

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

P. O. Box 440, Whitehouse, Texas 75791

www.wellspringcommunity.net

frgusmsfs@gmail.com

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Brothers and Sisters,

During the past several weeks, our Sunday Scripture readings have been calling us to form and shape our character in the image of Jesus and live as he lived. It is not enough to know the doctrines and beliefs and be a member of a church. Our character, our lifestyle, our values, our relationships, the way we live and the way we treat others are the most important matters and not our affiliation to groups and organizations. The first readings of our mass for the rest of this month are excerpts from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians Chapters 2-6. These excerpts give us more insights into the nature of this formation and transformation in Christ. I encourage you to read these chapters, especially Chapter 5 of the letter to Ephesians.

Paul encouraged the Ephesians to “be imitators of God, as His beloved children. Follow the way of love, even as Christ loved you.” He further instructed them, “defer to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:1-2 & 21) To defer means to submit or yield. We are called, as the Ephesians were, to yield to one another in service out of reverence for Christ. We are the body of Christ and every member in the Body is special and important in the Body. One member is not more important or significant than the other. In a body each member yields to other members out of respect. Members are at the service of one another. Love must be expressed in generous service.

Paul teaches us as he taught the Ephesians that we belong in the household of God, that we are not aliens and that we are fellow citizens with the saints. We are fitted together with the apostles, prophets and all the saints to become a dwelling place for God in the spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22). That is why St. Paul teaches us to “defer to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Jesus gave us his own example of how this deference could be practiced. During his last supper with his disciples, he humbled himself and washed the feet of his disciples and called them to follow his example in gracious and self-sacrificing service. We must learn to live other-centered lives, look out for the needs of others, and go beyond the call of duty to help and serve others. It takes a lifetime to learn to live authentic lives...but it takes only a minute to offer your love, your kindness, your understanding - your gift of service to those around you.

God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

October 26 – October 31, 2026

**If the heart wanders or is distracted, bring it back quite gently
and place it tenderly in God's presence. And if you do nothing else while at prayer
but bring your heart back again and again and place it in God's presence,
though it went away every time you brought it back,
your time of prayer would be very well spent.
(St. Francis De Sales)**

October 26 – Monday, Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

**Trust that wherever you are is the best place to be and whatever you do is the
best that you can do, and you will find peace and serenity.**

Ephesians 4:32 - 5:8

Paul encouraged the Ephesians to be kind, compassionate and forgiving as God has forgiven in Christ. This excerpt reminds us that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. We are called to follow the way of love, imitating God as his beloved children. We are empowered to live a life of love, imitating God, by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 1

**Happy the man,
who follows not the counsel of the wicked,
Nor walks in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the company of the insolent
But delights in the law of the Lord
and meditates on his law day and night.**

Luke 13:10-17

Jesus healed a woman who, for eighteen years, could not straighten her body. This was done on a Sabbath. Jesus broke the law. The president of the Synagogue protested. There are six days to work and healing was work!!! Let Sabbath be kept holy without working.

Most of us don't consider our work a personal form of worship. But could there be a more beautiful way to honor our God than by contributing to the re-creation of the world through our gifts?

Jesus asked them: "Which of you does not let his ox or ass out of the stall on the Sabbath to water it....." What Jesus said was that if kindness may be shown to animals on Sabbath, much more should be shown to human beings.

Celebrate Sabbath and honor God! But let not the Sabbath prevent you from showing compassion and kindness to the needy and the suffering.

Often, we become preoccupied with our rules, customs and traditions and forget basic human needs. We love our system. Our system has a way of taking over us and controlling us and our system often gains priority over persons. Be watchful!

Saint of the Day, October 26 - Saint Peter of Alcantara and 16 other saints are remembered this day

Saint Peter of Alcantara was born in Alcantara, Spain in 1499. His father was the Governor of the province, and his mother came from a noble family. He was privately tutored and attended the University of Salamanca. After he returned home from the university, he joined the Franciscans. Peter was accepted as a Franciscan Friar of the Stricter Observance in 1515. At the young age of 22, he was sent to found a community of the Stricter Observance at Badajoz. He was ordained as a priest in 1524 and in 1525 he became Guardian of the friary of St. Mary of the Angels at Robredillo, Old Castile.

He later entered the Order of the reform of the Discalced Friars. By 1538, he was elected the Superior of St. Gabriel province. As the superior, he drew up new constitutions for the order of Stricter Observance, however these were met with resistance. Eventually he resigned from this post. Peter then began a new life, one of less formal responsibility but one of greater spiritual responsibility. He took up his spiritual cross and preached with great success to the poor. His sermons often concentrated on compassion.

When Peter was not preaching, he spent long periods of time in solitude. From 1553 to early 1555, he spent his time alone in meditation and prayer. Following these two years of solitude, Peter made a pilgrimage to Rome, barefoot the entire way. Peter was known for frequently experiencing ecstasy, a state where he was entirely consumed with the warmth and light of the Holy Spirit. These euphoric moments were common during his prayer and meditation. Some claim to have witnessed him levitate.

Peter was a contemporary of well-known 16th-century Spanish saints, including Ignatius of Loyola and John of the Cross. He served as confessor to Saint Teresa of Avila. Church reform

was a major issue in Peter's day, and he directed most of his energies toward that end. His death came one year before the Council of Trent ended. When he was close to death, Peter took to his knees and prayed. When he was offered water, he refused it saying, "Even my Lord Jesus Christ thirsted on the Cross." Peter died in prayer on October 18, 1562. Peter of Alcantara was canonized in 1669.

October 27 - Tuesday, Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

**Surrendering your personal need to control
and trusting divine providence brings you peace and serenity.**

Ephesians 5:21-32

This is one of the often misunderstood and misinterpreted excerpts from the letter to the Ephesians. The exhortation in this excerpt seems to contradict common understanding about women and their role in family and society. I know many who take offense at the ideas expressed in this excerpt. However, I believe we will have better insights into the meaning and value of the letter, if we see verse 21 as the basis of the whole chapter. Verse 21 says, "Defer to one another out of reverence for Christ."

To defer means to submit or yield out of respect/reverence. We are called to yield to one another in service out of reverence for Christ. We are the body of Christ and every member in the Body is special and important in the Body. One member is not more important or significant than the other. In a body each member submits to other members out of respect. Members are at the service of one another.

Psalm 128

**Blessed are you who fear the Lord,
Who walk in his ways!
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
Blessed shall you be and favored.**

Luke 13:18-21

Jesus speaks about a tiny mustard seed which when planted sprouts and grows into a shrub, yields more seeds and becomes a shelter for the birds of the air...He says, the Kingdom of God grows in similar ways...Great things happen from small beginnings.

Let your life grow and become fruitful...it has the power within it to become fruitful! Give your life a chance, tenderly care for it, nurture it...let the Lord make it fruitful in his time!

Let the birds of the air find shelter, a home...be approachable, be available, be hospitable, be welcoming and non-threatening...let people find you safe to be with...

Jesus also speaks about a little yeast in the flour which has the power to change, transform the whole dough and give it a chance to be bread for others...

Be open to change and be transformed by the Grace poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit.....Trust in the power of God's grace to transform you....

Saint of the Day, October 27 - St. Emiliana Boulancourt and 15 other saints are remembered this day

Emiliana was born around the year 1115. She lived as a solitary lay sister in the Cistercian Abbey of Boulancourt, located in the commune of Longeville, in Haute-Marne, Northeast France. She led a life of great penitence: fasting from food and liquids three days a week, wearing a hair shirt and a pointed iron chain, and going barefoot both in winter and in summer. she also led a wondrous life of prayer, constantly communing with God and frequently reciting the Psalms.

The fame of her sanctity spread quickly, and people came to consult her from all around, especially when they heard of her gift of prophecy. The saint received them with patience and humility, counseling them wisely and bringing about the conversion of many. Finally, worn out by her life-long labors and penances, the saintly woman died in 1178. Such was her renown that an eternal light was placed at her grave.

October 28 - Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles

**One of the keys to serenity is trusting that the universe is friendly
and befriending the universe.**

Ephesians 2:19-22

Paul tells the Ephesians that they belong in the household of God...they are not aliens, they are fellow citizens with the saints. We are fitted together with the apostles, prophets and all the saints to become a dwelling place for God in the spirit.

Reflect on the “dignity and honor” of being called to belong in the household of God with all the saints.

Psalm 19

**The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament proclaims his handiwork.....**

**May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart,
Find favor in your sight O, God.....**

Luke 6:12-16

Jesus, after a night in prayer, chose a group of twelve and trusted them with his mission. His Life and Message must be lived out in fellowship. The Pharisees always isolated themselves from the people –Pharisee meant “separated”. The message of Jesus is to be lived in fellowship, in Community.

Jesus chose a strange group of 12. A group of extremes met and shared their Master’s Vision and Mission. With Jesus they could transcend cultural, ethnic, ideological and other barriers and live in fellowship and communion.

The most diverse type of people must live together in fellowship and fulfill a mission, which is far greater than all of them put together.

He chose very ordinary people, men without any special qualification. Jesus called them to be with him and to be sent out on his mission. He gave them a message, a power, a lifestyle, a presence and community to live in and care for. He gave them his mission to complete and fulfill.

Today, we are called to complete his mission!

Saint of the Day, October 28 - Apostles Simon and Jude and 15 other saints are remembered this day

Scriptures tells us very little about these two apostles. Luke’s Gospel tells us that Simon was a zealot. Zealots were a group of radicals who hated the Romans and were fanatic nationalists. Jesus chose him to be an apostle, and legend tells us that he proclaimed the Gospel in Egypt. In the Gospel of Mathew and Mark, Jude is called Thaddeus. We call him Jude to distinguish him

from Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus. Legend has it that he went to Persia to proclaim the Gospel.

Thaddeus (from Greek Thaddaios and from Aramaic Taddai) means a heart or courageous heart. As of the 1990 Census, 'Thaddeus' was the 611th most popular male name in the United States, while 'Thad', its diminutive version, was the 846th most popular

Today's feast comes just before "All Saints Day". There used to be a custom today to go from door to door begging for the ingredients of "soul cakes" which were eaten in early November as a way of sharing a meal with the dead. People would sing, "For the love of Simon and Jude, give us fixings for our food".

It would be wonderful if we could listen to the same song today, "give us fixings for our food". Many of our brothers and sisters sing this song out of their desperate need. Let "All Saints Day" become a joyful day for us and let it bring us into communion with those whose lives are not as joyful as ours.

October 29 – Thursday, Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

**When you do the good, the right and wise thing, you find peace
and serenity and so do it again and again if you choose to be peaceful
and serene.**

Ephesians 6:10-20

Paul encouraged the Ephesians to draw strength from the Lord and stand firm against evil designs. The struggle is not with human forces, but with the powers of darkness. So, he says, "stand fast with truth as the belt around your waist and justice as the breastplate and zeal as your footgear". Let your faith be your shield in all circumstances. And pray at every opportunity.

Stand your ground and let your faith carry you through all testing and trying moments.

Psalm 144

**Blessed be the Lord, my rock,
Who trains my hands for battle, my fingers for war,
My refuge and my fortress, my stronghold, my deliverer,
My shield in whom I trust.**

Luke 13:31-35

The Pharisees were hostile to Jesus. But some of them came to warn him about how Herod was trying to kill him. This shows us that all Pharisees were not hostile and unsympathetic to Jesus. We tend to put all people together into one category and pass judgments about them.

Be open and non-judgmental. Look beyond what you see and hear! Each person is unique. Learn to know, appreciate and respect each person as he/she is!

This excerpt is one of the passages that show how little we know about Jesus and how little even the Gospels tell us about him. Here, we find him deeply disturbed, distressed, disappointed, sad, hurt, even angry.....and pouring out from what is deeply inside of him.....we find his courage, compassion and tenderness...all expressed in real lament for Jerusalem.

Be in touch with your passions! Listen to your heart! Discern your passions!

Saint of the Day, October 29 - St. Narcissus of Jerusalem and 180 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Narcissus was born towards the end of the first century around the year 99. He was almost 80-years-old when he was placed at the head of the church of Jerusalem, making him the 30th bishop of that see. In the year 195, he and Theophilus, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, presided together in a council of the bishops of Palestine held at Caesarea regarding the time Easter is celebrated. It was then decreed that the feast of Easter is to be kept always on a Sunday.

Three persistent sinners, fearing Narcissus' severity in the observance of religious discipline, accused him of an unimaginable crime. The sinners maintained they were telling the truth by adding additional security into their claims. If they were not speaking the truth, one wished he might perish by fire, another, that he might be struck with a leprosy, and the third, that he might lose his sight.

Nevertheless, their accusations were found to be false and Divine Retribution was called upon them. The first was burnt in his house, along with his whole family, by an accidental fire in the night. The second was struck with a universal leprosy; and the third, terrified by these examples, confessed the conspiracy and slander, and by the abundance of tears which he continually shed for his sins, lost his sight before his death.

Soon after, Narcissus decided to leave Jerusalem for a life of solitude. His reasons for doing so weren't clear. Some believed he left because he could not bear the shock of the bold slander, and others believed leaving had always been his wish. He spent several years undiscovered in his retreat, where he enjoyed all the happiness and advantage which a close conversation with

God can bestow. After he departed, the neighboring bishops chose a new pastor for Narcissus' church until he decided to return.

Once Narcissus returned, years later, the faithful rejoiced and convinced Narcissus to once again assume the administration of the diocese. He accepted. As Narcissus started to reach an extreme old age, he made St. Alexander his coadjutor. A coadjutor is a bishop appointed to assist a diocesan bishop, and often also designated as his successor.

St. Narcissus continued to serve his flock, and even other churches, by his diligent prayers and his earnest exhortations to unity and concord, as St. Alexander testifies in his letter to the Arsinoites in Egypt, where he says that Narcissus was at that time about 116 years old. St. Narcissus passed away soon after in AD 216, at the age of 117.

October 30 – Friday, Thirtieth week in Ordinary Time

Joyfulness nurtures serenity and serenity nurtures joyfulness.

Philippians 1:1-11

Paul was a good pastor. He recognized, acknowledged and thanked his converts for their growth in faith. In this excerpt, he praises them for their faith and affirms his confidence that God who began a good work in them would bring it to completion. He encouraged them to let their love mature, “ripen”. He prayed for them, “that your love may increase ever more..... that you may be pure and blameless.... filled with the fruits of righteousness.....”

Pray for each other: “may your love increase ever more.... may you live blameless lives and be filled with fruits of justice”.

Psalms 111

**I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart,
in the company and assembly of the just.
Great are the works of the Lord,
exquisite in all their delights.**

Luke 14:1-6

Jesus had differences with the Pharisees. This excerpt tells us about Jesus, despite his differences, accepting the hospitality of a leading Pharisee.

Learn to accept the differences, be tolerant and appreciate and respect diversity!

When Jesus came to this Pharisees house, there was a man who suffered from dropsy. Jesus asked them whether it was alright to cure on the Sabbath. Then he added, "If it is alright to help an animal on the Sabbath, why would it not be alright to help a person in need?" An animal that fell into an open well could be saved on a Sabbath. If an animal can be redeemed from a well, why would it not be alright to redeem a person who fell ill? Jesus healed the man, who suffered from dropsy, on the Sabbath.

Be good and do good. Any time is a good time to be and to do good.

Saint of the Day, October 30 - St. Alphonsus Rodriguez and 18 other saints are remembered this day.

Born in Spain in 1533, Alphonsus inherited the family textile business at 23. Within the space of three years, his wife, daughter, and mother died; meanwhile, business was poor. Alphonsus stepped back and reassessed his life. He sold the business, and with his young son, moved into his sister's home. There he learned the discipline of prayer and meditation.

At the death of his son years later, Alphonsus, almost 40 by then, sought to join the Jesuits. He was not helped by his poor education. He applied twice before being admitted. For 45 years he served as doorkeeper at the Jesuits' college in Majorca. When not at his post, he was almost always at prayer, though he often encountered difficulties and temptations.

His holiness and prayerfulness attracted many to him, including Saint Peter Claver, then a Jesuit seminarian. Alphonsus' life as doorkeeper may have been humdrum, but centuries later he caught the attention of poet and fellow-Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins, who made him the subject of one of his poems. Alphonsus died in 1617.

October 31 – Saturday, Thirtieth week in Ordinary Time

**Rule your mind with serenity rather than with force and manipulation.
(Lao Tzu)**

Philippians 1:18-26

Paul wrote to the Philippians that the most important thing in his life was to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus. It did not matter to him who got the credit, and he did not care what other

preachers said about him. All that mattered was that Christ was proclaimed because salvation would result from preaching Christ and his Gospel. Paul continued to say that it did not matter to him if he died. Death would mean glory in Christ. Paul expressed his deepest desire to live for Christ even if it meant death for him.

Psalm 42

**As the hind longs for running waters,
So my soul longs for you, O God.
Athirst is my soul for God, the living God
When shall I go and behold the face of God.**

Luke 14:1, 7-11

Jesus taught his listeners to be generous and gracious in giving and in showing hospitality. He challenged them to give generously to those who are unable to return the favor - the cripples, the lame, the beggars and the poor. You must give because it is your nature to give and not because there is a reward waiting for you. Giving is the quality of your person...you must learn to give because that is the kind of person you are...you must give even when there is no personal gain. Jesus called forth a new way of giving which made no claims, no conditions, and no expectation of return.

Jesus also set a new standard for hospitality - be hospitable to all, including the poor, the beggars, the cripples and all who cannot return the favor. Let your hospitality be inclusive, all-embracing and without reciprocity. The teaching of Jesus, in this context, was to "invite", to host the poor, the cripples, the lame, the blind and so on and not to just send them food baskets or a little cash to buy groceries. It is to reach out to all needy people as brothers and sisters who are worthy of respect and welcome in our homes.

Be gracious! Be generous! Give without counting the cost!

Saint of the Day, October 31 - St. Wolfgang of Regensburg and 8 Other saints are remembered this day.

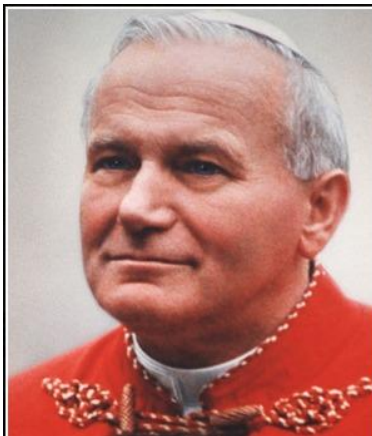
Wolfgang was born in Swabia, Germany, and was educated at a school located at the abbey of Reichenau. There he encountered Henry, a young noble who went on to become Archbishop of Trier. Meanwhile, Wolfgang remained in close contact with the archbishop, teaching in his cathedral school and supporting his efforts to reform the clergy.

At the death of the archbishop, Wolfgang chose to become a Benedictine monk and moved to an abbey in Einsiedeln, now part of Switzerland. Ordained a priest, he was appointed director of the monastery school there. Later he was sent to Hungary as a missionary, though his zeal and good will yielded limited results.

Emperor Otto II appointed him Bishop of Regensburg, near Munich. Wolfgang immediately initiated reform of the clergy and of religious life, preaching with vigor and effectiveness and always demonstrating special concern for the poor. He wore the habit of a monk and lived an austere life. The desire for a life of solitude and monastic life never left him. At one point he left his diocese so that he could devote himself to prayer, but his responsibilities as bishop called him back. In 994, Wolfgang became ill while on a journey; he died in Puppington near Linz, Austria. He was canonized in 1052. His feast day is celebrated widely in much of central Europe.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Sing and play music in your hearts to the Lord,
always giving thanks for everything
to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
(Ephesians 5:19-20)**



The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all.

— Pope John Paul II —