

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During the past several weeks, we have been learning a lot from Jesus about being his disciples. Disciples of Jesus are called to form and shape their character in the image of Jesus and live as he lived. It is not enough to know the doctrines and beliefs and be a member of a church. Our character, our lifestyle, our values, our relationships, the way we live and the way we treat others are the most important matters and not our affiliation to groups and organizations. The disciples of Jesus must learn to have deep respect for all people and treat them with dignity. All people, regardless of their culture and religious affiliation are made in the image and likeness of God. Our Sacred Scriptures have reminded us that Jesus is not ashamed to call us “brothers,” such is our dignity and worth.

Disciples of Jesus are constantly challenged to make difficult choices: to choose wisdom rather than material wealth as Solomon did, to choose God’s life-giving word even when it is very costly, to choose the eternal rather than the immediate and the transitory. We can always turn to Jesus, with great confidence, because he is capable of understanding and empathizing with us. He has known our life, our suffering, and our death. He became one with us. Last Sunday we heard Jesus calling his disciples and us today to find joy as well as greatness in serving of others. Greatness goes to all who surrender themselves in service!!! Jesus advises us, “Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest and whoever wants to rank first must serve the needs of all.”

Now we come to the Scripture readings of today. In our first reading (Jeremiah 31:7-9), we hear the Prophet Jeremiah calling his people to shout with joy because the Lord has delivered His people - the “remnant of Israel” is returning home. God’s everlasting fidelity makes this happen. “Remnant” was a term used to describe the survivors of Israel, who would find their way home. It was also a term which came to mean a “spirituality” unique to Israel, which reflected total dependence on God for survival, freedom, and salvation.

This “Yahweh-Israel” bond of total dependence becomes more pronounced in today’s reading which mentions only mothers and expectant mothers and not husbands or men. Without any male figure in their lives, they had to totally depend on God and on the support of the community that was held together by God. This excerpt also mentions the blind and the lame and others who represented the helpless and the marginalized in the community. This vision of Jeremiah gave the returning exiles reason to “shout with joy” and become more confident in the provident care of a caring, compassionate, and loving God. It is good for us to reflect and to

nurture a “remnant spirituality,” a spirituality that reflects utter confidence in the provident care of our loving God. We are living in troublesome times. Our faith in God, our hope in his promises and our love for God and each other are being tested and tried. We are being challenged every way to deepen our confidence in divine providence.

The second reading (Hebrews 5:1-6) presents Jesus as one who has seen us for who we are, who has clear and unimpaired insight into our human condition, who willingly became one of us, embracing our humanity in all its weakness in order to become our high priest. He can be our high priest because he knows, he has good insights, he has knowledge of us from “inside”, he knows our “inside story.” He can “deal patiently” with erring sinners because he knows our weakness. Jesus is our high priest who mediates our cause before God. He not only offers gifts and sacrifices on our behalf – He is the gift. He is the sacrifice that saves us from sin and sets us free. Jesus became one with us in our weakness and humbled himself to serve our needs. This understanding of Jesus enables us to become more trusting in the providential care of our God.

The Gospel reading of today (Mark 10:46-52) tells us the story of Bartimaeus who cried out to Jesus, hoping that his eyes would be opened, and he would see again. The blind man on the roadside, by the title he gives to Jesus, shows that he recognizes Jesus more clearly than those who have been traveling with Jesus for a long time. Remember last week’s Gospel, James and John wanted to sit at the left and right of Jesus. Here is a blind man who wants to see! Solomon wanted wisdom, the blind man wants to see and James and John wanted the first place!!!

The blind man had an insight! He saw Jesus for what and who he was and called him “Jesus, Son of David”. The prophets and the wise men of old had prophesied: “the blind will see; the deaf will hear...” Jesus saw the inside of the man...he saw the “inside story” of the man and he called this blind man’s vision, “faith” and he said, “Go on your way; your faith has saved you.”. The blind man, Bartimaeus, had a new vision.... he saw...he believed and -became a disciple.

Mark, the evangelist, has often referred to the spiritual blindness of the disciples. They did not understand Jesus and His way; they were confused; they doubted; they questioned – they did not see! There have been special moments of “seeing” like when Peter said, “You are the Messiah”. But for the most part the disciples were without clear vision about Jesus, his person, his way, his purpose. Jesus continued to walk with them and teach them and remind them again and again about who He was and the purpose for which He came. The disciples had to learn to trust Jesus and struggle to understand his way, his truth, and his life. They had to develop a spirituality that called forth utter confidence in divine providence.

During the coming week, take a few minutes each day to go to a quiet place, be still and reflect on how your day has been, and on how your choices and actions of the day reflect your trust in divine providence. Pray with the disciples of Jesus, “Lord, increase our faith” (Luke 17:5).

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 27, 2024

**Prayerfulness is an attitude of humility and trust
that enables us to open ourselves to the Father so that our entire life,
from the seeking of daily bread to the transformation of the world,
is filled with God's will and purpose.**

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
increase our faith, hope and charity,
and make us love what you command,
so that we may merit what you promise.
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.

**Forbearance is following the advice of Jesus,
"If any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also ..."
(Matthew 5:39)**

Jeremiah 31:7-9

Jeremiah shares his vision of the "remnant of Israel" returning home. God's everlasting fidelity will make this happen. "I will lead them to brooks of water, on a level road, so that none shall stumble." "Remnant" was a term used to describe the survivors of Israel, who would find their way home. It was also a term which came to mean a "spirituality" unique to Israel, which reflected total dependence on God for survival, freedom and salvation. This "Yahweh-Israel" bond becomes more pronounced in today's excerpt which mentions only mothers and expectant mothers and not husbands or men. Without any male figure in their lives, they had to totally depend on God and on the support the community that was held together by God. This

excerpt also mentions the blind and the lame who represented the helpless and the marginalized in the community.

The widows, the orphans, the blind, the lame...the poor of the Lord are uppermost in the divine plan. How could this not be in the plan of the community?!

Psalm 126

We hold memorial services on anniversaries of important events. In Psalm 126, the Psalmist is calling his people to remember with joy and gratitude the great things God has done for them, especially the event of being freed from Babylon – God has rehabilitated his people. Around 538 BC, Cyrus the Persian king liberated them from Babylon – and they saw this event as God anointing a pagan king to liberate them. This could only be a miracle that God chose a pagan king to liberate his people. This is reason to rejoice and be grateful. “We are glad” because God was with his people when they were being swallowed up the monster Babylon.

Psalm 126 was probably sung shortly after Israel's return from exile. The people rejoice that they are in Zion, but mere presence in the holy city is not enough. They must pray for the prosperity and the fertility of the land. 126:4 prays for restoration, rehabilitation. They are still in trouble, trying to rebuild their lives on the ruins of the ancient city. This is also a prayer for those who chose to stay back in the big city of Babylon – those who had prospered and become rich, choosing to stay back and enjoy their fortune and not share the work of returning and rebuilding of their ancient city.

**When the Lord brought back the captives from Zion,
We were like men dreaming.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
And our tongue with rejoicing.**

Hebrews 5:1-6

This excerpt reminds us that Jesus became one with us, embraced our humanity, shared our weakness and became our high priest representing us before God. He can be our high priest because he knows, he has good insights, he has knowledge of us from “inside”, he knows our “inside story.” He can “deal patiently with erring sinners (5:2) because he knows our weakness... “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”.

Jesus became one with us in our weakness and humbled himself to serve our needs. We are called to humble ourselves and serve the needs of others.

Mark 10:46-52

A blind man had an insight! He saw Jesus for what and who he was and called him "Jesus, Son of David." The prophets and the wise men of old had prophesied: "the blind will see, the deaf will hear..."

Jesus saw the inside of the man...he saw the "inside story" of the man and he called this blind man's vision, "faith" and he said, "Go on your way; your faith has saved you." Bartimaeus, the blind man had a new vision - he saw and believed and followed Jesus.

Try to make this your prayer this week: "Master, I want to see".

Open yourself to the Lord. Let him open your eyes...the eyes of your mind and your heart.... let him help you see yourself better, see the world more positively and creatively and the Lord more fully....

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, October 27 - St. Emiliana Boulancourt and 15 other saints are remembered this day

Emiliana was born around the year 1115. She lived as a solitary lay sister in the Cistercian Abbey of Boulancourt, located in the commune of Longeville, in Haute-Marne, North East France. She led a life of great penitence: fasting from food and liquids three days a week, wearing a hair

shirt and a pointed iron chain, and going barefoot both in winter and in summer. she also led a wondrous life of prayer, constantly communing with God and frequently reciting the Psalms.

The fame of her sanctity spread quickly and people came to consult her from all around, especially when they heard of her gift of prophecy. The saint received them with patience and humility, counseling them wisely and bringing about the conversion of many. Finally, worn out by her life-long labors and penances, the saintly woman died in 1178. Such was her renown that an eternal light was placed at her grave.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**When prayer is a struggle, do not worry about the prayers that you cannot pray.
You yourself are a prayer to God at that moment.
All that is within you cries out to Him.**

