Wellspring
Fransalian Center for Spirituality
P. O. Box 440, Whitehouse, Texas 75791
www.wellspringcommunity.net frgusmsfs@gmail.com

November 30, 2026

Brothers and Sisters,

The Scripture readings of today's mass call us to be people of hope and let our hope carry us forward through these difficult and troublesome days. In the first reading, Isaiah shares his beautiful vision of the Lord's house being established as the highest of all mountains, raised above all hills, to which all nations would come. On this mountain, a sense of brotherhood, harmony and peace would come. He dreams of the time when all instruments of destruction will be transformed into creative and life-giving instruments, "sword into plowshares" and "spears into pruning hooks." Isaiah calls us today, as he called his people, to move in hope, unafraid and "walk in the light of the Lord."

The season of Advent is a season of hope. As deformed by sin, violence and war, the shape of this world will pass away. We are offered the hope that God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth where justice and peace will meet, and the blessedness that comes from this transformed world will surpass all the longings for peace which spring up in the human heart.

Our hope is rooted in the unconditional love of God for each human being. God never gives up on anyone. God's love is enduring, steadfast, unconditional, unconquerable, and all-embracing. Our hope is not a passive waiting for things to happen. It calls forth continual conversion if we are to hasten our journey into the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love, and peace. We are constantly challenged to "be attentive and watchful," "Pray constantly for strength," "live loving and blameless" lives and be people of hope.

Let us share Isaiah's vision of a transformed world where justice and peace become the norm and strive to be people of hope who walk in the light of the Lord! Let us meditate on Isaiah's vision of turning "swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks." Let us pray that all destructive instruments will be turned into creative, life-giving instruments – Weapons of war into weapons of peace; Anger into Gentleness; Violence into Peace; Hatred into Love…….

I encourage you to take a few moments each day of this week to reflect on how your day has been, on how you walked in the light of the Lord and on what contribution you have made to the creation of the transformed world as Isaiah envisioned.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

First Week of Advent

November 30 – December 5, 2026

**"During Advent we do not just live in anticipation of Christmas;
we are also called to rekindle the anticipation of the glorious return of Christ,
when he will return at the end of time, preparing ourselves, with consistent
and courageous choices, for the final encounter with him.
We remember Christmas, we await the glorious return of Christ,
and also our personal encounter: the day in which the Lord will call."
(Pope Francis)**

November 30 – St. Andrew, Apostle

The most powerful weapon you can use to end war is peace.

Romans 10:9-18

Paul tells the Christians in Rome that no one who believes in Jesus would be put to shame! He praises all who proclaim the good news of Jesus, "How wonderful are the feet of those who announce good news!"

Bring the good news of Jesus to someone today!

Psalm 19

**The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul;
The decree of the Lord is trustworthy,
Giving wisdom to the simple.**

Mathew 4:18-22

Simon, Andrew, James and John left all they had to follow Jesus. They were not men of great scholarship or influence or wealth or social background. They were not poor either. They were

just men, simple working men, just ordinary folks. They were fishermen. Good fishermen must possess certain qualities which make them good fishermen:

Patience - learn to wait till fish takes the bait. **Gentleness and Calmness** - Quick moves and restlessness will never make a good fisherman. **Perseverance** - learn to try and try again. **Courage** - be ready to risk and face the fury of the sea. **An eye for the right moment** - discern the right time to fish, certain times the fish won't bite. **Fit the bait for the fish** - one fish rises to one bait, another to another bait**. Be invisible** - stay out of sight, even his shadow keeps the fish from biting.

Reflect on these qualities of fishermen and let them become your quality!

Saint of the Day, November 30 - St. Andrew, Apostle and 5 other saints are remembered this day.

Andrew, the brother of Peter, from Bethsaida in Galilee was a fisherman. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that while walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Andrew and Simon Peter fishing and called them to become his disciples and they did. However, the Gospel of John tells us that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. When Jesus walked by one day, John the Baptist stated, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" and then Andrew followed Jesus.

We do not know much more about Andrew. Andrew is often shown as the man who brings others to Jesus. He brings his brother, helps the Greek men who wanted to speak to Jesus and brings the boy with five loaves and fishes.

Tradition tells us that Andrew went to preach the Good News around the shores of the Black Sea and throughout what is now Greece and Turkey. Andrew was martyred by crucifixion in Patras (Greece). He was bound, rather than nailed, to a cross, as is described in the Acts of Andrew. He was crucified on a cross form known as "crux decussata," which is an X-shaped cross or a "saltire." Today this is commonly referred to as "St. Andrew's Cross." It is believed that Andrew requested to be crucified this way, because he deemed himself "unworthy to be crucified on the same type of cross as Jesus."

December 1 - Tuesday, First Week of Advent

Let go of the thoughts that make you week and helpless
and you will find peace and serenity.

Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the power and the virtue of the promised king in whom the promise of God would be fulfilled. The spirit of the Lord will bless and empower this chosen king to be a man of virtue beyond all ordinary human understanding. The spirit of the Lord will rest on him and empower him with gifts. The Church's tradition lists seven gifts of the Holy Spirit as Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord, as described in this excerpt from Isaiah (Isaiah 11:1-2). Isaiah saw them as God's gifts to the king for the service of his people. We see them today as gifts for the common good - for the benefit of the community, and not for personal gain/profit.

The list of gifts, as seen above, does not imply that there are no other gifts from the Spirit of God. There are as many gifts as there are people. The list could be seen and understood as inclusive of all gifts that God gives to each of us. It is up to each of us to open ourselves, discern and discover our own gifts with which we are gifted. We are gifted persons, a gifted Community, and a gifted Church.

We are gifted with the Holy Spirit and spirited with His gifts. BE GRATEFUL. The Holy Spirit calls us to develop these gifts, share them with others and use them for the service of the Community.

Psalm 72

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
And with your justice, the king's son;
He shall govern your people with justice
And your afflicted ones with judgment.

Luke 10:21-24.

Jesus had sent the disciples out on their first mission. They returned and reported to him all that they had done…they preached good news, cast out evil spirits, etc. As he listened to them, he was moved to pray with gratitude for the wonderful gift of the Father to the simple people who answered his call. He invited the disciples to be grateful. God continues to reveal himself through simple and humble people.

Let us rejoice and be grateful for the ongoing revelation of God and God's ways through the many people, events, and situations in our own life.

Saint of the Day, December 1 - Bl. Charles de Foucauld and 20 other saints are remembered this day.

Charles de Foucauld (Brother Charles of Jesus) was born in Strasbourg, France on September 15, 1858. Orphaned at the age of six, he and his sister Marie were raised by their grandfather in whose footsteps he followed by taking up a military career. He lost his faith as an adolescent. His taste for easy living was well known to all and yet he showed that he could be strong willed and constant in difficult situations. He undertook a risky exploration of Morocco. Seeing the way Muslims expressed their faith questioned him and he began repeating, "My God, if you exist, let me come to know you."

On his return to France, the warm, respectful welcome he received from his deeply Christian family made him continue his search. Under the guidance of Fr. Huvelin he rediscovered God in October 1886. He was then 28 years old. He said, "As soon as I believed in God, I understood that I could not do otherwise than to live for him alone." A pilgrimage to the Holy Land revealed his vocation to him: to follow Jesus in his life at Nazareth. He spent 7 years as a Trappist, first in France and then at Akbès in Syria. Later he began to lead a life of prayer and adoration, alone, near a convent of Poor Clares in Nazareth.

Ordained a priest at 43 (1901) he left for the Sahara, living at first in Beni Abbès and later at Tamanrasset among the Tuaregs of the Hoggar. He wanted to be among those who were, "the furthest removed, the most abandoned." He wanted all who drew close to him to find in him a brother, "a universal brother." In a great respect for the culture and faith of those among whom he lived, his desire was to "shout the Gospel with his life". "I would like to be sufficiently good that people would say, "If such is the servant, what must the Master be like?" On the evening of December 1, 1916, he was killed by a band of marauders.

December 2 - Wednesday, First Week of Advent

I do not want the peace which passeth understanding;
I want the understanding which bringeth peace."
(Helen Keller)

Isaiah 25:6-10

This excerpt describes Isaiah's vision of the whole creation moving toward a final day of unending celebration, to a joyful feast where people from all over the earth gather with God and his heavenly court. Rich food and choice wine symbolize fulfillment, complete satisfaction. **A loving and benevolent and gracious God will provide for all people.**

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Beside restful waters he leads me;
He refreshes my soul…….

Mathew 15:29-37

Mathew tells us how gracious, kind, and compassionate Jesus was. While his primary concern was to proclaim the kingdom, he became sensitive to the most basic needs of people, their hunger and thirst and their need for rest and he did something about it, responded to their basic needs…. he gave them not only the bread of God's word, but bread for the body.

Be sensitive to the basic needs of people! Be mindful of the hunger and thirst of the less fortunate in your community!

This excerpt describes to us how God's power and compassion met and reached out to the many needs of people and to the different situations of people.

May your power and your compassion meet…. may justice and peace embrace….and may you reach out to all in need of compassion and love.

Jesus did not burden people with lectures, with doctrines, with ideals…. he fed them, healed them and strengthened them for their ongoing journey.

May you find strength and comfort in listening to the word of Jesus. And may you be an instrument of strength for others on their journey.

Saint of the Day, December 2 - St. Bibiana and 7 other saints are remembered this day.

We know very little about St. Bibiana. Tradition tells us that, in the year 363, she suffered persecution under the then governor of Rome. She was the daughter of Christians, Flavian, a Roman knight, and Dafrosa, his wife. Flavian was tortured and sent into exile, where he died of his wounds. Dafrosa was beheaded, and their two daughters, Bibiana and Demetria, were stripped of their possessions and left to suffer poverty. However, they remained in their house, spending their time in fasting and prayer. Demetria, after confessing her Faith, fell dead at the feet of the governor Aproinanus.

St. Bibiana was placed in the hands of a wicked woman called Rufina, who in vain endeavored to seduce her. She used blows as well as persuasion, but Bibiana remained faithful. Enraged at the constancy of this saintly virgin, Apronianus ordered her to be tied to a pillar and beaten with scourges, laden with lead plummets, until she expired. The saint endured the torments with joy and died under the blows inflicted by the hands of the executioner.

December 3 – Thursday, First Week of Advent

Set peacefulness and serenity as your highest goal and organize your life around it.

Isaiah 26:1-6

Isaiah sings the song of the newly formed nation out of the survivors of great devastation. This new nation will be a nation of firm purpose, a nation that keeps faith, a nation that is just, a nation that trust the Lord. It is such a nation that the Lord keeps in peace.

God's peace, shalom is grounded in firm purpose, faithfulness, justice and trust in the Lord. Reflect on the urgency of developing these virtues.

Let us pray for a new world order…. a world where justice and peace prevail, a world that is re-established and renewed in faith.

Psalm 118

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
For his mercy endures forever.
It is better to take refuge in the Lord,
than to trust in man.

Mathew 7:21, 24-27

All are called to the Kingdom of God. However, crying out, "Lord…Lord…" will not give anyone access to the Kingdom. Jesus calls for sincerity of purpose. Sincerity of purpose is shown in practice, in the way we live out our purpose.

Fine words are never substitutes for fine deeds. Be sincere in your efforts to live out your faith.

It is not difficult to recite a creed, but to live the Christian life is demanding and challenging and often difficult.

Faith without practice is dead. Love without obedience (surrender) is impossible.

Saint of the Day, December 3 - St. Francis Xavier and 11 other saints are remembered this day

Francis was born on April 7, 1506, in Xavier (Javier) Castle, near Sangüesa, Navarre, Spain. He was sent to study at the University of Paris where he roomed with his friend, Peter Favre. They were much influenced by Ignatius of Loyola, who encouraged Francis to become a priest. He renounced his worldly life in response to the words he heard from St. Ignatius of Loyola, "What does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?"

On August 15, 1534, Francis Xavier along with Peter Favre, and several other friends, made vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The men planned to travel to the Holy Land to convert non-believers. Francis Xavier started his study of theology that same year and was ordained on June 24, 1537.

Francis was one of the first five who joined Ignatius when he founded the Society of Jesus or Jesuits as we know the order today. He left for India in 1541 and arrived in the region and colony of Goa, India on May 6, 1542. He became a great missionary in India, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Japan.

He wanted to go to China and left India for the last time in April 1552. His ship reached China in August, stopping at an island off the Chinese coast. While he was waiting for his boat to arrive, he became ill with a fever and died on December 3, 1552, before he could fulfill his dream of being a missionary in China. He was a man of courage, determination, patience and perseverance.

December 4 – Friday, First Week of Advent

Serenity is not something you wish for. It is something you strive for and fail and strive some more and do it again and again.

Isaiah 29:17-24

Isaiah describes his vision of the messianic times. In the messianic time, the deaf will hear, the blind will see out of gloom and darkness, the humble will rejoice, the tyrant and the arrogant will be gone….a new world order will be established, where people will live in justice and peace.

Pray for a new world order, a world of justice and peace for all.

Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation.
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is my life's refuge.
Of whom should I be afraid?

Mathew 9:27-31

The blind men cried out their need and Jesus heard their cry! **Reflect on crying out your own need and hearing the cry of others in need.**

The blind men met Jesus in the house. **Reflect on meeting Jesus in the house, where you are.**

Jesus asked: Do you believe that I am able to do this? Yes Lord, was the answer. **Reflect on being challenged on your faith: do you believe? And how do you respond?**

Jesus touched their eyes and said: Be opened! **Reflect on the healing and opening touch of the Lord! Reflect on your own need to be touched and to touch others. Let your touch be healing, loving, compassionate.**

Jesus asked them not to publicize what happened. But they spread the story about him all over the country. **Reflect on maintaining confidence. Think about what happens in sharing things that bring conflict, tension, harm to others….Be trustworthy! And be a channel of peace…**

Saint of the Day, December 4 - St. John Damascene and 19 other saints are remembered this day.

John was a Byzantine monk and priest, born and raised in Damascus around the year 675 or 676. He received a classical and theological education and followed his father in a government position under the Arabs. After a few years, he resigned and went to the Monastery of Saint Sabas near Jerusalem and spent most of his life in this Monastery.

Eastern Orthodox Christian traditions and Eastern Catholic traditions have been particularly shaped by his insights. Among Eastern Christians, St. John is best known for his defense of Christian sacred art, particularly in the form of icons. While the churches of Rome and Constantinople were still united during St. John's life, the Byzantine Emperor Leo III broke radically from the ancient tradition of the church, charging that the veneration of Christian icons was a form of idolatry.

St. John began publicly opposing the emperor's command against sacred images in a series of writings. His argument was that Christians did not actually worship images, but rather, through them they worshiped God, and honored the memory of the saints and that by taking an incarnate physical form, Christ had given warrant to the Church's depiction of him in images.

He is famous for his treatise, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, a summary of the Greek Fathers, of which he became the last. He is known as a poet, one of the two greatest of the Eastern Church, the other being Romanus the Melodist. His devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and his sermons on her feasts are well known. He died at his monastery, Mar Saba, near Jerusalem on December 4, 749.

December 5 – Saturday, First Week of Advent

Inner peace, serenity and service are the real measures of personal worth, possessions, power, success and wealth.

Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26

Isaiah shared with his people his vision of a time of favor from the Lord: The Lord will make his people prosperous again; he will be gracious to the people who cry out to him; he will provide for the needs of his people; he will show the way that can be trusted; he will heal the wounds of his people…. He will not hide from his people. So, be happy, rejoice…you will have no reason to weep!

Share the vision of Isaiah for a new world order and pray for the establishment of a world of peace, justice, and prosperity for all.

Psalm 147

Praise the Lord, for he is good;
Sing praise to our God, for he is gracious;

It is fitting to praise him.
The Lord builds Jerusalem;
The dispersed of Israel, he gathers…..

Mathew 9:35 – 10:1, 6-8

This excerpt begins with a summary of what Jesus has been doing: proclaimed good news, taught the values of the kingdom and healed the sick. Jesus looked at the crowd with compassion. He saw a rich harvest and the need for laborers to gather in the harvest. The spiritual leaders, at the time of Jesus, saw sinners to be condemned, Gentiles who do not follow the law, tax gatherers who were traitors to the nation, etc. But Jesus saw a rich harvest…..people to be gathered in and not kept out or destroyed.

Look beyond what you see! Be positive, optimistic about you and the world around you! See the goodness of God everywhere and in all people!

Jesus sent out his disciples, an extraordinary mixture of very ordinary men with the most profound message: "The Kingdom of God is at hand". They were sent to bring good news, heal the sick…. share the gift they had received freely and joyfully.

Bring the good news of Jesus to someone today…..share your gifts with others.

Saint of the Day, December 5 - St. Sabas and 16 other saints are remembered this day.

Sabas was born at Mutalaska, Cappadocia, near Caesarea in 439. He was the son of an army officer, who left him in the care of an uncle. Mistreated by his uncle's wife, Sabas ran away to another uncle, though he was only eight. When the two uncles became involved in a lawsuit over his estate, he again ran away, this time to a monastery near Mutalaska. In 456, he went to Jerusalem and there entered a monastery under St. Theoctistus. When he was thirty, he became a hermit under the guidance of St. Euthymius, and after Euthymius' death, spent four years alone in the desert near Jericho.

Despite his desire for solitude, he attracted many disciples. When his one hundred fifty monks asked for a priest and despite his opposition to monks being ordained, he was obliged to accept ordination by Patriarch Sallust of Jerusalem in 491. He attracted disciples from Egypt and Armenia, allowed them a liturgy in their own tongue, and built several hospitals and another monastery near Jericho.

While functioning as abbot among a large community of monks, he felt ever called to live the life of a hermit. Each year, in Lent, he left his monks for long periods of time. A group of 60 men

left the monastery, settling at a nearby ruined facility. When Sabas learned of the difficulties they were facing, he generously gave them supplies and assisted in the repair of their church.

Over the years, Sabas traveled throughout Palestine, preaching the true faith and successfully bringing back many to the Church. At the age of 91, in response to a plea from the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sabas undertook a journey to Constantinople in conjunction with the Samaritan revolt and its violent repression. He fell ill and soon after his return, died at the monastery at Mar Saba on December 5, 532. Today the monastery is still inhabited by monks of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and Saint Sabas is regarded as one of the most noteworthy figures of early monasticism.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Advent is the spiritual season of hope par excellence,
and in this season, the whole Church is called to be hope,
for itself and for the world.
(Pope Benedict XVI)

