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November 23, 2026

Brothers and Sisters,

Today's Gospel reading tells us about Jesus pointing to a poor widow as a model of generosity. Jesus was sitting opposite the treasury at the temple. He saw many rich people putting in large sums of money, and then a poor widow putting in two small copper coins – like a penny or two in our terms. He called his disciples and gave this poor widow as an example to follow. The rich gave out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty had put in everything she had. What Jesus praised was not the amount of money that she gave, but the person that she was – she was benevolent, generous and self-sacrificing. The widow's small gift came from a heart of abundance. Her way of giving is the practice that Jesus offered the disciples as an example.

The most profound giving is sacrificial giving, whether big or small and it is the sacrifice that really counts. Young children give their allowance, Old people give their Social Security or the little pension they have, Young couples help other young people getting married, rich people offer the largest gift they can give in response to urgent needs, etc. Whatever the size of the gift, it is the sacrifice that counts. When you meet a person, young or old, rich or poor, who sets his need aside and gives, you have found a truly generous person and that is a very special gift!

Generosity is other-centeredness…being mindful of others and looking out for the needs of others! Generosity is giving…giving of ourselves and not just sharing our possession. Generosity is sacrificial…it is easy to give from our abundance, but true giving requires sacrifice. Generous people give in response to urgent needs even when they are in need themselves…it is genuine, unconditional giving, without expecting a return. Generosity is not something that happens because we have become wealthy. It is our lifestyle, the way we live, think and act. It is the way we approach the world.

On Thursday this week, we will celebrate thanksgiving, remembering the generosity of the many who blessed us, served us, made sacrifices for us and gave of themselves generously. A few days later, on Sunday, we will begin the season of Advent and work our way to Christmas and New Year. Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas are not just days of celebrations…they are seasons of celebrations and seasons of generosity, remembering the generosity of our God and that of many people in our lives. During this season of generosity, let us be mindful of the less privileged in our communities, rethink our needs, downsize our appetites, share with the hungry and the needy from the abundance that is available to us…gratefully and generously!

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

November 23-28, 2026

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7)**

November 23 – Monday, Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

The most important accomplishment in a whole day is being still and serene in the midst of a busy day.

Revelation 14:1-5

This excerpt contains another vision of John where he sees the faithful survive the anger of hostile powers. He sees the faithful survivors, 144,000 of them (signifying completeness, perfection and inclusiveness), as pure, without deceit, without flow, with names of the Lamb and of his father written on their forehead (identified as God's own) rejoicing and singing hymns before the throne of God.

Psalm 24

**The Lord's is the earth and its fullness;
The world and all who dwell on it.
For he founded it upon the seas
and established upon the rivers.**

Luke 21:1-4

In the court of the women in the temple, there were thirteen collection boxes known as the trumpets. They were shaped like trumpets with the narrow part at the top and the wider part at the foot. Each was assigned to offerings for a different purpose - for the wood that was burned for sacrifice, for the incense burned on the altar, for the upkeep of the vessels and so

on. It is into these that the rich were flinging their coins. Among them was a poor widow who put in "two lepta". A lepton was the smallest of coins; the name means "the thin one". Jesus said that this "thin one" outvalued all the other offerings because it was all she had. She gave from her want and not from her surplus. **She was in her gift and she was her gift.**

The value of any gift is in the spirit in which it is given and the sacrifice which it involves and above all the presence of the giver in the gift. The gift must carry something of the giver.

It is not the size or the weight or the shape or the color or glitter or the glamour, but the presence of the giver in the gift that makes the gift a GIFT.

Walk softly. Give generously.
Listen intensely. Speak tenderly. Pray fervently.

Saint of the Day, November 23 - Saint Clement and 11 other saints are remembered this day.

Clement of Rome was the third successor of Saint Peter, reigning as pope during the last decade of the first century. He's known as one of the Church's five "Apostolic Fathers," those who provided a direct link between the Apostles and later generations of Church Fathers.

Clément's First Epistle to the Corinthians was preserved and widely read in the early Church. This letter from the bishop of Rome to the Church in Corinth concerns a split that alienated a large number of the laity from the clergy. Deploring the unauthorized and unjustifiable division in the Corinthian community, Clement urged charity to heal the rift. According to tradition, Clement was imprisoned under the Emperor Trajan and during this time led a ministry among fellow prisoners. Thereafter he was executed by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the sea. He was Pope, probably, from the year 88 till his death in 99.

November 24 - Tuesday, Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

When you do the good thing, the right thing and the wise thing,
you find peace and serenity. Do it again and again.

Revelation 14:14-19

John had his vision of the Parousia (the second coming of Christ). In this vision, he saw one like

the Son of Man reaping a fully ripe and rich harvest and the angel reaping those destined to be judged. Several symbols are used in this excerpt to describe the Parousia as God's judgment over the whole land rather than a few chosen people. Be confident and be faithful! God will gather in the good and faithful.

Psalm 96

Say among the nations: The Lord is king.
He has made the world firm, not to be moved;
He governs the peoples with equity.

Luke 21:5-11

Jesus had just pointed to a widow and her simple offering as an example and inspiration for all. The widow's simple gift involved great sacrifice. She gave out of her want and not from the surplus. Even as they listened to the call for simplicity, generosity and sacrifice, they could think only about the glory of the temple adorned with expensive stones and ornaments. The pillars of the porches in the temple were made of single blocks of white marble, forty feet high. The most famous among the ornaments was the great vine made of solid gold.

Their comment on the splendor of the temple moved Jesus to prophecy. He told them that these stones and ornaments would not endure. They would all be pulled down and destroyed. To the Jews it was unthinkable that the glory of the temple would be shattered to dust. Jesus called his listeners to be watchful and learn to read the signs of the time.

Do not seek glory in things that do not last. Seek glory in the enduring and the lasting that are of God and from God!

Be alert! Stay awake! Be watchful! Read the signs of the times! Prayerfully listen and discern what God is saying to you now!

Saint of the Day, November 24 - St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions and 146 other saints are remembered this day.

Anddrew was born Trần An Dũng in 1795 in Vietnam, taking the name Andrew at his baptism (Anrê Dũng) and was ordained a priest on March 15, 1823. During persecution, Andrew Dũng changed his name to Lạc to avoid capture, and thus he is memorialized as Andrew Dũng-Lạc (Anrê Dũng Lạc).

Andrew Dung-Lac was one of 117 people martyred in Vietnam between 1820 and 1862. Members of the companions group gave their lives for Christ in the 17th, 18th, and 19th

centuries, and received beatification during four different occasions between 1900 and 1951. All were canonized during the papacy of Saint John Paul II.

Christianity came to Vietnam through the Portuguese. Jesuits opened the first permanent mission at Da Nang in 1615. They ministered to Japanese Catholics who had been driven from Japan. Severe persecutions were launched at least three times in the 19th century. During the six decades after 1820, between 100,000 and 300,000 Catholics were killed or subjected to great hardship. Foreign missionaries martyred in the first wave included priests of the Paris Mission Society, and Spanish Dominican priests and tertiaries.

In 1832, Emperor Minh-Mang banned all foreign missionaries, and tried to make all Vietnamese deny their faith by trampling on a crucifix. Like the priest-holes in Ireland during English persecution, many hiding places were offered in homes of the faithful. Persecution broke out again in 1847, when the emperor suspected foreign missionaries and Vietnamese Christians of sympathizing with a rebellion led by of one of his sons. The last of the martyrs were 17 laypersons, one of them a 9-year-old, executed in 1862. That year a treaty with France guaranteed religious freedom to Catholics, but it did not stop all persecution.

November 25 - Wednesday, Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Within yourself is a sacred space, a sanctuary of peace and serenity to which you can retreat at any time.

Revelation 15:1-4

This vision of John describes the calamities that surround the final judgment. It also reveals that the victory and glory of the redeeming Lamb is the apex and the goal of the history of salvation. Those who have come through the battle and the suffering into blessedness sing the song of Moses; “Mighty and wonderful are your works Lord…..Righteous and true are your ways O King…….” John had the vision of the saints marching into victory, into blessedness and glory and singing the praises of God.

Psalm 98

Sing to the Lord a new song,
For he has done wondrous deeds;
His right hand has won victory for him,
his holy arm.

Luke 21:12-19

Jesus told his disciples that they will be arrested and persecuted, even delivered over by their own families; that they will be hated, but not a "hair on their head will be lost". Jesus encouraged them to stand strong and not be afraid.

Trust in the Lord! Stand strong and be not afraid!

Jesus told them to trust and not be worried about defending themselves. He promised to give them words to speak and wisdom to know what to say to the adversaries. He said to them "by patient endurance, you will save your lives".

Pray for the gift of "patient endurance".

Pray for the gift of wisdom to listen and discern what God is saying to you now and for the courage to respond to God's call.

Saint of the Day, November 25 - St. Catherine of Alexandria and 6 other saints are remembered this day

Saint Catherine of Alexandria, or Saint Katharine of Alexandria, also known as Saint Catherine of the Wheel and The Great Martyr Saint Catherine, is, according to tradition was martyred in the early 4th century at the hands of the pagan emperor Maxentius. According to her hagiography, she was both a princess and a noted scholar, who became a Christian around the age of 14, converted hundreds of people to Christianity, and was martyred around the age of 18. More than 1,100 years after Catherine's martyrdom, Joan of Arc identified her as one of the saints who appeared to and counselled her.

The Eastern Orthodox Church venerates her as a Great Martyr and celebrates her feast day on November 24 or 25, depending on the regional tradition. In Catholicism she is traditionally revered as one of **the Fourteen Holy Helpers***.** In 1969 the Roman Catholic Church removed her feast day from the General Roman Calendar; however, she continued to be commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on 25 November. In 2002, her feast was restored to the General Roman Calendar as an optional memorial.

*****Fourteen Holy Helpers**. Saints Acacius, Barbara, Blaise, Christopher, Cyriacus, Catherine of Alexandria, Denis, Erasmus of Formiae, Eustace, George, Giles, Margaret of Antioch, Pantaleon, and Vitus. The Fourteen Holy Helpers are a group of saints venerated together in Roman Catholicism because their intercession is believed to be particularly effective, especially against various diseases.

In the middle of the 14th century, the plague - also called “The Black Death” - also called “The Greatest Catastrophe Ever” - ravaged Europe, killing 50 million people, or about 60% of the population (a vastly higher death rate than coronavirus), within a few years.

Lacking the advances of modern medicine and layering dead bodies in pits like “lasagne with layers of pasta and cheese,” the people had no choice but to cling to their faith. It was at this time that the Fourteen Holy Helpers - Catholics saints, all but one of whom were early martyrs - came to be invoked by Catholics against the plague and other misfortunes.

According to New Liturgical Movement, devotion to these 14 saints started in Germany at the time of the plague, and they were called “Nothelfer,” which in German means “helpers in need.” As bouts of the plague resurfaced over the decades, devotion to the Holy Helpers spread to other countries, and eventually Nicholas V declared that devotion to the saints came with special indulgences.

November 26 – Thursday, Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today
and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Today, the fourth Thursday of November is Thanksgiving Day in U.S.A.
We wish all visitors to our website in USA a very happy and joyful day.
May God bless you and your families with grateful hearts,
joyful sharing and the spirit of hopefulness!
May this day be a day of blessing and grace for you and for all!

Eating, drinking, good conversation, hospitality and being together
creates a home out of a house.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Revelation 18:1-2, 21-23; 19:1-3, 9

The author describes the fall of the great city of Babylon with all its evil forces and being thrown into the depth of the sea not to be found again. Then he describes the joy of the great

multitude in heaven singing “Alleluia, Salvation and Glory” at the feast of the lamb. Mighty kingdoms will fall, but God’s kingdom will stand and His people will rejoice.

Psalm 100

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
Come before him with joyful songs.
Know that the Lord is God.

Luke 21:20-28

They admired the beauty and glory of their temple - gazed at it with amazement! They thought they were privileged to be in the presence of a beautiful and enduring reality, the construction of which took over 80 years. Besides its obvious beauty, the fact that the temple was revered as God’s dwelling place on earth made it a permanent structure in Jewish life and spirituality. So, they were shocked at the prediction Jesus made! Even angry! When Luke wrote his Gospel, the prediction of Jesus had come true! The temple was gone! Titus and his troops had conquered Jerusalem and leveled the temple in 70 C.E.

But God had not gone from there, nor was he gone from the hearts of the believers! The harsh realities that Jesus predicted did come true and believers faced them with courage. Jesus encouraged the disciples to accept these hardships as opportunities to bear witness to him and to the good news of salvation. He says: “stand up straight and raise your heads for your ransom is near at hand” - remember his teachings, trust his word and not give over to apocalyptic anxiety. He encourages us not to worry about fearful omens and not give in to the dread of suffering that could come as a result of following him.

Our faith today is being tested. We need to stand our ground - be deeply rooted in our faith tradition.

Our faith must be true, our witness must be authentic and continuous, our hope must be our strength, our love must be forgiving and gracious and benevolent…….

Saint of the Day, November 26 - St. Columban and 14 other saints are remembered this day.

Saint Columban, (Columbanus in Latin) was born around 540 in Leinster, Ireland. He was well-educated in the areas of grammar, rhetoric, geometry, and the Holy Scriptures. He was one of the greatest missionaries of the Celtic church, who initiated a revival of spirituality on the

European continent. Educated in the monastery of Bangor, County Down, Columban left Ireland for Europe around 590 with 12 monks. They won wide respect for the rigor of their discipline, their preaching, and their commitment to charity and religious life in a time characterized by clerical laxity and civil strife. Columban established several monasteries in Europe which became centers of religion and culture.

Columban became unpopular because of his attacks on the degeneracy in the Burgundian court and among local clergy. He reproved the king for his licentious life, insisting that he should get married. Since this threatened the power of the queen mother, Columban was deported back to Ireland. His ship ran aground in a storm, and he continued his work in Europe, ultimately arriving in Italy, where he found favor with the king of the Lombards. In his last years he established the famous monastery of Bobbio, where he died in 615. His writings include a treatise on penance and against Arianism, sermons, poetry, and his monastic rule.

November 27 – Friday, Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.

(Albert Einstein)

Revelation 20:1-4, 11 – 21:2

In this vision, John sees the ancient dragon being chained and hurled into the abyss which is then closed and sealed. He saw the reign of Christ following the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment. He saw new heavens and the new earth. The communion and the celebration of the saints have begun.

Be confident. Be awake and alert and prepared! The Lord is breaking into your personal history!

Psalm 84

My soul yearns and pines
for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my flesh
cry out for the living God.

Luke 21:29-33

Jesus had talked about the "Day of the Lord" and the terrible events that surround that day. He talked about what he himself had to face and what his disciples eventually would face. Hearing all this, the disciples wanted to know what they should do and what signs they should be looking for.

Jesus used familiar imageries of sun, moon, stars, gathering of clouds, budding fig tree, etc. to describe the reality of God breaking into history. Jesus encouraged them to recognize the coming of God in all happenings and not look for God in extra-ordinary events.

Be alert, stay awake and continue to fulfill the mission of Jesus in whatever situation you may be……...recognize the presence and movement of God in all you do!

Saint of the Day, November 27 - Saint Francesco Antonio Fasani and 39 other saints are remembered this day.

Francesco was born Giovanniello Fasani on August 6, 1681 in Lucera, in the Province of Foggia, then part of the Kingdom of Naples. He began his studies at the Conventual friary in his town and entered the Order there, taking the religious name Francesco and Antonio. After his ordination to the priesthood, he taught philosophy to younger friars, served as guardian of his friary, and later became provincial minister. When his term of office ended, Francesco became master of novices and finally pastor in his hometown.

In his various ministries, he was loving, devout, and penitential. He was a sought-after confessor and preacher. One witness at the canonical hearings regarding Francesco's holiness testified, "In his preaching he spoke in a familiar way, filled as he was with the love of God and neighbor; fired by the Spirit, he made use of the word and deed of holy Scripture, stirring his listeners and moving them to do penance." Francesco showed himself a loyal friend of the poor, never hesitating to seek from benefactors what was needed.

At his death in Lucera in 1742, children ran through the streets crying out, "The saint is dead! The saint is dead!" Francesco was canonized in 1986.

November 28 – Saturday, Thirty Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles.
It takes away today's peace and serenity.

Revelation 22:1-7

John describes the heavenly Jerusalem as the abode of the divine life, the very dwelling place of God. The throne of God is the center of this place which replaces the temple. The river of life flows there, and fruit bearing trees grow on the bank of this river. All who have been welcomed into this presence will have no need for the light from the lamp or the sun. God will give them light and they will reign forever.

The saints of God will enjoy the eternal presence of life, light, joy, and love in the very presence of God.

Psalm 95

Come let us sing joyfully to the Lord;
Let us acclaim the rock of our salvation.
Let us greet him with thanksgiving;
Let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

Luke 21:34-36

Jesus continued to call his disciples to be alert and awake and to stand strong. He told them about the difficulties ahead. Throughout his ministry, Jesus emphasized that the suffering of persecution for the sake of the Kingdom and for the cause of justice was an integral part of being a disciple.

The "Day of the Lord" will come. No one knew the time or the day or the hour.
God will break in at the least expected moment, through least expected events, people, and situations. So, it is urgent to stay awake, alert and prepared. Jesus said to them, "Pray constantly for strength…"

Be alert and awake and be prepared and continue to fulfill the mission of Jesus in proclaiming the kingdom of justice and peace for all.

Saint of the Day, November 28 - Saint James of the March and 14 other saints are remembered this day.

St. James of the March was born Dominic Gangala in early 1390 to a poor family in the March of Ancona in central Italy. As a child, he began his studies at Offida under the guidance of his uncle, a priest, who soon afterwards sent him to school in the nearby city of Ascoli Piceno. He later studied at the University of Perugia where he took the degree of Doctor in Canon and Civil Law.

He entered the Order of Friars Minor in Assisi in 1416 and took the name Jacobus (James in English). During his novitiate, he practiced all virtues so well that he became a model of religious perfection. Soon after his ordination, he was sent out as a missionary. He traveled through Italy, Dalmatia, Croatia, Albania, Bosnia, Austria, Bohemia, Saxony, Prussia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Russia for over 50 years. During the years 1427 and 1428 he preached in Vienna, Augsburg, Ratisbon, Ulm, Limburg, Brandenburg, and Leipzig. He spent the last three years of his life in Naples, and died there on November 28., 1476.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Be thankful for the struggles you go through.
They make you stronger, wiser, and humble.
Don't let them break you.
Let them form you, shape you and transform you!

