

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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February 16, 2026

Brothers and Sisters,

Yesterday, the sixth Sunday in Ordinary time, we heard Jesus challenging his disciples and us today, to let our holiness surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees! "I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Mathew 5:20) We are called to live a higher standard of life. We are called to live noble and virtuous lives. Jesus calls us today to let our faith and our hope and love become real, tangible and experiential. Our knowledge must be transformed into action, theory into practice, theology into life and our spirituality into everyday relationships.

A priest gave a wonderful sermon on love – all about love being generous, gracious, sacrificial, other-centered, unconditional, etc. The next day, he got someone to pour concrete around the steps in his backyard and a path through the middle of the backyard to the street. A little while later, he heard voices of children in the backyard and looked out to find the children drawing stuff on the concrete. The priest went out and screamed at the kids and asked them to leave without messing up the concrete. One of the boys said, 'Father you gave a wonderful sermon on love yesterday. What happened to it?' The priest replied, "Yes, I believe everything I said about love, and I love God and people as I said yesterday...but not in the concrete!" Ha! Ha!

Jesus challenges us to let our faith, our hope and our love become "concrete." We are living in challenging and troublesome times. Our faith is constantly being questioned, our hope being threatened, and our love being tested and tried. We have important challenges to face. We must live lives of faith, we must move in hope in the face of difficulties and tragedies, we must concern ourselves with loving and serving, we must work for justice and peace, we must be and become compassionate to all, we must seek God's plan and purpose for us, and we must live noble and virtuous lives.

Let us renew our commitment to live noble, virtuous and faithful lives. We may be tired and weary of our duties, responsibilities, daily chores and all the mundane things we are called to do. Full of life and energy or tired and weary, let us choose to live our faith in the "concrete." Let us strive to make our faith and our hope and our love more real for us and for the world around us. We have a life to live and a mission to fulfill. St. Francis de Sales advises us, "Go courageously and do what you are called to." Let us allow our faith to carry us through these troublesome and trying times.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Sixth Week In Ordinary Time

February 16 - 21, 2026

**Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy.
That is not our business and, in fact, it is nobody's business.
What we are asked to do is to love,
and this love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbors worthy.”
(Thomas Merton)**

February 16 – Monday, Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

**The most wonderful taste of serenity is found
by the love you create for yourself, and those around you.**

James 1:1-11

James encouraged his community to rejoice at the opportunity to endure trials. He says that enduring trials makes a person grow to spiritual maturity. He encouraged them to pray, with faith, for God’s wisdom. He invited his readers to accept the opportunity for being humble and joyful in poverty as well as in wealth.

Pray for God’s wisdom to be humble, grateful and joyful in poverty as well as in wealth.

Psalm 119

**The law of your mouth to me is more precious
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.
I know, O Lord, that your ordinances are just,
And in your faithfulness, you have afflicted me....**

Mark 8:11-13

The Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign that will substantiate his claim. Jesus refused to give a sign. The tendency of the age in which Jesus lived was to look for God in the abnormal, in extraordinary events. They believed that when the messiah came the most startling things would happen. This is the kind of sign the Pharisees were looking for. They looked for events that would defy the laws of nature.

To Jesus the whole world was full of signs – the corn in the corn field, the leaven in the loaf, the lilies of the field, the sparrows in the air, the fishes in the sea – God did not have to break in from outside the world. He was in the world for anyone who had eyes to see.

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he, who sees, takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries." (Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

Look beyond what you see! The daily miracles of night and day and the beauty of all common things proclaim simply and purely the presence of God.....

Saint of the Day, February 16 – St. Daniel and 17 other saints are remembered this day.

Daniel and four companions, Elias, Isaias, Jeremy and Samuel were Egyptians who visited Christians condemned to work in the mines of Cilicia during Maximus persecution, to comfort them. Apprehended at the gates of Caesarea, Palestine, they were brought before the governor, Firmilian and accused of being Christians. They were all tortured and then beheaded. When Porphyry, a servant of St. Pamphilus demanded that the bodies be buried, he was tortured and then burned to death when it was found he was a Christian. Seleucus witnessed his death and applauded his constancy in the face of his terrible death; whereupon he was arrested by the soldiers involved in the execution, brought before the governor and was beheaded at Firmilian's order. They all died in 309 C.E.

February 17 – Tuesday, Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

**Serenity comes from the ability to say "Yes" to all that has been,
all that is and all that will be in Gd's plan.**

James 1:12-18

James encouraged his readers to stand strong and prove their worth by enduring trials and temptations. He says that we are not free to blame God for our temptations. We must be responsible. "God, who is untouched by evil, tempts no one." "It is the tug and lure of his own passion that tempts man." All things that come from God are good and only good comes from God.

Psalm 94

**Happy the man whom you instruct, O Lord,
whom by your law you teach,
giving him rest from evil days.
For the Lord will not cast off his people,
nor abandon his inheritance.....**

Mark 8:14-21

The disciples came to the end of their bread supply – just one loaf left and were anxious. Jesus asked them, “Have you forgotten your experience with me and the loaves.....?”

Remember and learn from experience! Remember how you have come through difficult situations in the past! God has been there.....You have come through.... Be amazed and confident that God, who has brought you thus far, will bring you through all that is happening and may happen!

Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod, said Jesus. The disciples felt that the master also must be worried about their bread supply. Jesus said to them: “Don’t you understand? Are your minds completely closed?” The Pharisees had just asked for a sign – some extraordinary event – as a proof of Jesus being the messiah. Herod had built up his happiness on power, influence, prestige, wealth, etc. For the Pharisees and Herod the Kingdom of God was an earthly reality based on earthly power, established by force of might and wealth. This is the “leaven” that the disciples were to be “beware of”.

Beware of the ways of the world – the ways of power, influence, prestige, might, wealth, etc. Welcome the ways of God’s kingdom – the ways of obedience, love, service, self-surrender, sacrifice, etc.

Saint of the Day, February 17 - Founders of the Servite Order and 62 other saints are remembered this day.

In the middle of the 13th century, the city of Florence, Italy, was prosperous and culturally advanced and at the same time torn with political strife as well as the heresy of the Cathari, who believed that physical reality was inherently evil. Morals were low and religion seemed meaningless. In 1240, Seven wealthy, well-known cloth merchants who lived in Florence at this time, Bonfilii, Monaldi, John Bonagiunta, Gerard Sostegni, Bartholomew Amidei, Benedict dell’Antella, Ricoverus Ugucione, and Alexis Falconier, decided to withdraw from the city to a solitary place for prayer and direct service of God. But they soon found themselves disturbed by constant visitors from Florence. They next withdrew to the deserted slopes of Monte Senario.

In 1244, under the direction of Saint Peter of Verona, O.P., this small group adopted a religious habit similar to the Dominican habit, choosing to live under the Rule of St. Augustine and adopting the name of the Servants of Mary. The new Order took a form more like that of the mendicant friars than that of the older monastic Orders.

Members of the community came to the United States from Austria in 1852 and settled in New York and later in Philadelphia. The two American provinces developed from the foundation made by Father Austin Morini in 1870 in Wisconsin.

Community members combined monastic life and active ministry. In the monastery, they led a life of prayer, work and silence while in the active apostolate they engaged in pastoral ministry, teaching, preaching, and other ministries.

February 18 – Ash Wednesday

**Want to find serenity?
Have no anxiety over imperfections and shortfalls.**

Today, we begin the season of Lent. It is time to check on our spiritual health. Lent is a call to walk with Jesus - even pick up the cross - and make it to Jerusalem! It is journey from ashes to fire – from death to resurrection and new life.

Traditionally, Christians all over the world have used the disciplines of **Prayer, Penance and Almsgiving** as pathways of Lenten Spirituality. They still are wonderful and life-giving disciplines. They bring us closer to God and to God's people.

Prayer strengthens our connection to God.

Penance builds our character and helps us get rid of unhealthy habits which weaken our ability to love God, others and ourselves.

Almsgiving helps to care for others - to reach out to the less fortunate, the unfortunate, the disadvantaged, the poor, the marginalized and suffering people in our community.

Joel 2:12-18:

Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting and mourning.

Psalm 51: Create in me a clean heart, Oh God

Have mercy on me, God, in your goodness;
In your abundant compassion, blot out my offense.
Wash away all my guilt;
From my sin, cleanse me.

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

We implore you, in Christ's name: Be reconciled to God

Mathew 6:1-6, 16-18

Keep your deeds of mercy secret and your father who sees in secret will repay you.

Prayerfully Reflect:

Now is the acceptable time, the season for conversion, change and transformation!

Joel proclaims an URGENCY: It is time to sanctify the community.

Paul urges (begs) on behalf of Christ; be reconciled to God.

Jesus urges: purify your motivations; your intentions. It's all about being called again to conversion, holiness, perfection, purification, sanctification, transformation.

**This is the fast that pleases me: releasing those bound unjustly,
setting the oppressed free
sharing your bread with the hungry
(Isaiah 58)**

Saint of the Day, February 18 - St. Simon or Symeon of Jerusalem and 16 other saints are remembered this day

According to tradition, the first bishop of Jerusalem was James, son of Zebedee, appointed bishop by the Apostles Peter. Simeon of Jerusalem was selected as James' successor after the conquest of Jerusalem. According to tradition, after the martyrdom of James and the conquest of Jerusalem which immediately followed, those apostles and disciples who were still living

came together from all directions to discern who was worthy to succeed James. They, unanimously proclaimed Symeon, the son of Clopas, as the worthy person to succeed James. He was a cousin of Jesus, Clopas being a brother of Joseph. He is also one of those mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as having received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

In the year 66, civil war broke out in Palestine, as a consequence of Jewish opposition to the Romans. The Christians in Jerusalem were warned of the impending destruction of the city and ordered to leave it. Accordingly, that same year, they retired with St. Simeon at their head to the other side of the Jordan, occupying a small city called Pella. After the capture and burning of Jerusalem, the Christians returned and settled among the ruins until the Emperor Hadrian afterwards entirely razed it.

However, the church here flourished greatly, and many Jews were converted by the miracles wrought by the saints. When Vespasian and Domitian had ordered the destruction of all who were of the race of David, St. Simeon had escaped their search; but when Trajan gave a similar injunction, he was denounced as being not only one of David's descendants, but also a Christian, and he was brought before Atticus, the Roman governor. He was condemned to death and, after being tortured, was crucified around the year 107 C.E. According to tradition, he was extremely old, around 120.

February 19 – Thursday after Ash Wednesday

**Serenity is not an escape. It is courage and wisdom
and the determination to change what can be and accept what cannot be.**

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Moses placed two choices before the people: Life and blessing OR death and disaster

Obedience to God's commands, loving him and walking in his ways will bring life and blessing.

Disobedience, turning away from God's ways and going after other gods will bring death and disaster.

Today the choice is ours. Choose Life!

Psalm 1

Psalm 1 reflects on two kinds of people and two ways of life: The just man and his way of justice, righteousness and godliness and the wicked man and his way of injustice, unrighteousness, and ungodliness.

Way of godliness brings blessings, and the way of ungodliness brings death and disaster.

Choose godliness.... let it reflect your character!

Luke 9:22-25

Jesus must endure rejection and be put to death but will rise on the third day.

The disciples of Jesus must be prepared to deny themselves, take up their cross each day and follow the master.

Jesus calls his disciples to invest their life into life in the kingdom rather than save it or hang on to it. The loss that comes through this investment of self is real gain in itself.

There is bliss, joy, blessing and grace in investing life in the kingdom, in the denial, in renunciation because it is investment and self-denial for greater wealth, lasting wealth, imperishable wealth.....it is wealth that befits God and God's children.

Saint of the Day, February 19 - St. Conrad of Piacenza and 10 other saints are remembered this day.

St, Conrad was born Corrado Confalonieri, a member of one of the noblest families of Piacenza in Northern Italy. The date of his birth is uncertain. He married an aristocratic young woman named Ephrosyne when he was quite young. One day while hunting he ordered attendants to set fire to some brush in order to flush out the game. The fire spread to nearby fields and to a large forest. Conrad fled.

An innocent peasant was imprisoned, tortured to confess, and condemned to death. As the man was being led to execution, a remorseful Conrad publicly admitted his guilt. As punishment and reparation for the damages he had caused, the city seized all his assets, only sparing his life due to his noble status.

Soon after this event, Conrad and his wife agreed to separate - she to a Poor Clare monastery and he to a group of hermits following the Third Order Rule. His reputation for holiness, however, spread quickly. Since his many visitors destroyed his solitude, Conrad went to a more

remote spot in Sicily where he lived 36 years as a hermit, praying for himself and for the rest of the world. Conrad died kneeling before a crucifix on February 19, 1351. He was canonized in 1625.

February 20 - Friday after Ash Wednesday

**When you lose touch with inner stillness,
you lose touch with yourself.**

(Eckhart Tolle)

Isaiah 58:1-9

The Prophet Isaiah invites us to change not only our behavior but also our heart. True worship includes caring for the needs of the poor, the oppressed and the homeless. Justice and the care of the orphans, the poor and the widows are integral part of covenant relationship.

Vatican II document says, “the poor cry for a change of heart and mind” (ES) and that is what Isaiah calls for. An attitudinal change, change of heart is what brings about genuine change in the person and the world around the person.

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, God, in your goodness;
In your abundant compassion, blot out my offense.
Wash away all my guilt;
From my sin, cleanse me.

Mathew 9:14-15

Jesus rejects the sad and gloomy approach to religion and religious practices. There is a place and time for fasting and penance. But there is also a time for feasting. Balance fasting and feasting!

The spirit of fasting and penance is a spirit of joy and not of gloom. The spirit of joy is the gift of Jesus to all disciples.

Let the fasting and feasting create joy and freedom of spirit.

Let the fasting and feasting create generosity of spirit and fellowship in community.

Let the fasting and feasting be inclusive. Let them include the less fortunate and the unfortunate!

Let your fasting and feasting help you to reach out to the less fortunate, the unfortunate, the disadvantaged, the poor, and the marginalized and suffering people in your community.

Saint of the Day, February 20 - St. Jacinta & Francisco Marto and 20 other saints are remembered this day.

Saint Francisco de Jesus Marto (June 11, 1908 – April 4, 1919), his sister Saint Jacinta de Jesus Marto (March 11, 1910 – February 20, 1920) and their cousin Lúcia dos Santos (1907–2005) were children from Aljustrel, a small hamlet near Fátima, Portugal, who witnessed three apparitions of the Angel of Peace in 1916 and several apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Cova da Iria in 1917. At that time, Europe was involved in an extremely bloody war. Portugal itself was in political turmoil, having overthrown its monarchy in 1910; the government disbanded religious organizations soon after.

At the first appearance, Mary asked the children to return to that spot on the thirteenth of each month for the next six months. She also asked them to learn to read and write and to pray the rosary “to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war.” They were to pray for sinners and for the conversion of Russia, which had recently overthrown Czar Nicholas II and was soon to fall under communism. Up to 90,000 people gathered for Mary’s final apparition on October 13, 1917. The title Our Lady of Fátima was given to the Virgin Mary as a result, and the Sanctuary of Fátima became a major center of world Christian pilgrimage.

Less than two years later, Francisco died of influenza in his family home. He was buried in the parish cemetery and then re-buried in the Fátima basilica in 1952. Jacinta died of influenza in Lisbon in 1920, offering her suffering for the conversion of sinners, peace in the world, and the Holy Father. She was re-buried in the Fátima basilica in 1951. Their cousin Lúcia dos Santos, became a Carmelite nun and was still living when Jacinta and Francisco were beatified in 2000; she died five years later. Pope Francis canonized the younger children on his visit to Fátima to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first apparition, May 13, 2017.

February 21 – Saturday after Ash Wednesday

**We can be serene even in the midst of calamities
and by our serenity, make others more comfortable and unafraid.**

Isaiah 58:9-14

Isaiah proclaims care for the oppressed, the disadvantaged, the poor and all suffering people as channels of God's blessings and Grace....

Then (when you care for the oppressed, feed the hungry, etc.) God will renew your strength and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails.....God will guide you always and give you plenty even in parched land.....

Psalms 86

**You, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.
Hearken, O Lord, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my pleading.**

Luke 5:27-32

Jesus invited Levi (Matthew) to leave his tax collectors post and follow him. Levi responded and gave Jesus a great reception which included the company that Levi kept and the scribes and Pharisees could neither understand nor appreciate it.

Jesus made a bold statement: I have come to call sinners to a change of heart. Jesus saw Matthew the tax collector and all others like him as people who needed forgiveness and healing and Grace and new beginnings.

This is at the heart of the call of Lent – a call to conversion, forgiveness, healing, new life, new beginnings. Lent is the spring time of the Church. It's time to spring to new life and new power and new strength and new hope.....

Matthew celebrated his newfound freedom and joy in Jesus. He shared the truth and the goodness and the love he found with people like himself.

This is also an integral part of the call of Lent. Share the joy you find in Jesus and his forgiving and healing love. Share it with others like yourself.

Saint of the Day, February 21 - Founders of the Servite Order and 62 other saints are remembered this day.

In the middle of the 13th century, the city of Florence, Italy, was prosperous and culturally advanced and at the same time torn with political strife as well as the heresy of the Cathari,

who believed that physical reality was inherently evil. Morals were low and religion seemed meaningless. In 1240, Seven wealthy, well-known cloth merchants who lived in Florence at this time, Bonfilii, Monaldi, John Bonagiunta, Gerard Sostegni, Bartholomew Amidei, Benedict dell'Antella, Ricoverus Ugucione, and Alexis Falconier, decided to withdraw from the city to a solitary place for prayer and direct service of God. But they soon found themselves disturbed by constant visitors from Florence. They next withdrew to the deserted slopes of Monte Senario.

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**The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves,
the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image.
(Thomas Merton)**

