

Wellspring

Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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August 7, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time. We continue to journey with Jesus and his disciples through the Gospel of Luke. Last week, we reflected on looking beyond the material world and the transitory and passing realities that we confront daily and focusing our attention on the eternal existence of love and truth. Our Scripture readings this week call us to be attentive, vigilant and watchful.

The first century B.C.E. wise man (first reading of today's mass) calls his readers to be attentive to the powerful Word of Wisdom from heaven coming into a messy world and recreating everything and making all things new so that the children of God may be preserved and sustained. Another wise man in the first century C.E. (Second reading of today's mass), calls his tired and weary Christian readers under persecution to be attentive to God breaking into their history in surprising ways. He gave them heroes and heroines of faith for their inspiration.

Many of the early Christians, tired of waiting for Jesus to return and tired of being tested and persecuted, began to think of leaving the community. They became spiritually weak and tired of doing good. It is to these people that the letter to the Hebrews was addressed. The Hebrews author, instead of giving them lectures, offered them heroes and heroines of faith like Abraham for inspiration. And in the Gospel of today, we read about Jesus calling his disciples to be watchful, alert, awake, attentive and be prepared. God is breaking into history in surprising ways, and no one knew the day or the hour!

All our Scripture readings call us to stay alert, awake, attentive, focused, steady, vigilant, and watchful on our journey. We are living in a fast-moving, messy, and noisy world, and it is easy to get confused, distracted and lost. Jesus used imageries familiar to his listeners. "Let your loins be girt," he said...in other words, pull up your sleeves; "keep your lamps burning," trim the wick and replenish the lamps with oil...just be ready to welcome God as and when he breaks in.....you do not know the day or the hour! (Today's Gospel)

Years ago, a farmer owned land along the Atlantic seacoast. He constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms along the Atlantic. They dreaded the awful storms that raged across the Atlantic, wreaking havoc on the buildings and crops. As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received a steady stream of refusals. Finally, a short, thin

man, well past middle age, approached the farmer. "Are you a good farm hand?" the farmer asked him. "Well, I can sleep when the wind blows," answered the little man.

Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, hired him. The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man's work. Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore. Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand's sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, "Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!" The man rolled over in bed and said firmly, "No sir. I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows."

Enraged by the response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead, he hurried outside to prepare for the storm. To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down. Nothing could blow away. The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to also sleep while the wind blew.

When we are prepared, spiritually, mentally, and physically, we have nothing to fear even when the wind and the storm pass through our life. Let us be watchful on our journey, look more attentively at where our heart has been and where it is now. Has it been and is it now in a good place, a peaceful place, a safe place, a quiet place, a secure place? Being watchful helps us keep our heart in a good place and live from this good place!

We must pay attention to our desires. We have all kinds of desires. Pay attention to the desires that need to be purified or abandoned or carefully and tenderly taken care of...Pay attention to those wonderful desires that are there but have not been acted upon and see what we would like to do to respond to those desires. Be attentive to what is important and what is trivial, what needs action now and what is not really all that urgent. We must pay attention to the concerns and needs of those entrusted to our care.

We must pay attention...notice the "moments of grace" in our life. It takes real discipline to attend to ordinary things. For most of us, it takes deliberate effort to be attentive. Major happenings like birth, moving, promotion, financial loss, death, etc. force themselves on our consciousness. The ordinary realities of life simply pass by; they just go by, or we just go by them! We must be attentive...be Vigilant...Be present to the moment! Be present to God and God's way for us! And that is the challenge that our Scripture readings offer us today.

I want to 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 on how you would like God to find you when he breaks into your history... Your work completed...your mission being accomplished...?

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 7, 2022

**Dear friends, build your house on rock. Try each day to follow Christ's word.
Listen to him as a true friend with whom you can share your path in life.
With him at your side, you will find courage and hope to face difficulties and problems,
and even to overcome disappointments and setbacks.
(Pope Benedict XVI)**

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
whom, taught by the Holy Spirit,
we dare to call our Father,
bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts
the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters,
that we may merit to enter into the inheritance
which you have promised.
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.

Wisdom 18:6-9

The first century B.C.E. author reminded his readers that Israel's liberation and emergence as a special people of God was the result of God's plan of salvation. God's plan brought blessing to Israel...they did celebrate the Passover from slavery to freedom. By recalling the events of their collective history and remembering how God was involved in their history, the author tried to call forth from his readers renewed fidelity to God and to their heritage of faith.

The present excerpt, referenced above, tells us that the powerful Word of Wisdom from heaven comes into the land of doom and recreates everything and makes all things new so that the children of God may be preserved and sustained. And all creation praise God, their deliverer and savior.

Psalm 33

The Psalmist calls us to sing a new and joyful song because God is always doing new and surprising things and God's word is: faithfulness, loyal love, covenant love, steadfast love, unfailing love and it is everywhere! The Lord's eyes rest upon those with whom he has covenanted in love. Such is the wisdom of God. His covenant love is expressed in the tender care of all he has created. His word is "Covenant Love", Unfailing, and steadfast love. What else to do but sing a joyful and new song!

**Our soul waits for the Lord,
who is our help and our shield.
May your kindness O, Lord, be upon us,
who have put our hope you.**

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

Many of the early Christians, tired of waiting for Jesus to return and tired of being tested and persecuted, began to think of leaving the community. They became spiritually weak and tired of doing good. It is to these people that the letter to the Hebrews was addressed. The Hebrews author, instead of giving them lectures, offered them heroes and heroines of faith for inspiration, among them was Abraham, the father of their faith tradition.

Abraham lived by faith. He journeyed not knowing where he was going with only faith in God's promise as his security. The author of Hebrews suggests that we are pilgrims, often, going through the valley of darkness. Faith makes the journey meaningful and fearless. Abraham's faith was tested, and our faith also will be tested. Be grounded and growing in your faith.

Trusting in God's promise, Abraham began a journey. Living in tents, surrounded by flocks that were their livelihood, Abraham and Sarah had no permanent address. Whenever their flocks had depleted the food supply in a particular area, they struck camp and moved on. We do not live in tents today. But we still are spiritual nomads.

Like Abraham and Sarah, our fidelity to God calls us to journey, to move on, our roots sunk into no earthly place, our source of security in God and God alone.

Abraham's act of obedience began a lifelong habit of saying "yes" with his life to whatever God planned.

Abraham was called again to do the impossible – to sacrifice his only son, to destroy his only hope for descendants. Abraham obeyed, surrendered! His unwavering faith was rewarded far beyond anything he could envision. In his surrender to God's will he became truly free, real and religious – at one with God's Will.

Abraham's call and response have become models for every other call. Like him, we are called again and again to leave the safe and familiar, the sound and the sane, to venture into territories unknown, uncharted and unsure. In all these "leave-takings" Abraham and Sarah remain our models and their faith in God who would lead them become our inspiration and strength!

Letting go is not easy and to let go of a sure and certain and secure thing in order to welcome something new and untried is even more difficult. And that is the challenge! Reflect on the call to let go and surrender to God's plan.

Luke 12:32-48

Jesus taught His disciples to be watchful, alert and awake...to be prepared. He said to them that no one knew the day or the hour when God would break into their history. He also said that the son of man would come when he is least expected.

Be alert! Stay awake! Be watchful! Now is the moment of Grace!

Jesus used imageries familiar to his listeners. "Let your loins be girt" he said...in other words, pull up your sleeves; "keep your lamps burning", trim the wick and replenish the lamps with oil....just be ready to welcome God as and when he breaks in.....you do not know the day or the hour!

How would you like God to find you when he breaks in? Your work completed? Your mission accomplished? Fulfilling the mission given to you? Your lamps burning bright?

Make sure that all is in good order!

Jesus told them the parable of the faithful steward to emphasize the need for preparedness. He asked them about what would happen to a steward who was abusive in his master's absence.

Jesus called them to be faithful even in the master's absence, even when no one is watching. Faithfulness is an enduring quality of a person and not just doing duties and fulfilling obligations.

He also taught them that responsibility came with privilege.... "More will be asked of the man to whom more has been entrusted".

Abuse of privileges brings disaster. Be watchful. Be grateful and be responsible for the gifts and talents which God has given to you.

Saint of the day, August 7 - St. Cajetan and 24 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Cajetan was born on October 1, 1480, into a noble family of Vicenza, Italy. His father died when he was two years of age. He studied law in Padua, receiving his degree as doctor in civil and canon law at age 24. In 1506 he worked as a diplomat for Pope Julius II, with whom he helped reconcile the Republic of Venice. But he was not ordained a priest until the year 1516.

In 1522 Cajetan founded a hospital for incurables in Vicenza. By 1523 he had established a hospital in Venice, as well. His interests were as much or more devoted to spiritual healing than the physical kind, and he joined a confraternity in Rome called the "Oratory of Divine Love". He intended to form a group that would combine the spirit of monasticism with the exercises of the active ministry

In 1523, the Church was in sad shape. People could not get the spiritual nourishment they needed from the large numbers of uneducated and even immoral priests who took their money but returned nothing. When good priests and laypeople turned to the hierarchy for help, they found leaders at best apathetic and indifferent to their concerns.

Cajetan went to Rome, not to talk to the pope or the hierarchy, but to consult with members of the Oratory of the Divine Love. Cajetan and three friends decided that the best road to reformation lay in reviving the spirit and zeal of the clergy. Together they founded a congregation known as the Theatines, from Teate where their first superior bishop had his see. One of the friends later became Pope Paul IV.

They managed to escape to Venice after their house in Rome was wrecked when Emperor Charles V's troops sacked Rome in 1527. The Theatines were outstanding among the Catholic reform movements that took shape before the Protestant Reformation. Cajetan founded a monte de pieta— "mountain or fund of piety" in Naples, one of many charitable, nonprofit credit organizations that lent money on the security of pawned objects. The purpose was to help the poor and protect them against usurers. Cajetan's little organization ultimately became the Bank of Naples, with great changes in policy. Cajetan died in Naples on August 7, 1547 and was canonized On 12 April 1671.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.
(Mahatma Gandhi)