

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last six Sundays, our Scripture readings called us to walk in faith, be men and women of hope, nurture a confident and trusting relationship with the Lord, let that relationship become more gracious, to have courage to face the challenges of following Jesus as his disciples, to listen to the voice of God, and to go to a quiet place with the Lord and rest a while.

Our Scripture readings of today call us to be compassionate and let that compassion be shown in generous and sacrificial giving. A poor man from Baal-Shalisha, brought the first fruits of his harvest to Elisha, despite his own personal needs, trusting in God as his sole benefactor (first reading). The Palmist sings about the very nature of God as “compassion”, all embracing love, and abundant love. Paul, calls us “to live in a manner worthy of our calling” through love (second reading). The Gospel speaks of a young boy giving all he had to Jesus so that he could feed five thousand men, not counting women and children. All the Scripture readings of today remind us of our call to live noble and virtuous lives and respond to this call by giving ourselves generously in kindness and compassion.

The Gospel reading of today tells us the wonderful story of compassion, of simplicity, of abundance, of generosity, of sharing, of giving, of trusting.....a story that carries much for our inspiration, reflection and prayer (John 6:1-15). Jesus had compassion for the hungry who were following – they were hungry for his word but were physically hungry as well. The disciples were helpless – two hundred days wages would not be enough for a mouthful for each, said Philip. Jesus asked them to feed the hungry with whatever was available and showed that there is always abundance in giving and sharing. The generosity of a boy became abundance in the hands of Jesus. There was not only enough for all, but there was enough left over to fill twelve wicker baskets, there was an overflowing... abundance, God’s abundance!

Five loaves and two fish, given generously, go a long way in meeting urgent needs. Five loaves and two fish come in many forms...five minutes to listen to the sad story of the lonely, two words of encouragement and support for someone who is discouraged, five dollars in the pocket for someone who is hungry, a few words of kindness to the one who is suffering, a prayer in your heart for those living in war and violence.....

Our Sacred Scriptures proclaim the greatness of our God, the abundance of his love, the generosity of his heart and compassion that flows from a heart of Love. We are made to image this heart of love...love that generous and sacrificial.

A little girl named Liz was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year-old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. He hesitated for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, "Yes, I'll do it, if it will save her." As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled seeing the color returning to her cheek. Then his face grew pale, and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away?" Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood in order to save her. And that is sacrificial love, generosity at its peak!

Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) He also said, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45) St. Paul advised the Ephesians, "be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:1-2)

**Generosity is other-centeredness....being mindful of others, looking out for the needs of others and giving generously in sacrificial love.**

St. Paul taught the Philippians and teaches us today "Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:3-5)

Abundance and lack exist simultaneously in our lives. When we choose not to focus on what is missing, but on the abundance that is present - love, health, family, friends, work, the wasteland of misery falls away and we experience daily joy, we become grateful and we become generous as our God is to us.

Let us choose to be grateful and generous with the abundance that is available to us and not be discontent and look for more and better. Let us be mindful of those who are less fortunate than we are, rethink our needs, downsize our appetites, share with the hungry and the needy and share from the abundance that we have received....

I encourage you to take a few minutes each day of this week to go to a quiet place, be still and reflect on how generous you have been as you went about fulfilling your daily responsibilities. Take a few minutes also to remember those who have been generous to you and send a blessing their way.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

# Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 28, 2024

**The God to whom we pray is a God of love,  
who is more ready to answer than we are ready to pray.  
We do not have to force His Gifts and His Grace out of Him.  
We do not come to a God who has to be coaxed, or pestered,  
or battered into answering our prayer. We come to one who simply wills to give.  
We, actually, come into the presence of the one who has already given.  
We come with desire in our hearts and words on our lips: "Thy will be done."**

## Collect

O God, protector of those who hope in you,  
without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy,  
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us  
and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide,  
we may use the good things that pass  
in such a way as to hold fast even now  
to those that ever endure.  
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.

**Lord, teach me forbearance when things go wrong as sometimes they will so  
that I may remain unruffled when others grow uptight.**

## 2 Kings 4:42-44

In this Scripture passage, we read the fourth miracle story of Elisha, the Prophet. There are ten such stories of his miracles in Chapters four to eight in the second book of Kings. Through this story God revealed his concern for the poor, the suffering and the helpless among his people. Through the generosity of a poor man from Baal-Shalisha, who brought the first fruits of his harvest to Elisha, God calls us to generosity and self-sacrifice. Despite his own personal needs, the man honored God and remained confident and trusting in God as his sole benefactor.

**This experience challenges us to be gracious, generous, self-sacrificing and trusting in God and overcome our undue desires for wealth and material prosperity and nurture our hunger for God and God's ways.**

## **Psalm 145**

This is a psalm composed for public worship. It is an acrostic (alphabetic) poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The Psalm focuses primarily on God's compassion, especially for the underprivileged and depressed. It carries a daily reminder of praising the unfathomable greatness of God, which goes beyond all our theologies, philosophies and doctrines. Verse 4 invites us to meditate on the wondrous acts of God and to pass on this memory to the future generations. Verses 8-9 express the most basic faith of the Old Testament about the very nature of God: "steadfast love", "compassion", all embracing love, abundant love. The whole Psalm proclaims God's name: "Steadfast love"

**Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord,  
And let your faithful ones bless you.  
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom  
And speak of your might.**

## **Ephesians 4:1-6**

This Scripture passage reminds us that we have a noble calling and that we should be faithful to that calling. We are called to live noble lives, lives of virtue, honor, mutual love, compassion for one another, peace, and harmony. Then we will be "one body, one spirit" and we will share "one Baptism, one faith, one hope, one Lord, one God and Father".

## **John 6:1-15**

This is a story of compassion, of simplicity, of abundance, of generosity, of sharing, of giving, of trusting.....a story that carries much for us. Jesus, who continued to feed those who followed him with God's truth, became aware of their physical hunger and he attended to that need as well. He showed that it was important to recognize and meet those urgent needs. Jesus cared for the whole person and called his disciples to do the same. The physical hunger became a channel of recognizing the deeper hunger for God, for truth, for justice, for love....

Jesus called the disciples to feed the hungry with whatever was available and showed that there is always abundance in giving and sharing. Five loaves and two fishes go a long way in meeting urgent needs. There was not only enough for all, but there was enough left over to fill twelve wicker baskets....there was an overflowing, "my cup is overflowing", an abundance, simple abundance, God's abundance...

**Those who are fed are charged to feed others...those who are full are called to fill others!**

## **All of the above readings call and challenge us to:**

- **be gracious, generous, self-sacrificing, and trusting in God and overcome our undue desires for wealth and material prosperity and nurture our hunger for God and God's ways.**
- **live noble lives... lives of virtue, honor, mutual love, compassion for one another, peace, and harmony.**
- **be mindful of those who are less fortunate than we are, when we are served oversized, biggie-sized, and super-sized portions in restaurants...portions that we are unable to handle.....**
- **be grateful and joyful and generous with the abundance that is available to us and not be discontent and looking for more and better.....**
- **rethink our needs, downsize our appetites, share with the hungry and the needy.....**
- **recognize the hunger of people and nourish them in word and sacrament.**
- **share from the abundance we have received, food for the body as well as food for the spirit.**

**Be Still for a few moments!**

**Pray for your needs and those of your family and community.**

## **Spiritual Communion**

Lord Jesus, I believe in your real presence in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Altar. I place myself in your presence and adore you, worship you and glorify you. I am unable to receive you in Holy Communion at Mass today. I hunger and thirst for your way, your truth and your life. Come into my heart Lord and satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst. Bless me that I may give witness to your presence in my life. Amen

**Be Still for a few moments!**

## **Saint of the Day, July 28 - St. Alphonsa of India and 14 other saints are remembered his day**

St Alphonsa was born as Anna Muttathupadathu in a Syro-Malabar Catholic family in Kudamalloor, near Kottayam in India on August 19, 1910. Her parents nicknamed her Annakkutty (little Anna). She had a difficult childhood and experienced loss and suffering early on in life. Anna's mother died when she was young, so her maternal aunt raised her. Anna sacrificed her material fortune and wanted to dedicate her life to Jesus Christ. In 1923, Anna's feet were burnt when she fell into a pit of burning chaff. This accident left her partially disabled for the rest of her life. When it became possible, Anna joined the Franciscan Clarist Congregation, a religious congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis, and through them, completed her schooling. On May 19, 1930 Alphonsa entered the novitiate of the congregation at Bharananganam. On August 11, 1931 she completed the novitiate and took her first vows. And became a religious in the catholic church.

Sr. Alphonsa took her permanent vows on August 12, 1936. Two days later she returned to Bharananganam and taught high school at St. Alphonsa Girl's High School but was often sick and unable to teach. For most of her years as a Clarist Sister she endured serious illness. On June 14, 1939 she was struck by a severe attack of pneumonia which left her weakened. On October 18, 1940, a thief entered her room in the middle of the night. This traumatic event caused her to suffer amnesia and weakened her again. Her health continued to deteriorate over a period of months. In July 1945, she developed gastroenteritis and liver problems that caused violent convulsions and vomiting. After a series of serious health problems, she died on July 28, 1946, at the age of 35. On Sunday, October 12, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI canonized her.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**The measure of love is to love without measure.  
(St. Francis de Sales)**

