

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

P. O. Box 440, Whitehouse, Texas 75791

www.wellspringcommunity.net

frgusmsfs@gmail.com

July 14, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the Gospel reading of today's mass, we hear Jesus speaking to his disciples about the cost of discipleship, that being a disciple could mean division, separation even from loved ones because loyalty to Christ has to take precedence over the dearest loyalties of this world. To choose Christ could mean denial of other things and other loyalties!

Choosing "Jesus' Way" is not easy. But choosing his way frees us to be what God made us to be and wants us to be. This choice however is very demanding because the freedom that comes from choosing his way is always very demanding. True freedom limits us to choose only that which fits our nature, our character.

From the beginning of scriptures, we read about great men and women being called to make difficult choices and they in turn called their people to make hard choices. Moses and the prophets and finally Jesus offered people choices between life and death; way of the just and way of the wicked; good and bad; foolishness and wisdom and so on.

Jesus challenges us to make difficult choices, make the difficult journey, walk the path of trials, face testing times, and enter through the narrow door! The way of Jesus is not easy, but it is just the right way, the way made to fit our needs! We must make difficult choices and be faithful to the choices we make. The choice is ours. Once the choice is made, the question is: is that your final choice? Your final answer to God's call?

In the Gospel of Mathew (Mathew 21:28-32), we read about a son who said "no" to his father and changed it into an "yes" and another son who said "yes" to his father changed it into a "no". The final answer made the difference. There are many whose lives once characterized by "no" to God and to God's goodness and then transformed into a decided "yes", into a final answer "yes". Peter and Thomas did. Thomas Merton, one of the great mystics of our times moved from "No" to "Yes". John Newton had a dramatic conversion during a storm at sea. He was a slave trader. His "yes" to God is memorialized in the "Amazing Grace" which is sung by many with great devotion.

I encourage you to take a few moments during this week to reflect on how your day has been and how your choices of the day reflect your choice of the way of Jesus.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

July 14-19, 2025

**Dismiss all anxiety from your minds.
Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and in petitions full of gratitude.
Then God's own peace, which is beyond all understanding,
will guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:4-7)**

July 14 – Monday, Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**He who has a “why” to live for can bear almost any “how.”
(Friedrich Nietzsche)**

Exodus 1:8-14, 22

Israelites became numerous and powerful in Egypt. A new king, who did not know the history of the coming of Israelites to Egypt, began to fear that they might join the enemies and fight against Egypt. So, he began to oppress them, make them slaves, and make their life bitter for them. Pharaoh then ordered all his subjects to throw into the river every boy that is born to the Hebrews.

Psalm 124

**Had not the Lord been with us,
Let Israel say, had not the Lord been with us,
When men rose against us,
Then would they have swallowed us alive,
When their fury was inflamed against us.....**

Mathew 10:34 – 11:1

Jesus talks about the cost of discipleship with startling honesty. Being a disciple could mean division, separation even from loved ones because loyalty to Christ has to take precedence over the dearest loyalties of this world. To choose Christ could mean denial of other things and other

loyalties! The disciple must be ready to take up the cross, be regarded as a criminal and die with no glory, no fame, no name, no wealth.....

Be prepared to welcome and accept the pain and the loss that come with being faithful to your call.....

The disciple is called to invest his life into loving and caring and serving and giving and not hang on it. To help, even in small ways, is to gather wealth into the eternal. Life is worth investing; worth sacrifices...nothing can be given in exchange for life!

Give life and love all you have Invest yourself into loving God and God's people! Give graciously and generously!

Saint of the Day, July 14 - St. Kateri Tekawitha and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

Kateri was born in a village near Auriesville, New York in 1656. She was the daughter of a Mohawk chief and her mother was a Christian Algonquin. She was four when her mother died of rubella. She also contracted this disease which disfigured her face. After this event that marked all her life, Kateri was adopted by her two aunts and her uncle.

Kateri converted to Catholicism during her adolescence. She was baptized at the age of twenty and this caused great hostility towards her on the part of her tribe. Although she had to suffer greatly for her faith, she stood firm in her beliefs.

Because of her conversion, she was treated as a slave among her own people. Her life was in danger because of her faith, so she fled on foot 200 miles to a Christian Indian village near Montreal, Canada. She lived only four more years, but in that time, she developed a deep spirituality and devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. She devoted herself to teaching prayers to the children and helping the sick and elderly. She prayed for hours every day and practiced strenuous fasting for the conversion of her nation. She died in 1680. Pope Benedict XVI canonized Saint Kateri Tekakwitha on October 21, 2012. She is the first canonized Native American saint.

July 15 – Tuesday, Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Your purpose in life is to find your purpose
and give your whole heart and soul to it
(Buddha)**

Exodus 2:1-15

This Scripture passage describes the birth of Moses and how he was saved, while Pharaoh's order to throw into the river every boy that is born to the Hebrews was still in effect. It describes the wisdom of his mother and the courage of his sister who watched him flow down the river in a basket. Moses was saved and brought up by Pharaoh's daughter. He grew up healthy and strong and with a deep sense of respect for his people. He eventually killed someone in defense of his people who were being abused by the Egyptians and had to escape into the land Midian.

This is a marvelous story of the beginning of the freedom of Israel from Slavery in Egypt. Chapters 2 and 3 give us good insight into God's choice of Moses as the leader of the freedom movement. The mystery of God's loving concern for his people and his plan to save them from misery in Egypt continued to unfold.

Psalm 69

**I pray to you, O Lord, for the time of your favor, O God!
In your great kindness answer me, with your constant help,
But I am afflicted and in pain; let your saving help, O God, protect me.
I will praise the name of God in song,
And I will glorify him with thanksgiving.....**

Mathew 11:20-24

Jesus reproached the towns where most of his miracles were worked because they did not respond to his call for conversion, change, reform. He said to the people of these towns that places like Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah would have reformed if they had heard what he said and seen what he did. They were blessed..... Graced.... they were privileged..... but they did not respond. With blessing and Grace and privilege comes responsibility. Their guilt was not just "no response", but open rejection of the good news they heard.

Reflect on how privileged and blessed and graced you are. Be Grateful!

Saint of the Day, July 15 – St. Bonaventure and 35 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Bonaventure was born in 1221 at Bagnoregio in Umbria, then part of the Papal States. Almost nothing is known of his childhood. He was baptized John but received the name Bonaventure when he became of a Franciscan. He entered the Franciscan Order in 1243 and studied at the University of Paris. After having successfully defended his order against the reproaches of the anti-mendicant party, he was elected Minister General of the Franciscan

Order. On November 24, 1265, he was selected for the post of Archbishop of York; however, he was never consecrated and resigned the appointment in October 1266.

Bonaventure was instrumental in securing the election of Pope Gregory X, who rewarded him with the title of Cardinal Bishop of Albano, and insisted on his presence at the great Second Council of Lyon in 1274. There, after his significant contributions led to a union of the Greek and Latin churches, Bonaventure died suddenly on July 15, 1274 and in suspicious circumstances. There is a theory that he was poisoned. He was canonized on April 14, 1482

He steered the Franciscans on a moderate and intellectual course that made them the most prominent order in the Catholic Church until the coming of the Jesuits. His theology was marked by an attempt completely to integrate faith and reason. He thought of Christ as the "one true master" who offers humans knowledge that begins in faith, is developed through rational understanding, and is perfected by mystical union with God.

July 16 – Wednesday, Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**If you have a strong purpose in life, you don't have to be pushed.
Your passion for your purpose will move you.**

Exodus 3:1-6, 9-12

Moses was called while tending the flock of his father-in-law. Moses saw a bush on fire and went to investigate..... something extraordinary happened during an ordinary day's work.....God spoke and Moses heard!

There is an old song, "Great things happen when God mixes with man." Great things did happen in the life of Moses and his people. Be open to the surprises that God sends as you fulfill your daily chores.....

Moses recognized that he was in God's presence and that God was calling him to go to Pharaoh and lead his people out of Egypt. He acknowledged his own insufficiency, inadequacy in responding to God's call to lead his people out of Egypt. God assured him of his continued presence, "I will be with you".

Trust in the presence of God in your life! You are graced with his presence! His Grace makes you adequate to fulfill your mission!

Psalm 103

**Bless the lord O my soul;
and all my being bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.**

Mathew 11:25-27

The learned, the clever and the intelligent men of the time did not accept Jesus and his message. They had no use for him.

The simple people welcomed him and his word. Jesus praised his heavenly father for this wonderful gift of revelation to the simple and the humble. God is known through God's self-revelation. The simple and the humble recognized him as he revealed himself.

Be simple! Be humble! Be open and listen to God as he reveals himself to you!

Saint of the Day, July 16 - Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the title given to the Blessed Virgin Mary in her role as patroness of the Carmelite Order. The first Carmelites were Christian hermits living on Mount Carmel, near the Fountain of Elijah, in northern Israel from the late 12th century. They built in the midst of their hermitages a chapel which they dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. By the 13th century they became known as "Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel."

They soon celebrated a special Mass and Office in honor of Mary. In 1726, it became a celebration of the universal Church under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. For centuries the Carmelites have seen themselves as specially related to Mary. Their great saints and theologians have promoted devotion to her.

Since the 15th century, popular devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel has centered on the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, also known as the Brown Scapular. Traditionally, Mary is said to have given the Scapular to an early Carmelite named Saint Simon Stock (1165-1265). The scapular is a modified version of Mary's own garment. It symbolizes her special protection and calls the wearers to consecrate themselves to her in a special way.

The solemn liturgical feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was probably first celebrated in England in the latter part of the 14th century. Its object was thanksgiving to Mary, the patroness of the Carmelite Order, for the benefits they received through her during their difficult early years.

July 17– Thursday, Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Nothing is more creative than a brilliant mind with a purpose.

Exodus 3:13-20

Moses had a personal encounter with God and a conversation that gave him a sense of the very personal presence of God in his life and in the life of his people. Moses was given the mission to proclaim to his people that God would save them from the Egyptians and bring them to a land of freedom and prosperity. The Lord warned Moses of the dangers he would face from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. With the assurance of God's personal presence, Moses responded to God's call.

Trust in God's personal presence in your life! God is always there to help us fulfill our mission!

Psalms 105

**Give thanks to the Lord, invoke his name;
Make known among the nations his deeds.
Recall the wondrous deeds that he has wrought, his portents,
And the judgments he has uttered.**

Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus said, Come to me all who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest.....Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.....I am meek and humble of heart.....My yoke is easy and my burden is light.....

My yoke is easy - The word "easy" should be translated "well-fitting". This simply means that the yoke is "tailor-made" to fit well. The discipline, the way, the life that Jesus offers is made to fit well, "tailor-made" for us - it won't hurt us, it won't burden us.

Jesus came proclaiming good news.....love, forgiveness, healing, peace.....not as an avenging ruler, but proclaiming the triumph of compassion..... Jesus came.....meek, humble.....inviting all to turn to him with their burdens.....

To rest in Jesus is to dwell in him.....to drink fully of his spirit.....to be refreshed and renewed for life and ministry....as St. Augustine says, "our hearts are restless until they come to rest in you".

Saint of the Day, July 17 – Saint Francis Solano and 50 other saints remembered this day

Francis Solano was born on March 10, 1549 in Montilla, Spain. He was educated by the Jesuits but felt drawn to the poverty and penitential life of the Franciscan friars. At the age of twenty, he joined the Order of Friars Minor at Montilla, entering the novitiate at St. Lawrence Friary. The community there belonged to the Reformed observance within the Order, following a very strict routine of prayer, silence and fasting. Francis followed this regimen rigorously, always going barefoot, abstaining from meat, and wearing a hairshirt throughout that entire year. As a result, however, his health was permanently affected, leaving him sick and fatigued.

Francis was solemnly professed in 1569. He was then sent to the friary of Our Lady of Loreto in Seville for his seminary studies. There he learned not only philosophy and theology but developed his musical talents. He was ordained a priest in 1576. He was then named Master of Ceremonies for the community. Still a lover of simplicity, Francis made a small cell for himself by the chapel of the friary, made of clay and reeds. After completing his final theological studies, he was assigned as an itinerant preacher to the surrounding villages of the region. He was eventually given a license as a confessor. During this period, he requested that he might be allowed to go to North Africa, with the hope of achieving martyrdom for preaching the Catholic faith. He was denied this request.

After the death of his father, Francis returned to his hometown of Montilla to care for his mother. During that time, he gained the reputation of a wonder worker, as a number of people were cured of their afflictions through his intercession. In 1583, he cared for the sick and the dying when a pestilence broke out at Granada. His care for the sick during this epidemic drew so much admiration that he became embarrassed and asked to be sent to the African missions. Instead he was sent to South America in 1589. While working in what is now Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay, Francis quickly learned the local languages and was well received by the indigenous peoples. His visits to the sick often included playing a song on his violin.

Around 1601, he was called to Lima, Peru, where he tried to recall the Spanish colonists to their baptismal integrity. Francis also worked to defend the indigenous peoples from oppression. He died in Lima in 1610 and was canonized a saint in 1726.

July 18 – Friday, Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

All that happens to us, including our humiliations, our misfortunes, our embarrassments, etc. are given to us as resources to help us find and fulfill our God-given purpose.

Exodus 11:10-12:14

This Scripture passage gives us the details of the sacrifice of the Passover, which would become a memorial for all generations. The Lord's judgment would pass over the homes of the Israelites and they would flee Egypt and begin their journey to freedom.

Begin, if you have not begun yet and if you have already begun, to further your journey from whatever enslaves you into the freedom of the children of God!

Psalm 116

**How shall I make a return to the Lord
For all the good he has done for me?
The cup of salvation I will take up
And I will call upon the name of the Lord.**

Mathew 12:1-8

This story tells about the disciples plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath Day. The Scribes and the Pharisees became more suspicious of a teacher who allowed his disciples to violate the Sabbath law. This kind of thing could not be allowed to spread unchecked. The problem was that the Sabbath law was broken.

Jesus used this occasion to teach the disciples that the claim of human need takes precedence over ritual claims; that worship offered to God takes precedence over all Sabbath rules and regulations; that the steadfast love of God takes precedence over ritual sacrifice; that man is not at the service of the law, but the law is at the service of man..... Jesus insisted that the greatest ritual service is the service of human need.

Jesus called his disciples to go beyond ritual service, church service, synagogue service, etc. to the service of human need. In fact, the Gospels tell of only one synagogue service that Jesus conducted. But we have an abundance of incidence of Jesus at the service of human need.

Christian service is involvement in the demands and problems and tragedies of the human situation.

Saint of the Day, July 18 - St. Camillus de Lellis and 17 other saints are remembered this day

St. Camillus de Lellis was born May 25, 1550 at Bocchianico, Italy. His mother died when he was a child, his father neglected him, and he grew up with an excessive love for gambling. Camillus

was ornery, rowdy, and quarrelsome from his youth. From age 16, he fought with the armies of Venice and Naples, and he sustained a wound on his leg that he would have for the rest of his life. Army life was over for him in 1574, at which time he gambled away everything he had - savings, weapons, literally down to his shirt.

At 17, in Rome, he entered the San Giacomo Hospital for Incurables as both patient and servant but was dismissed for quarrelsome behaviors after nine months. Penniless, he was able to find work at the Capuchin friary. One day, he was so moved by a sermon of the superior that he began a process of conversion. He became a Capuchin novice as a lay brother but was later rejected because of his leg wound. He then went to the Hospital for Incurables in Rome where he was both a patient and a caregiver. After another stint of service at San Giacomo, he came back to the Capuchins, only to be dismissed again, for the same reason.

Again, back at San Giacomo, his dedication was rewarded by his being made superintendent. Camillus observed that many of the caregivers neglected the needs of the patients, so he recruited virtuous men from the community to help him provide better care. It was then that he was inspired to form a community of men to help the sick. Feeling first the need to become a priest, he was allowed to enter the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1584.

After ordination, Camillus founded the Ministers of the Sick, or Camellians, whose members served in hospitals, in prisons, on-board ships, and on the battlefield. He died in Rome on July 14, 1614 and was canonized a saint in 1746. He is the patron saint of hospitals, physicians, nurses, and the sick.

July 19 – Saturday, Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Your emotions make you human...even the unpleasant ones
have a purpose. Don't lock them away. If you ignore them,
they just get louder and annoying.**

Exodus 12:37-42

Time came for the Israelites to leave Egypt after about 430 years there. They had to leave in haste and they didn't even have time to bake bread. There was an urgency to begin the journey.....they had to get on the journey into freedom with "bread made in haste", unleavened bread which became a memorial for all generations.

Reflect on your own sense of urgency to begin or to further your own journey into freedom...

Psalm 136

**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
For his mercy endures forever;
Who remembered us in our abjection,
For his mercy endures forever.....**

Mathew 12:14-21

Jesus had to withdraw from the crowd since the Pharisees began to plot against him. Many followed and found healing and new life. Jesus asked them not to publicize what he had done for them. Jesus was courageous, took risks and became vulnerable...but never reckless.

**Do all things with selfless love without seeking approval, recognition and publicity.
May you be courageous and wise and never reckless in your ministry.**

This Gospel passage also tells us that Jesus came serving, caring for the suffering, healing the broken, bringing hope to the gentiles..... "bruised reed he will not crush; smoldering wick he will not quench.....in his name Gentiles will find hope." For Jesus, to be the messiah meant selfless service, sacrificial love, healing the hurt.....and not controlling, crushing and overpowering.

May you live your calling in selfless service and sacrificial love and not controlling, crushing and overpowering.

Saint of the Day, July 19 - Saint Mary MacKillop and 12 other saints are remembered this day

Mary Helen MacKillop was born on January 15, 1842 in Melbourne. She was educated at private schools and by her father. She started to work at the age of 16 as a clerk in a stationery store in Melbourne. To provide for her needy family, she took a job as governess at the estate of her aunt and uncle in South Australia where she was to look after their children and teach them.

Mary grew up in a family that faced constant financial struggles. As a young woman she was drawn to religious life but could not find an existing order of Sisters that met her needs. In 1860, she met Father Julian Woods, who became her spiritual director. Together they founded a new community of women, the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, also known as the Josephite Sisters. Its members were to staff schools especially for poor children, as well as orphanages, and do other works of charity.

As the congregation grew, so did Mary MacKillop's problems. Her priest-friend proved unreliable in many ways and his responsibilities for direction of the Sisters were removed. Meanwhile, Mary had the support of some local bishops as she and her Sisters went about their work. But the bishop in South Australia, aging and relying on others for advice, briefly excommunicated Mary, charging her with disobedience and dispensed 50 of her Sisters from their vows. He ultimately rescinded his order of excommunication.

Mary insisted that her congregation should be governed by an elected mother general answerable to Rome, not to the local bishop. There also were disputes about whether or not the congregation could own property. In the end, Rome proved to be Mary's best source of support. After a long wait, official approval of the congregation and on how it was to be governed came from Pope Leo XIII.

Despite her struggles with Church authorities, Mary MacKillop and her Sisters were able to offer social services that few, if any, government agencies in Australia could provide. They served Protestants and Catholics alike. They worked among the aborigines. They taught in schools and orphanages and served unmarried mothers.

By the time Mary was approaching the end of her life, the congregation was thriving. She died in 1909 at the age of 67. Pope John Paul II beatified her in 1995 and in 2010, Pope Benedict XVI canonized her. She became Australia's first saint.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

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

