

Wellspring

Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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October 4, 2026

Brothers and Sisters,

We made an amazing journey with Jesus and his disciples to Jerusalem and learned much about what it means to follow Jesus and His way. Last Sunday, we met Jesus in Jerusalem where we heard him challenging us, just as he challenged his disciples, to transform our negative responses to God into positive ones – to change our “no” to God into a decided “yes” and remain faithful. Today, we celebrate the Twenty-seventh Sunday in ordinary time. Our Scripture readings of today remind us of the generosity of our God who has provided us with all that we need and trusted us with His creation. The readings also remind us of how irresponsible, unfaithful, and ungrateful we have been and call us to be more faithful, grateful and generous.

In his “Song of the Vineyard”, Isaiah describes the failure of Israel to bear fruit, despite the blessings lavished upon them by a loving, forgiving and generous God (first reading). The Psalmist pleads with God to look down from Heaven and to take care of Israel (Responsorial Psalm). Paul tells Philippians about the high expectations he has for them, reminding them that they need to become fruit-bearing Christians by praying and giving thanks to God and by practicing justice and living virtuous lives (Second Reading). The Parable of the tenant farmers, in the Gospel of today, remind us of the generosity of our God providing us with all our needs and the patience with which God responds to us who have become irresponsible and abusive of His trust. The parable also reminds us that abuse of God’s trust can be disastrous.

From the beginning of our sacred Scriptures, we read many stories of God’s generosity and patience and man’s ongoing irresponsibility and abuse of God’s trust. In the beginning of the Bible, we meet man and woman living in a land of abundance in total communion with God, with themselves and nature (Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7). In the midst of such abundance of blessing and grace, they failed to be true to what God made them to be and lost their sense of God and of themselves as God’s special creatures made in His image. They were to open their hearts and embrace the abundance that came from a generous heart, a heart of abundance, a heart love. But they looked for more and lost what they already had!!!

The author of the book of Proverbs (Proverbs 9:1-6) personifies wisdom as a lady and speaks of wisdom, after having built her house, inviting everyone to share the abundance...rich food, choice wines, etc. and (9:13-18) “folly” as a harlot who also invites everyone to feed on stolen food and drink. What Wisdom offers brings life and what Folly offers brings death. Generosity generates generosity and the lack of it generates emptiness!!!

Paul encouraged the Corinthian community to be generous with all of God's gifts as a sign of gratitude and confidence in God's watchful care (2 Corinthians 9:6-10). Generosity will become fruitful in abundance. God will provide in abundance...generosity will be enriched in every way...be joyful in giving!

Abraham, Lot and their families, with all their belongings reached the land of Canaan. Tension began to build between the two households. Abraham, in an effort to bring peace between them, let Lot choose the land that he wished to occupy. As the elder, Abraham could have made the choice, but he let Lot make the choice. His generosity eased the tension, resolved the conflict and brought peace (Genesis 13:2, 5-18). Generosity is other-centeredness, having a big heart, a heart of abundance. Abraham had a big heart, a heart of abundance!

It was an unseasonably hot day. Everybody, it seemed, was looking for some kind of relief, so an ice cream store was a natural place to stop. A little girl, clutching her money tightly, entered the store. Before she could say a word, the store clerk sharply told her to get outside and read the sign on the door and stay out until she put on some shoes. She left slowly, and a big man followed her out of the store.

The big man watched as the little girl stood in front of the store and read the sign: "No Bare Feet." Tears started rolling down her cheeks as she turned and walked away because she had no shoes. Just then the big man called out to her. Sitting down on the curb, he took off his size-12 shoes, and set them in front of the girl saying, "Here, you won't be able to walk in these, but if you sort of slide along, you can get your ice cream cone."

Then he lifted up the little girl and set her feet into the shoes. "Take your time," he said, "I get tired of moving them around, and it will feel good to just sit here and eat my ice cream." The shining eyes of the little girl could not be missed as she shuffled up to the counter and ordered her ice cream cone. He was a big man, all right. Big belly, big shoes, but most of all, he had a big heart.....a heart of abundance and that is what generosity is!

Be grateful! Grace in abundance has been poured into your heart! Give from the heart of abundance! Have a big heart!

I 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 also on the abundance of blessings that our God showers on us and be grateful for His generosity. Be cautious of the temptations in our land of God's abundance and pray for God's grace to make good and wise choices.

God bless you and your family

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Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

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

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 4, 2026

**If we want it to have real meaning and fulfilment, as you want and as you deserve,
I say to each one of you, “Put on faith”, and your life will take on a new flavor,
it will have a compass to show you the way;
“put on hope” and every one of your days will be enlightened
and your horizon will no longer be dark, but luminous;
“put on love”, and your life will be like a house built on rock,
your journey will be joyful, because you will find many friends to journey with you.
(Pope Francis)**

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
who in the abundance of your kindness
surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you,
pour out your mercy upon us
to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.
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.

**Silence, stillness and Serenity help us reach
the depths of truth, goodness and love.**

Isaiah 5:1-7

In this excerpt, we have Isaiah’s “song of the vineyard” written in the form of a ballad. Isaiah, calling God his friend, portrays God in a loving and intimate relationship with his vineyard, the house of Israel. God is a gracious friend. His generosity is beyond comprehension. He has provided everything for his vineyard – cleared the ground, made a wall, built a watch tower,

hewed out a winepress – all that is needed. But the vineyard, God's people, did not become fruitful. The song sings of the disappointment of the friend of the vineyard.

Psalms 80

This Psalm begins with "Joseph" praying to the shepherd of Israel. "Joseph" here refers to the northern tribes, taken into exile by the Assyrians, of which Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh are mentioned in the second verse of the Psalm. So it is a group of poor exiles from the north who are represented in prayer in this Psalm. Remember, exile began about 721 years before Christ. Psalm 80:1-3 is their prayer to God whom they knew as the "Shepherd of Israel", just as David did (Psalm 23). These exiles are making a bold, but trusting and prayerful response to their experience. Moving and powerful words are used by the Psalmist – Stir up thy might; Restore us; let your face shine!! Then they tell their Shepherd God how heartbroken they are: how long are you going to treat us this way, giving us tears, the scorn of neighbors and the laughter of the enemies for food and drink?!!! Restore us God, they prayed.

We are using only the second part of the Psalm in the Liturgy today (80:8-19). This is the parable of the Vineyard. It is a theological interpretation of the exile, in parable. The parable also alludes to the fact that what is described has happened again and again in history. This part of the Psalm begins with the remembrance of God's redemptive acts at Exodus as the basis of all other acts of God in behalf of His people. Great Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea had described God as the Vinedresser and Israel as his favorite vineyard. Jesus spoke of himself as the vine and His Father as the Vinedresser. The parable tells the story of the vine as it grew and developed. Then it describes the destruction of the vineyard by foreign armies (12-13) and prays for restoration. This is a beautiful and inspiring Psalm, rich in meaning and carrying within it theology, salvation history and spirituality. Pray the whole Psalm when you have chance.

**A vine from Egypt you planted;
You drove away the nations and planted it.
It put forth its foliage to the Sea,
Its shoots as far as the river.**

Philippians 4:6-9

Paul encouraged the Philippian converts, "Rejoice in the Lord always!" and again, "Rejoice!" Because "The Lord is near"! Our belief in the nearness of our God should remove all fears and anxieties and bring us true and abiding peace. Paul was in prison and the Philippian converts were about to experience the pain of persecution. Paul exhorted them to rejoice and he exhorts us today to nurture authentic joy amid the pain of war, car-bombings, terrorist threats and attacks, poor leadership, clergy scandal, etc. Paul's reason for joy is "The Lord is near".

Faith in the nearness of God should not only make us rejoice but should enable us to cope with anxiety. Paul encourages us today to not waste our time fretting or worrying. Instead,

channel all energies into prayer, with gratitude. Paul says that those who call upon God in grateful prayer, will be empowered to endure anxiety..... they will know God's peace, which surpasses all understanding.

Mathew 21:33-43

This Parable of the tenant farmers teaches us many things:

- that we are trusted stewards - reflect on being good, faithful and trusted stewards of God's gifts.
- that we are trusted to cultivate and tenderly care for God's gifts - reflect on how you have been appreciating, cultivating and tenderly caring for your gifts.
- that our God has Graciously gifted us with all that is necessary for our life and mission - reflect on the "Graciousness" of God; reflect on your own need to be gracious in your ways.
- that our God is patient and compassionate – reflect on being patient and compassionate in all your relationships.
- that abuse of our gifts and talents brings us disaster - reflect on what happens when you abuse your gifts and talents and those of others.

Saint of the Day, October 4 - St. Francis of Assisi and 11 other saints are remembered this day.

Francis was born in Assisi, Italy in 1182. A man who loved pleasure, fine clothes and all that wealth could offer, renounced his wealth and became one of the most extraordinary saints of the Middle Ages. Francis listened to the voice that called and said, "repair my house, which is falling into ruin". Francis ended up repairing (renewing) not a small chapel, but the "Church". Francis moved from the glory of wealth to the glory of poverty. He celebrated the unity of creation, "harmony" in the universe. The beauty of creation filled him with joy. Everything that God created was brother and sister to him. He treated everything with "reverence". He died on October 3, 1226, in Assisi, Italy and was canonized on July 16, 1228, by Pope Gregory IX.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Life itself doesn't give you joy... life gives you time and space.
It is up to you to fill it!**

