

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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July 8, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope that you had a wonderful celebration of Independence Day and a long weekend to be with family and friends. For most people that I know, the Fourth of July is a day of patriotic pageantry: flags, fireworks, and festivities with family and friends. For me, and I hope, for you as well, it is a day to reflect on freedom: its high price as well as its sacred meaning. Our troops have historically paid a high price to maintain our freedom and we, gratefully, honor them as our nation's heroes and heroines. It is good for us to remember that our founders were so passionate about freedom that they challenged the oppressive forces, and our troops continue to passionately challenge the tyrannies of our day.

Now that we have had our July 4th parades, flag-wavings, fireworks, and other festivities, let us reflect on our freedom and strive to become more passionate about living, defending, and protecting that freedom for all. Freedom is often identified with the ability to choose according to personal preferences and to live without boundaries. True freedom is freedom to be, to live and to function meaningfully and effectively even within limits and boundaries. Such freedom is freedom to take a stand toward conditions of life and not freedom from conditions themselves. We must be passionate about being free even in unfavorable conditions. French philosopher, author, and journalist Albert Camus once said, "Freedom is nothing but a chance to be better." We know that in our country, we have ample opportunities to better ourselves and to help and support others as they strive to better themselves.

It is also good for us to, gratefully, remember the many freedoms that we enjoy, which many of our brothers and sisters only dream about. We have the freedom to live where we want, to choose our own career and vocation, to speak our minds freely, to gather in groups publicly, to choose our religious beliefs, to fall in love and marry the person of our choice, to start our own business, to map out our own future, even to plan out our own funeral, and so many other avenues of freedom open to us. True freedom is freedom to be even in adverse situations. It is freedom to be what God calls us to be.

I encourage you to take a few moments during this week to reflect on your understanding of freedom and being free, as you strive to be what God calls you to be. Let us also remember all men and women who have made and continue to make great sacrifices for our freedom. Let us be grateful to them for their services.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

## **Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**July 8-13, 2024**

**Every believer in this world of ours must be a spark of light,  
a center of love, a vivifying leaven amidst his fellow men.  
And he will be this all the more perfectly, the more closely he lives  
in communion with God in the intimacy of his own soul.**  
(Pope John XXIII)

**July 8 – Monday, Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**We should meet abuse by forbearance.**  
(Mahatma Gandhi)

### **Hosea 2:16-18, 21-22**

Hosea shares his vision of Yahweh leading his people to the desert to reestablish the covenant. Yahweh will espouse Israel in justice, in love, in mercy and in fidelity. Israel will once again know God as the Lord of everlasting Love and Faithfulness.

**Pray: Father, teach me to trust in your everlasting love and leave my life in your hands.**

### **Psalm 145**

**Every day will I bless you,  
And I will praise your name forever and ever.  
Great is the Lord and highly to be praised;  
His greatness is unsearchable.**

### **Mathew 9:18-26**

There are two miracles in this excerpt from the Gospel of Mathew: the healing of the ruler's daughter and the healing of the woman with hemorrhage. Each of them came with a different quality of faith: the ruler came desperate, having tried everything and the woman, came believing that even touching the garment of Jesus would bring healing. The amazing thing is:

they were accepted, with the kind of faith with which they came - with what they brought, just the way they were, without conditions.

**Turn to the Lord with whatever faith you have...inadequate faith, little faith, lots of faith...size of a mustard seed.....Pray: Lord, increase my faith!**

**No matter, how imperfectly we come, His love and his arms are open to us in welcome embrace.**

**We do not wait until our motivations, our faith and our theology are perfect. We come just as we are.**

**Saint of the day, July 8 - Saint Gregory Grassi and Companions (120) and 18 other saints are remembered this day.**

Gregory Grassi was born in Italy, on December 13, 1833. At the age of 15, he took the Franciscan habit in the Friary of Montiano, Romagna, with the name Gregory. His solemn profession was made one year later, on 14 December. He was then sent to Bologna to do his seminary studies and was ordained priest on August 17, 1856. Then he was sent to Rome for further training to prepare for his mission to China.

In 1860 Gregory Grassi was assigned to Taiyuan, China, where he was appointed Mission Promoter, Director of the mission orphanage, and choirmaster at the seminary. In 1876 he was chosen as the Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic for the Apostolic Vicariate of Shansi. After he assumed authority over the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Shansi on September 6, 1891, he established a novitiate to provide access to Franciscan life for the Chinese of all four vicariates in Shanxi and a rest home for overworked missionaries.

Christian missionaries have often gotten caught in the crossfire of wars against their own countries. When the governments of Britain, Germany, Russia, and France forced substantial territorial concessions from the Chinese in 1898, anti-foreign sentiment grew very strong among many Chinese people. When the short but bloody Boxer Rebellion broke out in Peking in June 1900 and the Empress Dowager Cixi issued the Imperial Decree of declaration of war against foreign powers, Gregory Grassi was urged to flee, but decided to stay.

At the beginning of July, the Governor of Shanxi, Yuxian, ordered the arrest of the European missionaries in the province. Throughout China during the Boxer Uprising, 5 bishops, 50 priests, 2 brothers, 15 sisters and 40,000 Chinese Christians were killed. Gregory Grassi and companions were among the 120 martyrs canonized in 2000 by Pope John Paul II.

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## **July 9 - Tuesday, Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Forbearance is patience under testing and trying circumstances,  
which contributes to building strength of character.**

### **Hosea 8:4-7 & 11-13**

Hosea speaks of Israel's break with their noble traditions. They had appointed their own kings and they had turned to idol worship. They have broken away from Davidic Kingdom and turned away from the law of Yahweh. In this excerpt, we read about Hosea condemning these practices as unacceptable to God and calling Israel to turn to the God of their Fathers.

**Be faithful to your noble traditions...be grounded in your heritage of faith.**

### **Psalm 115**

**Our God is in heaven;  
Whatever he wills, he does.  
Their idols are silver and gold,  
The handiwork of men.....**

### **Mathew 9:32-38**

Jesus healed a mute and the mute began to speak. The people were amazed and said, "nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel". But the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons through the prince of demons. Some people turn to slander, gossip and the like when all else fails and that is what the Pharisees did.

**Be gracious! Accept and affirm the good that you see around you! Be open to the surprises that God sends your way!**

Where the Pharisees saw law breakers, sinners, outcasts and the like, Jesus saw "a rich harvest and the need for laborers to gather in the harvest. Jesus saw people to be welcomed and gathered in...people to be healed and reconciled....

**Be optimistic! Be positive! See the good in the world around you!**

**Saint of the day, July 9 - St. Augustine Zhao Rong & Companions and 52 other saints are remembered this day.**

Augustine Zhao Rong and his 119 companions, are the Martyr Saints of China. The 87 Chinese Catholics and 33 Western missionaries, from the mid-17th century to 1930, were martyred because of their ministry and, in some cases, for their refusal to apostatize. Many died in the Boxer Rebellion, in which anti-colonial peasant rebels slaughtered 30,000 Chinese converts to Christianity along with missionaries and other foreigners.

Christianity arrived in China by way of Syria in the 600s. Depending on China's relations with the outside world, Christianity over the centuries was free to grow or was forced to operate secretly. The 120 martyrs in this group died between 1648 and 1930. Eighty-seven of them were born in China, and were children, parents, catechists, or laborers, ranging in age from nine years to 72. This group includes four Chinese diocesan priests. The 33 foreign-born martyrs were mostly priests or women religious, especially from the Order of Preachers, the Paris Foreign Mission Society, the Friars Minor, Society of Jesus, Salesians of Don Bosco and Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

Augustine Zhao Rong was a Chinese soldier who accompanied Bishop John Gabriel Taurin Dufresse of the Paris Foreign Mission Society to his martyrdom in Beijing. Not long after his baptism, Augustine was ordained as a diocesan priest. He was martyred in 1815. Beatified in groups at various times, these 120 martyrs were canonized together in Rome on October 1, 2000 by Pope John Paul II.

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**July 10 – Wednesday, Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Jesus taught his disciples to patiently do everything possible to correct an erring brother or sister and that is what forbearance means.**

**(Mathew 18:21-22)**

**Hosea 10:1-3; 7-8; 12**

Hosea shared his vision of God breaking down and destroying the pillars and altars and sacred places which Israel had set up because they had become unfaithful to God and turned to false gods. He told his people that it was time to seek the Lord and keep seeking "till he come and rain down justice upon you".

**Keep seeking the Lord and His ways...never stop seeking!**

## **Psalm 105**

**Sing to him, sing his praise,  
Proclaim all his wondrous deeds.  
Glory in his holy name;  
Rejoice, O hearts that seek the Lord!**

## **Mathew 10:1-7**

Jesus saw a rich harvest and the need for laborers to gather in the harvest. And he sent out an extraordinary mixture of very ordinary men with the most profound message: “The Kingdom of God is at hand”.

**In Jesus, the ordinary became extraordinary and the extraordinary became ordinary! The disciples of Jesus were and still are men and women on the move, on a journey with a mission to share the good news of the presence of God’s kingdom.**

In Jesus strangers and enemies were transformed into a people of “communion”, of “fellowship”. Jesus began with a small group – the message had to be lived out in fellowship. The way of the Pharisees was separation; the way of Jesus was fellowship.

**People who ordinarily would not have stayed together became one in the spirit and mission of Jesus.**

**Saint of the day, July 10 - St. Veronica Guiliani and 14 other saints are remembered this day.**

Veronica was born Ursula Giuliani at Mercatelli, Italy on December 27, 1660. She was the youngest of seven sisters, three of whom embraced the monastic life. At the age of three years Giuliani supposedly began to show great compassion for the poor. She would set apart a portion of her food for them, and even part with her clothes when she met a poor child scantily clad. Her mother died when Ursula was seven years of age. It is said that when her mother was dying she called her five daughters to her bedside and entrusted each of them to one of the five wounds of Jesus. Veronica was entrusted to the wound below Christ’s heart.

At the age of 17, Veronica joined the Poor Clares directed by the Capuchins. Her father had wanted her to marry, but she convinced him to allow her to become a nun. In her first years in the monastery, she worked in the kitchen, infirmary, sacristy, and also served as portress. At the age of 34, she was made novice mistress, a position she held for 22 years. When she was 37, Veronica received the stigmata. Life was not the same after that.

Church authorities in Rome wanted to test Veronica’s authenticity and so conducted an investigation. She lost the office of novice mistress temporarily and was not allowed to attend

Mass except on Sundays or holy days. Through all of this Veronica did not become bitter, and the investigation eventually restored her as novice mistress. Though she protested against it, at the age of 56 she was elected abbess, an office she held for 11 years until her death. Veronica was very devoted to the Eucharist and to the Sacred Heart. She offered her sufferings for the missions, died in 1727, and was canonized in 1839.

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## **July 11 – Thursday, Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Forbearance is the quality of a noble, royal, holy and godly character.**

### **Hosea 11:1-4, 8-9**

Hosea speaks of the love God has for his people. God's love is the basis and the source of Israel's redemption. Hosea says God's love can NOT destroy - only give life!

**May your love be life-giving!**

### **Psalm 80**

**Once again, O Lord of hosts,  
Look down from heaven and see:  
Take care of this vine  
And protect what your tight hand has planed.....**

### **Mathew 10:7-15**

Jesus instructed his disciples to go out and proclaim the presence of God's Kingdom. They were to do everything - all their service, all their ministry - to proclaim the presence of God's Kingdom. The disciples were given a God-directed mission and not a self-fulfilling, self-directed mission. There was urgency about fulfilling this mission because the mission was the proclamation of the presence of the Kingdom of God – it was about the presence of the kingdom and not about some future reality.

**So disciples of Jesus were called to live a simple life, travel light and not be burdened with stuff that weighs them down.... They were not sent out to acquire, to collect, to possess - but to give...the gift you have received, give as a gift.**

**Disciples of Jesus were and still are called to be bearers of good news, of peace, of God's forgiving love, of God's healing presence.....and never to become a burden to others!**

**They were to stay close to.....be in touch with "worthy" people, good, decent and noble people and reach out to all.**

**Saint of the day, July 11 - Saint Benedict and 15 other saints are remembered this day.**

Saint Benedict was born into a noble family in Norcia on March 2, 480. After attending primary schools in Norcia, Benedict went to Rome to broaden his knowledge of literature and law. However, since he was probably disgusted by the dissolute lifestyle of his peers and by Rome's difficult political situation, he retired to Affile with a group of priests.

At Affile, Benedict withdrew from social life and took shelter in a cave in the ruins of Nero's village, near Subiaco, where he began to live as a hermit. Immersed in solitude, his only contact with the outside world was with a monk called Romanus, whose monastery was nearby. He gave Benedict a monk's habit and provided for his spiritual and material needs. Three solitary years followed. Some shepherds befriended Benedict. They began to follow his teachings and the pastoral and apostolic principles of the Benedictine Order took root. Benedict is considered the father of western monasticism.

Benedict moved from a noble family to a hermitage and from the hermitage to a monastery – from an affluent life to the quiet life of the hermitage and from hermitage to life in a community. He taught people a way to use prayer and Christ-like attitudes to overcome their fears and mistrust of each other. He taught his followers, nuns and monks, to live a life of prayer and solitude and to see hospitality as the quality of their community life.

Benedict died on March 21, 547. He foresaw his coming death, informing his close and faraway disciples that the end was near. Six days before dying, he had the grave which he was to share with his deceased sister Saint Scholastica, opened. Then, completely exhausted, he asked to be taken into his oratory where, after taking his last Holy Communion, he died supported by his monks. He was Canonized in 1220 by Pope Honorius III

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## **July 12 – Friday, Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**To forbear is to hold back or withhold which implies patience and self-control.**

### **Hosea 14:2-10**

Hosea called his people to return to the Lord. He promised that God would forgive his people because of His love. He promised healing and wholeness for God's people because God loves. God would make them fruitful again. He encouraged his people to be wise, to be prudent, to walk in the way of the Lord and become just in their ways.

**Be wise and prudent and learn to walk in the way of the Lord in justice and truth.**

### **Psalm 51**

Have mercy on me God in your kindness;  
in the greatness of your compassion,  
wipe out my offense.  
Thoroughly ask me from my guilt  
and of my sin cleanse me.

### **Mathew 10:16-23**

Jesus instructed his disciples to be cautious and discerning in the way they live and fulfill the mission which he had given them.

They must keep proclaiming the Kingdom. They must also be prepared to face adversities. Adversities may come from family, from the state, even from the Synagogue.

Jesus encouraged them not to be afraid, but always remain confident.

They were not to be worried about what to say or how they should say what had to be said. Because they will not be the speakers, "the spirit of the father will be speaking" in them.

**Do not be afraid! The Spirit of the Father will be speaking in you!**

**Be prudent! Be discerning in taking risks! Unnecessary risks could bring disaster!**

## **Saint of the day, July 12 - St. John Jones and 25 other saints are remembered this day**

John Jones was born in Wales into a Welsh family, who had remained faithful Roman Catholics throughout the Protestant Reformation. He was ordained a diocesan priest and was imprisoned in the Marshalsea under the name Robert Buckley from 1582 to about 1585 for administering the sacraments. By summer 1586 he was out on bond, but in 1587 confined at Wisbech Castle. He left England, either escaped or exiled, in 1590 and at the age of sixty joined the Conventual Franciscans at Pontoise. Afterwards he went to Rome, where he lived among the Observant Friars of the Ara Coeli. After a time he was sent back by his superiors to the English mission. He reached London towards the end of 1592, and stayed temporarily at the house which Father John Gerard, S.J., had provided for missionary priests. He ministered to Catholics in the English countryside until his arrest in 1596.

In 1596 the 'priest catcher' Richard Topcliffe was informed by a spy that Father Jones had visited two Catholics and had said Mass in their home. It was later shown that the two Catholics were actually in prison when the alleged offense took place. Regardless, Jones was arrested, severely tortured and scourged.

Following his torture, Jones was imprisoned for nearly two years. During this time Jones helped sustain John Rigby in his faith, who later also became one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. On July 3, 1598 Father Jones was tried on the charge of "going over the seas in the first year of Her Majesty's reign (1558) and there being made a priest by the authority from Rome and then returning to England contrary to statute". He was convicted of high treason and sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered.

The execution was delayed by about an hour because the hangman forgot to bring a rope. Jones used the time to preach to the people and answer their questions. When the time came to draw away the cart, the hangman whipped the horses; but they were held back by three or four fellows till Jones had finished what he was saying. John Jones' dismembered remains were fixed atop poles on roads leading to Newington and Lambeth. His remains were later reputedly removed by at least two Catholic Englishmen, one of whom suffered a long imprisonment for this offense. He was canonized on October 25, 1970 by Pope Paul VI as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales, who are commemorated on that date.

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## **July 13 – Saturday, Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Forbearance is making allowance for each other's faults.**

## **Isaiah 6:1-8**

In this excerpt, Isaiah tells us of his overwhelming experience of God. He was in the sanctuary where he heard the angels singing "Holy, Holy, Holy..." He became overcome with his own sense of unworthiness in the presence of the Holy and cried out "Woe is me.... I am a man of unclean lips...." At this point, once again, he had an amazing experience of being cleansed and being called by God and he accepted that call in faith.

**Listen to the Lord calling you. Reflect on what he is calling you to be and to do today. Be generous in your response. The Lord will make you worthy of his call and empower you to fulfill your mission.**

## **Psalm 93**

**The Lord is king in splendor robed;  
Robed is the Lord and girt about with strength,  
And he has made the world firm, not to be moved.  
Your throne stands firm from of old;  
From everlasting you are, O Lord.**

## **Mathew 10:24-33**

Mathew gives us a few disconnected sayings of Jesus and we need to reflect on them one by one and not search for connections.

First, Jesus warned the disciples of the problems they will face. The disciple cannot expect any more favors than the Master.... they have to be prepared to face testing times like their master. He encouraged them to be fearless!

Truth is meant to be seen, not concealed. We try to hide certain things from ourselves, certain things from others and certain things, even from God! Jesus calls us to be honest, sincere - not hypocritical! Jesus calls us to be fearless - not reckless.

God's care is very personal. We are not lost in the crowd - God takes personal care of us. "Are not five sparrows sold for a few pennies? Yet not one of them is neglected by God." God personally cares for you. So be fearless. You are worth more.....

**Saint of the day, July 13 - Saint Henry and 13 other saints are remembered this day**

St. Henry was born in 972 to Duke Henry of Bavaria and Princess Gisela of Burgundy. During his youth, Henry received both an education and spiritual guidance from bishop Wolfgang of Regensburg who was, eventually, canonized a saint. Henry took on his father's position as Duke of Bavaria in 995, one year after St. Wolfgang's death. The Church supported his accession to the throne as King of Germany in 1002. As king, Henry encouraged the German bishops to reform the practices of the Church in accordance with canon law.

In 1014, the German king journeyed to Rome where Pope Benedict VIII formally crowned him as head of the Holy Roman Empire. The emperor demonstrated his loyalty to the Pope by confirming Benedict VIII's authority over the city of Rome. Henry made his journey from Rome back to Germany into a pilgrimage of sorts, stopping at various monasteries along the way. Henry became a great patron of churches and monasteries, donating so much of his wealth to them that his relatives complained that he was behaving irresponsibly. He was also a great patron of the poor, making enormous contributions for their relief.

The emperor's extraordinary generosity was made possible in part by his lack of an heir. He was married to a woman who was later canonized as a saint, St. Cunigunde of Luxembourg, but the two had no children.

For the last several years of his life, Henry had to deal with serious illness, and an additional ailment that crippled his left leg, along with his imperial responsibilities. He found support in prayer during these trials, and seriously considered resigning his imperial leadership in order to become a monk. After several years of illness, St. Henry II died in July of 1024. Pope Eugene III canonized him in 1146.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**The true and solid peace of nations consists  
not in equality of arms, but in mutual trust alone.**  
(Pope John XXIII)