

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Brothers and Sisters,

Our Scripture readings of this week speak of the assurance of Jesus to send us his Holy Spirit to help us to give witness to our life in Christ. Pope Francis says that giving witness always bears fruit whether it is just one's daily witness to Christ, witness during very difficult times, during persecution or witness that ends with death. The church bears fruit and is a mother when it gives witness to Jesus Christ. But people need the help of the Holy Spirit, especially in difficult moments, when faced with hard choices or when tempted by the world's standards. Pray to the Holy Spirit who "makes us strong in order to take the path of witness."

Witnessing to Christ is not a matter of carrying a Bible, wearing a cross, saying a few prayers, or teaching church doctrines although they are good and commendable practices. Witnessing is more about our attitudes, our behavior patterns, our lifestyle, our relationships, and the way we are present wherever we may be. St. Josaphat (1580-1623) was the first Byzantine-rite saint to be formally canonized. As Bishop, he worked for better understanding, acceptance and fair treatment of Byzantine Catholics in Poland. One day, he offered himself in the place of the servants being beaten by an angry crowd and the crowd hit him with an ax, shot him and threw him in the river. He kept his faith alive and stirred into flame the faith of many others. His witness was very costly!

Dorothy Day (1897-1980) grew up without a religious background and by age 16 decided that there was no God. When she decided to become a Catholic, the father of her child broke off the relationship. She started the newspaper "The Catholic Worker" and sold them on the streets of New York for one cent so that everyone could afford it. She founded the first of many Catholic Worker Houses of Hospitality. Dorothy and her staff lived in voluntary poverty, depending on God to meet their needs. She herself dressed in the used clothing that people donated to the house. Dorothy was a woman of peace, loved a philosophy of non-violence and believed that war was not compatible with the message of the Gospel. She lived a remarkable "Other-Centered" life and gave witness to Christ.

I invite and encourage you take a few moments each day of this week to reflect on the quality of your witnessing to the risen Christ and look at the possibility of raising the quality of your witness as you go about doing your daily chores. God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Sixth Week of Easter

May 11 - 16, 2026

**Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams.
Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential.
Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in,
but with what it is still possible for you to do.
(Pope John XXIII)**

May 11 – Monday, Sixth Week of Easter

Nature is the best medicine for peace and serenity.

Acts 16:11-15

We continue to read about the good news being announced to many people in leading cities and districts. Hospitality continues to be one of the greatest virtues among those who came into the early Christian community.

Be hospitable! May you be a welcoming person and may your home be a welcoming and safe place!

Psalm 149

**Sing to the Lord a new song
Of praise in the assembly of the faithful,
Let Israel be glad in their maker,
Let the children of Zion rejoice in their king.**

John 15:26 – 16:4

This excerpt tells us that Jesus promised his disciples to send them his Holy Spirit. He told them that the Holy Spirit would give witness to the good news and would give them courage to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties...

It is the Holy Spirit within us who moves us to respond to God. Our witness to Christ is inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit from within. The spirit brings us into this fellowship with Christ and sustains that relationship.

Our witness comes from long, lasting fellowship and intimacy with Christ. The disciples were witnesses because they have been with him. We can witness Christ only when we have been with him. The witness comes from inner, personal conviction. There can be no effective witness without personal conviction. The Spirit empowers, strengthens and sustains our conviction.

The witness flows into outward testimony. A Christian witness is a person who not only knows Christ but wants others to know Christ. He is prepared to speak what is in his heart. The Spirit empowers the person to speak the truth that is in the heart. The Spirit gives courage to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties.

Saint of the Day, May 11 - St. Ignatius of Laconi and 19 other saints are remembered this day.

Vincenzo Peis was born on December 10, 1701 into a poor peasant family in Sardinia. He was baptized as "Francesco Ignazio Vincenzo" since he was born out of a difficult pregnancy in which his mother invoked the intercession of Francis of Assisi. Vincenzo worked in the fields to support his parents. He suffered a serious illness at the age of seventeen that made him vow that he would consecrate himself to God and join the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin if he managed to recover from it. He did recover but put off the fulfilment of his vow after his father convinced him to wait because he depended on Vincenzo for support in the fields.

In 1721 he was in danger once more when the horse he was riding panicked. He could have been thrown off, but he called upon the assistance of Francis of Assisi and renewed the vow he had made during his illness. This time his parents did not raise objections to his becoming a friar and granted him their blessing.

He was accepted into the Franciscan novitiate on November 10, 1721 and made his profession on November 10, 1722 and took the name Ignatius. Ignatius's reputation for self-denial and charity led to his appointment as the official beggar for the friars in Cagliari. He fulfilled that task for 40 years, despite being blind for the last two years. He died on May 11, 1781 in Cagliari and was canonized in 1951.

May 12 – Tuesday, Sixth Week of Easter

**In the midst of conflicts, tensions and chaos,
keep stillness and serenity within you.**

Acts 16:22-34

Paul and Silas were arrested, flogged, chained to a stake and kept under maximum security. The two kept praying through the night. They and the jailer experienced a tremendous miracle as Paul and Silas were freed and led out of prison through a wide open gate. The Jailer accepted Jesus, welcomed Paul and Silas into his home and his whole household was baptized.

Be open to the good news. And take the good news home and share it with others!

Psalm 138

**I will give thanks to you O Lord, with all my heart,
For you have heard the words of my mouth;
In the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;
I will worship at your holy temple,
And give thanks to your name.**

John 16:5-11

The disciples of Jesus were confused, surprised, bewildered and grief-stricken at hearing that their master was going to leave them. Jesus comforted them saying that it was for the best. He had to go, so that he could send the Holy Spirit as a gift from the Father.

Be sensitive! Be compassionate! Reflect on the compassion of Jesus for the bewildered, confused disciples!

Jesus said that this gift of the Spirit, which he would send from the father, would do many things for his disciples that they themselves would be unable to do. The Spirit will convict them of sin, convince them of righteousness and convince them of judgment. It is the Spirit that helps us to know when we are wrong and when we have sinned. It is the spirit that helps us become convinced of what is good and right and just. And it is the spirit that helps us judge and condemn and defeat evil in the world.

Be open to the Holy Spirit! Be docile to the Holy Spirit! Listen to the Spirit whispering from within!

Saint of the Day, May 12 – Saint Leopold Mandic and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

Leopold was born Bogdan Ivan Mandić on May 12, 1866 in the coastal town of Herceg Novi, today part of Montenegro. He was the twelfth child of Dragica Zarević and Petar Antun Mandić, owner of an Adriatic fishing fleet. He grew up in the orbit of a community of Capuchin friars

based in the Province of Venice who had served in his town for two centuries. Physically malformed and delicate, he grew to a height of only 4'5", with a clumsy walk and afflicted by stuttering.

He felt called to the Franciscan way of life, took the habit of Franciscan Capuchins, took the religious name of Leopold of Castelnuovo, and was ordained a priest on September 20, 1890. He could not speak loudly enough to preach publicly. For many years he also suffered from severe arthritis, poor eyesight, and a stomach ailment. For several years Leopold taught Patrology, the study of the Church Fathers, to the clerics of his province, but he is best known for his work in the confessional, where he sometimes spent 13-15 hours a day. Several bishops sought out his spiritual advice.

Leopold's dream was to go to the Orthodox Christians and work for the reunion of Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy. His health never permitted it. Leopold often renewed his vow to go to the Eastern Christians; the cause of unity was constantly in his prayers. Leopold lived most of his life in Padua, died on July 30, 1942, and was canonized in 1982.

May 13 – Wednesday, Sixth Week of Easter

**Serenity is found in the acceptance of what is
and the release of what was.**

Acts 17:15, 22 – 18:1

In this excerpt from Acts, we read Paul's famous speech at Athens. He told the people of Athens that he knew the God they worshiped without really knowing him. He affirmed their faith in a God and then proceeded to reveal to them the knowledge and experience he had of God in Jesus. His main theme was, "in God we live and move and have our being". Many were baptized after hearing Paul and others wanted to hear him again.

Reflect: "In God we live and move and have our being."

Psalm 148

**Praise the lord from the heavens,
Praise him in the heights;
Praise him all you his angels,
Praise him all you his hosts.**

John 16:12-15

Jesus promised the disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes he would guide them to all truth and that he would teach them of things to come. Reflect on the following sayings of Jesus about the Holy Spirit:

Jesus says to the disciples: I will ask the Father and He will send you another helper who will stay with you forever (John 14:16). “The helper, the Holy Spirit will teach you everything and make you remember all I have told you (John 14:26). The Spirit will give them courage to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties (John 15:26-27). The Spirit will lead them into truth (John 16:7-8, 13). Jesus breathed on them and said: “receive the Holy Spirit’ (John 20:21-22). At Pentecost, the Spirit took “possession” of them (Acts 2:2-3). The Spirit transformed the disciples and Peter, who denied knowing Jesus, and empowered them to go and begin preaching and proclaiming Jesus (Acts 2:15-17).

Pray that you may experience the Holy Spirit rushing in with gifts that will transform you into “Sons of God”. Pray also that you may be gifted with a discerning heart...

Saint of the Day, May 13 - Our Lady of Fatima and 14 other saints are remembered this day.

Beginning in the spring of 1917, three Portuguese children - Francisco and Jacinta Marto and their cousin Lucia dos Santos - received apparitions of Our Lady at Cova da Iria near Fatima, Portugal. 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.

Mary gave the children three secrets. Following the deaths of Francisco and Jacinta in 1919 and 1920 respectively, Lucia revealed the first secret in 1927. It concerned devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The second secret was a vision of hell. When Lucia grew up she became a Carmelite nun and died in 2005 at the age of 97.

Pope John Paul II directed the Holy See’s Secretary of State to reveal the third secret in 2000; it spoke of a “bishop in white” who was shot by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows

into him. Many people linked this vision to the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981.

The feast of Our Lady of Fatima was approved by the local bishop in 1930; it was added to the Church's worldwide calendar in 2002.

May 14 – Saint Mathias, Apostle

Nature is the best medicine for peace and serenity.

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26

Judas, the betrayer of Jesus became desperate and hung himself. This excerpt tells us that about 120 followers of Jesus gathered and prayerfully discerned and chose Mathias to take the place of Judas. It is amazing to remember that it is from these small group of 120 that the message of Jesus spread all over the world.

Psalm 113

**Praise you servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the name of the Lord, both now and forever.
From the rising to the setting of the sun,
is the name of the Lord to be praised.**

John 15:9-17

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.....Abide in my love.....that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete.”

The secret of the life of Jesus was his contact with the Father. Again, and again, he withdrew to quiet places to be alone with the father. He knew what it meant to “abide” in the Father's Love. His disciples must do the same.

To “abide” is: to be in close contact, to be in touch; to be intimate; to live an intense, personal relationship; to surrender in fidelity; to surrender in obedience.

Stay focused on developing a personal, intense, intimate relationship with the Lord. Stay close...stay connected...be in touch.....

Abide in the presence of the Lord, in silence and in solitude.....Speak to the Lord from the depth of your heart.....

Love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12-17). It is a challenge to reach out to others in love - "not to withhold" our love from others. We are called to give what we have received as gifts from the Lord. Jesus calls us his friends, not slaves....it was his choice, not ours. Now it is up to us to respond. It is never sufficient to abstain from wrong-doing or sin or evil. We are called to be good and to do good - a good word and a good deed proclaim who we are. We are blessed with many opportunities to share God's gift of Love and life.

The standard of love is NOT an eye for an eye or love others as they love us or love others as we love ourselves...it is "Love one another as I have loved you". The standard is to love as God loves us, as Jesus loves us.....it is joyful, unconditional, unconquerable, invincible, non-possessive, self-sacrificing, enduring, steadfast love! May your love transcend competition and control...May your love transcend ill feelings, jealousies, hatred, etc....May you reach out in selfless and generous service!

Saint of the Day, May 14 - Saint Matthias and 10 other saints are remembered this day.

There is no mention of a Matthias among the lists of apostles or disciples of Jesus in the three synoptic gospels, but according to Acts, he had been with Jesus from his baptism by John until his Ascension. According to Acts 1:15-26, during the days after the Ascension Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers -about 120 of Jesus' followers.

Now that Judas had betrayed his Jesus, his master, it was necessary, Peter said, to fulfill the scriptural recommendation that another should take his office. "Therefore, it is necessary that one of the men who accompanied us the whole time the Lord Jesus came and went among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day on which he was taken up from us, become with us a witness to his resurrection." (Acts 1:21-22). They nominated two men: Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias. They prayed and drew lots. The choice fell upon Matthias, who was added to the Eleven. Matthias is not mentioned by name anywhere else in the New Testament.

The tradition of the Greeks says that Matthias planted the faith about Cappadocia and on the coasts of the Caspian Sea, residing chiefly near the port Issus (modern day Turkey). Other traditions claim that he spread the Gospel in Judea and in Ethiopia where he was stoned to death. Another tradition maintains that Matthias was stoned at Jerusalem by the local populace and then beheaded. According to Hippolytus of Rome, Matthias died of old age in Jerusalem.

May 15 - Friday, Sixth Week of Easter

**Steadfast Love is real love. And “Real love is to love them that hate you,
Do not seek to have everything that happens happen as you wish but wish for
everything to happen as it actually does happen, and your life will be serene.
(Epictetus)**

Acts 18:9-18

Paul continued to encounter many difficulties, oppositions and persecutions. He was brought to trial, but the judge saw it as a political trial and discontinued hearing. The Lord continued to bless him on his journey with many who supported him and gifted him with courage to proclaim the good news.

Be faithful to your calling even in times of trials!

Psalm 47

**All you peoples, clap your hands,
Shout to God with cries of gladness,
For the Lord, the most high, the awesome,
is the great king over all the earth.**

John 16:20-23

In this Gospel passage Jesus describes the experience of the disciples at his leaving them in terms of childbirth. The process requires time and patient endurance, but the result will be the joy that will never be taken away. The joy the world gives is at the mercy of the world. The joy Christ gives is independent of anything the world can offer. The joy which Christ gives is complete, enduring, pure, unmixed, and perfect. The world's joy is incomplete, wears out and passes away.

In Christian joy, the pain which went before is forgotten. If a person's fidelity costs much, he/she will forget the cost in lasting joy. There will be fullness of knowledge. Jesus says, "you will not need to ask any more questions". There are always unanswered questions, unsolved problems, and an uncertain future. But there is fullness of knowledge in Christ. In Christ you come to know yourself fully, you come to know humanity in its fullness, and you come to know God as God is. Our knowledge is fragmented.

In Christ fragmented knowledge finds unity and integrity and wholeness.

In Christ we have a new relationship with God because we know God as God is, we know the heart of God, we know the heart of Love. In this relationship, Jesus says, we may ask anything and are sure to get it. Our knowledge is complete, and our joy is full and pure and indestructible.

Saint of the Day, May 15 - St. Isidore the Farmer and 18 other saints are remembered this day.

Isidore was born into a poor but very devout family in Madrid around the year 1070. He was named Isidore from the name of their patron, St. Isidore of Seville. When he was barely old enough to wield a hoe, Isidore entered the service of John de Vergas, a wealthy landowner from Madrid, and worked faithfully on his estate outside the city for the rest of his life.

He married a young woman as simple and upright as himself who also became a saint—Maria de la Cabeza. They had one son, who died as a child. Isidore had deep religious feelings and habits. He rose early in the morning to go to church and spent many a holiday devoutly visiting the churches of Madrid and surrounding areas. All day long, as he walked behind the plow, he communed with God. His devotion, one might say, became a problem, for his fellow workers sometimes complained that he often showed up late because of lingering in church too long.

He was known for his love of the poor and shared what he had, even his meals, with the poor. There are accounts of Isidore's supplying them miraculously with food. He had a great concern for the proper treatment of animals as well. He died on May 15, 1130 and was canonized a saint on March 12, 1622 with Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier, Teresa of Avila and Philip Neri. Together, the group is known in Spain as "the five saints." Isidore has become the patron of farmers and rural communities. He is the patron of Madrid, Spain, and of the United States National Rural Life Conference.

May 16 – Saturday, Sixth Week of Easter

You are not experiencing peace and serenity at this present moment because you are focusing on what you don't have.

Acts 18:23-28

Paul continued his travels encouraging and reassuring his disciples in the many towns that he had preached. In this excerpt, we read about Apollos, a very spiritual man who knew the teachings of John the Baptist and had sound knowledge of Scriptures, teaching people about

Jesus. "Aquila and Priscilla took him home and explained to him God's new way in great detail". This is another example of the "welcoming character" of the early church and the sense of hospitality that strengthened the early Church.

Be encouraging and supportive...Be hospitable and welcoming!

Psalm 47

**All you peoples, clap your hands,
Shout to God with cries of gladness,
For the Lord, the most high, the awesome,
Is the great king over all the earth.**

John 16:23-28

In this excerpt, we read about Jesus teaching the disciples to pray and pray with confidence... "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full". We read about Jesus assuring his disciples that the Father loves them and that the Father would give them anything they ask in his name..... Jesus said, "I do not say that I will ask the Father for you, because the Father himself loves you....." You can go to God because he loves....you can ask God because he loves you....God will respond to you because he loves you.....

Asking God is an act of trust that God has power over our lives - that God loves us so much that we can trust him with our lives - our lives' concerns, needs, etc. We place ourselves in the hands of Our Father who loves us and knows our needs more than we know ourselves.

We stand before him with open arms to receive or to let go. We surrender ourselves to him and remain open to receive His Gifts. God has more ways to answer our prayers than simply saying "Yes" and granting our wish.

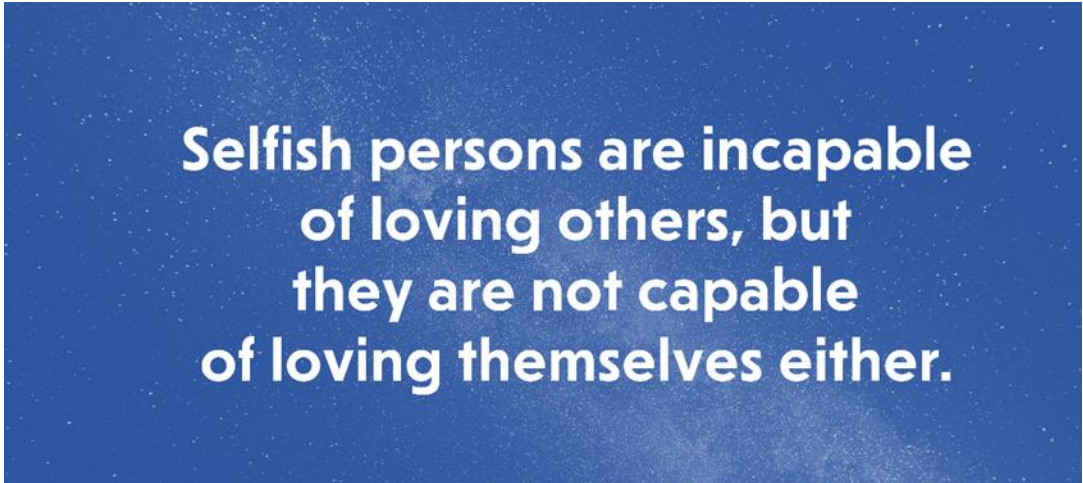
Saint of the Day, May 16 - St. Simon Stock and 19 other saints are remembered this day

Simon Stock was born and raised in England. Although little is known about his early life, legend has it that the name Stock, meaning "tree trunk," derives from the fact that, beginning at age twelve, he lived as a hermit in a hollow tree trunk of an oak tree in complete solitude and continual prayer. He had visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary who urged him to carry on in his life of sacrifice and love. During one vision, she told him that there would be Carmelite hermits coming to England from the Holy Land and that he should join them, and Simon joined them in 1212. In 1254 he was elected Superior-General of his Order at London.

The Carmelites themselves were struggling to become established in England, but through fervent prayer to Our Lady, the order persevered, and the Carmelites spread throughout England and southern and western Europe under Simon's leadership. In 1251, in a vision, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Simon holding the brown scapular in one hand. Her words were: "Receive, my beloved son, this scapular of thy Order; it is the special sign of my favor, which I have obtained for thee and for thy children of Mount Carmel. He who dies clothed with this habit shall be preserved from eternal fire. It is the badge of salvation, a shield in time of danger, and a pledge of special peace and protection." Through Saint Simon Stock, devotion to the scapular spread throughout the world. He lived an ascetic life, followed a diet of herbs, roots and wild apples and drank only water. He died on May 16, 1265 in Bordeaux, France.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Let unifying love be your measure; abiding love your challenge;
self-giving love your mission!
(Pope Benedict XVI)**



**Selfish persons are incapable
of loving others, but
they are not capable
of loving themselves either.**