in service.

## **Saint of the day, July 25 - St. James, Apostle and 12 other saints are remembered this day**

James and his brother John were sons of Zebedee, fishermen from Galilee. Before Jesus called them to discipleship, they were followers of St. John the Baptist. Jesus called the two of them to be fishers of men and they followed. James had become special in the company of the disciples.

James was present at many of the miracles of Jesus, at the transfiguration of Jesus and in the garden of Gethsemane on the night of the last supper. He was brought into the home of Jairus to witness Jesus restore life to a girl who had recently died, and on the night before Jesus was crucified, Jesus asked Peter, James, and John to keep watch while he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

James and John are shown to be bull-headed. When Jesus and his disciples were poorly treated in a Samaritan town, they suggested that they ask God to strike the town with fire from heaven. Jesus rebuked the two and called them to be tolerant. They were given the name “Sons of Thunder” by Jesus to acknowledge their impetuous personalities.

They didn’t understand the mission of Jesus and the nature of the Kingdom He proclaimed. According to the 12th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, James was the first of the twelve to be martyred. King Herod Agrippa had James captured and beheaded In Jerusalem, in the year 44 A.D.

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## **July 26 – Saints Ann and Joachim**

**You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm,  
because the coming of the Lord is at hand.**

(St. James 5:8)

## **Sirach 44:1, 10-15**

Sirach praises the virtues of Israel’s ancestors and remembers their wisdom.



**Remember with gratitude: how blessed you are to be part of such a great faith tradition and an ancient culture of spirituality.**

### **Psalm 103**

**The Lord secures justice ,  
and the rights of all the oppressed.  
He has made known his ways to Moses,  
and his deeds to the children of Israel.**

### **Mathew 13:16-17**

Jesus called the disciples to remember how blessed they were. They have seen what many in history, many prophets and saints, only dreamed of.

**Remember, with gratitude, how blessed you are: to see what you see; to know what you know; to touch what you touch; to feel what you feel.....**

### **Saint of the day, July 26 - Saints Joachim and Anne and 8 other saints are remembered this day.**

Saints Joachim and Anne are the parents of Mary and the grandparents of Jesus. Nothing is mentioned about them in the Gospels, not even their names. We also know nothing factual about them except that they existed. Even the names Joachim and Anne come from a legendary source written more than a century after Jesus died. All we know from tradition is that Anne and Joachim were devout, god-fearing people. The name Ann is the English form of the Biblical name Hannah, which means “grace”. St. Ann is the patroness of Christian mothers.

The heroism and holiness of these people, however, is inferred from the whole family atmosphere around Mary in the Scriptures. The strong character of Mary in making decisions, her continuous practice of prayer, her devotion to the laws of her faith, her steadiness at moments of crisis, and her devotion to her relatives—all indicate a close-knit, loving family that looked forward to the next generation even while retaining the best of the past.

Joachim and Anne, whether these are their real names or not, represent that entire quiet series of generations who faithfully perform their duties, practice their faith, and establish an atmosphere for the coming of the Messiah, but remain obscure.

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**July 27 – Saturday, Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Patience is one of the little virtues  
that nurtures the virtue of forbearance.**

### **Jeremiah 7:1-11**

Jeremiah had another experience of God where God directed him to call his people to reform their ways. This was the message Jeremiah was directed to deliver: “This is the temple of the Lord.....only if you would reform your ways and your deeds...deal justly with neighbor....no longer oppress resident alien, the orphan and the widow, no longer shed innocent blood of follow strange gods....then, I will remain in this place...”

### **Psalm 84**

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

### **Mathew 13:24-30**

Jesus told his listeners a parable about a man sowing good seed in his field. While he slept, an enemy sowed dandelion or tares in the middle of his field. Both the good and the bad seeds sprouted and the servants came forward to gather up the tares. But the man asked them to let them grow together to maturity for fear of destroying the good seed in the process of removing the bad. At harvest time, the good and the bad will be separated by those who know how to sort them out.

This parable teaches us many things: there are negative forces in the field and so be cautious; it is often difficult to distinguish between good and bad and so turn to those who have knowledge and wisdom for direction; don't be too quick to draw conclusions or make judgments; only God can and will make the final judgment...

**Pray for wisdom and prayerfully discern your choices. Trust in God and leave judgments in his hands.**

**Saint of the day, July 27 - Saint Pantaleon and 18 other saints are remembered this day.**

Pantaleon was born around the year 275. He was the son of a rich pagan, Eustorgius of Nicomedia, and had been instructed in Christianity by his Christian mother, Saint Eubula. After the death of his mother, Pantaleon left the church, studied medicine, and became physician to the emperor. Saint Hermolaus convinced him that Christ was the better physician, that faith was to be trusted over medical advice and Pantaleon returned to his faith in the Church.

By miraculously healing a blind man by invoking the name of Jesus over him, Pantaleon converted his father, upon whose death he came into possession of a large fortune. He freed his slaves and, distributing his wealth among the poor, developed a great reputation in Nicomedia. Envious colleagues denounced him to the emperor during the Diocletian persecution. The emperor wished to save him and sought to persuade him to apostasy. Pantaleon, however, openly confessed his faith, and as proof that Christ was the true God, he healed a paralytic. Notwithstanding this, he was condemned to death by the emperor, who regarded the miracle as an exhibition of magic. He was martyred in the year 305.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Only a life lived to the service of others is worth living.**  
(Albert Einstein)

