

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last week, we reflected on “Naming the sinful and the unhealthy in our life and choosing to do something about it during this Season of Lent. We thought about discerning what we need to and want to change in our lives and begin the process of conversion and transformation. This week we focus on naming the good, the healthy and the holy in our lives.

We must name the good and cultivate all that is decent, good, noble and virtuous - all that is of God and from God if real conversion and transformation has to happen in our lives. This must be done in “TRUTH” – not mere sentimentality, which leads to flattery. God has blessed us with the gifts of His Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of the Lord as well as many other virtues. During this last week of Lent, reflect on these gifts of the Holy Spirit and name all other gifts that God has blessed you with. Be grateful for these gifts. Be attentive to those gifts that you need to appreciate and nurture.

God has blessed us with his noble qualities – virtues that guide and direct our lives: Faith, Hope, Love, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance and many other qualities. During this last week of Lent, reflect on these virtues and name other qualities that God has blessed you with. Be especially attentive to those virtues that you need to nurture.

God continues to empower us with His Holy Spirit to become fulfilled in the fruitfulness of His Spirit: Charity, Generosity, Joy, Gentleness, Peacefulness, Faithfulness, Patience, Modesty, Kindness, Self-control, Goodness and Chastity. During this last week of Lent, reflect on these and other qualities, fruits of living in the Holy Spirit which God has blessed you with. Be attentive to those qualities that you need to nurture.

God has blessed us with family, friends and neighbors. Let us be grateful for these wonderful gifts. Holy week is a good time to gratefully remember these relationship. Let us be especially attentive to those relationships that need healing and nurturing.

I encourage you to take a few moments during this Holy Week to be still and reflect on how your day has been. Take a few moments also to thank the Lord for the good, the healthy and the holy in your life. Be a channel of blessing and grace for your family, friends and neighbors.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Holy Week

April 14-19, 2025

**No act of virtue can be great if it is not followed by advantage for others.
So, no matter how much time you spend fasting,
no matter how much you sleep on a hard floor
and eat ashes and sigh continually,
if you do no good to others,
you do nothing great.
(John Chrysostom)**

April 14 – Monday of Holy Week

**Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction.
(John F. Kennedy)**

Isaiah 42:1-7

The servant is raised up to proclaim justice, a time of deliverance. Isaiah describes this servant as having the finest qualities of Israel and her great leaders: noble, gentle and wise.

Learn to be noble, gentle and wise!

Psalm 27

**I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord with courage;
be stouthearted and wait for the Lord.**

John 12:1-11

Jesus attended a banquet in the home of Lazarus in Bethany. Martha served. How wonderful! Martha is at it again. She is a serving disciple. She expressed her love the way she knew best - serving and serving in the kitchen, not on a public platform or in a career lived in the eyes of men.

Service without notice...just with simple, profound, pure love! Be a serving disciple but serve with love!

Mary was different. Her love didn't calculate the cost. She took the precious thing she had and spent it on Jesus - love's extravagance!

Love gives all there is to give.....

It was an honor to anoint someone's head. Mary anointed the feet of Jesus. She wasn't seeking honor. She just loved and served the best way she knew. She humbled herself in service and in care.

Serve without seeking to be honored.....

"The house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment". What else? Martha's service and Mary's anointing - the house had to be filled with love.....

Love has its own fragrance and it has a way of transforming the air.....

Judas couldn't appreciate such love. He saw "extravagant waste" and nothing more. Hearts that are full of greed and jealousy and bitterness and such slings and arrows cannot see and appreciate love and all love's expressions.

Learn to appreciate the simple and the profound signs and expressions of love all around you.

Saint of the Day, April 14 - St. Lydwine and 9 other saints are remembered this day.

Lidwina was born on April 18, 1380 in Schiedam, Holland. She was one of nine children of a working man. At age 15, she was ice skating when she fell and broke a rib. She never recovered and became progressively disabled for the rest of her life. Her biographers state that she became paralyzed except for her left hand and that great pieces of her body fell off, and that blood poured from her mouth, ears, and nose. Today some posit that Saint Lidwina is one of the first known multiple sclerosis patients and attribute her disability to the effects of the disease and her fall.

After her fall, Lidwina fasted continuously and acquired fame as a healer and holy woman. The town officials of Schiedam, her hometown, promulgated a document (which has survived) that attests to her complete lack of food and sleep. At first, she ate a little piece of apple, then a bit of date and watered wine, then river water contaminated with salt from the tides. The authenticating document from Schiedam also attests that Lidwina shed skin, bones, parts of her intestines, which her parents kept in a vase and which gave off a sweet odor. These excited so

much attention that Lidwina had her mother bury them. Lidwina died at the age of 53. She is known as the patron saint of ice skaters.

April 15 – Tuesday of Holy Week

Great minds have purpose, others have wishes

Isaiah 49:1-6

Isaiah encountered disappointments and began to feel that he had wasted his time and had worked for nothing. He came out of this experience with renewed faith in his calling. He also gained new insights about his vocation which gave him strength.

Isaiah had an intense experience of being called by God even before his birth, “from his mother’s womb”, to be a “servant” and much more.....to be a light to the nations..... that salvation “may reach the ends of the earth”.

Psalm 71

**In you O Lord, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your justice rescue me and deliver me;
incline your ear to me and save me.**

John 13:21-38

Jesus and the disciples were around the Passover table. Tension mounted among the twelve disciples as Jesus told them that one of them would betray him. Questions about who the betrayer was, suspicion of each other..... many such factors created confusion.

It is amazing to know how Jesus tried to help the disciples become aware of what was happening and what was going to happen to him. They just failed to understand. They were too preoccupied with themselves and their ambitions.

Jesus made a final and special appeal to the heart of Judas. For the host to offer a special morsel from the dish was a sign of special friendship. When Jesus handed Judas Iscariot the “bit of food”, the “dipped morsel”, it was an offer of “special friendship”, a final appeal to the heart. But the heart of Judas was unmoved, full of greed, darkness, hate and didn’t see the light or the love that was offered.

Jesus told Peter as he affirmed his loyalty that even he would deny him 'three times before the cock crows'. This was a tough time for Jesus and his disciples.

Be alert! Stay awake! Be sensitive to those around you..... Be compassionate!

Saint of the Day, April 15 St. Paternus and 10 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Paternus was born at Poitiers, about the year 482. His father, Patranus, with the consent of his wife, went to Ireland, where he ended his days in solitude. The mother raised Paternus in great piety. When Paternus grew up he decided to follow in the steps of his father and, obtaining his mother's permission and blessing, he set out to Wales together with a group of other young ascetics seeking the solitary life.

In Wales, Paternus started to withdraw for solitary prayer. But, in a short time, together with other monks, Paternus founded the great Monastery of Llanbadarn Fawr ("the Great Monastery of Padarn") near to Aberystwyth in the former county of Cardiganshire, which is now Ceredigion. Some 120 monks lived in this monastery under St. Paternus. Paternus was most probably not only the Abbot of Llanbadarn but also a bishop at the same time. After governing his diocese for thirteen years, he withdrew to solitude in France, and there ended his days about the year 550.

April 16 – Wednesday of Holy Week

Find a purpose to live for and die for and not just a lifestyle to live.

Isaiah 50:4-9

The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I may know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them.

Reflect on developing a "well-trained tongue" and "well-disciplined" life. Reflect on speaking words of affirmation, encouragement, kindness and support.

Remember the "weary" – many who are "weary" of hunger and thirst, of poverty and disease; of war and violence; of life and its many such struggles.

Psalm 69

**I will praise the name of God in song,
And I will glorify him with thanksgiving.....
You who seek God, may your hearts be merry!**

Mathew 26:14-25

Judas made plans to betray Jesus for thirty silver pieces.....sold out his master who trusted him and offered him friendship..... what a dreadful bargain!!! This betrayal was not only the betrayal of Jesus – it was also the betrayal of the other eleven disciples, betrayal of friendship, betrayal of community.....

Remember and pray with those who suffer from betrayal from their loved ones!

Jesus, gently, but definitely and directly called Judas to reflect over what he was planning to do. Judas refused to listen.

Listen to the gentle voices that call you to reflect on what you are doing!

Listen and respond to the gentle corrections that come from those around you!

Saint of the Day, April 16 St. Bernadette Soubirous and 16 other saints are remembered this day.

Bernadette Soubirous was born on January 7, 1844 and baptized at the local parish church, St. Pierre's, on January 9, her parents' wedding anniversary. Hard times had fallen on France and the family lived in extreme poverty. Bernadette was a sickly child, contracted cholera as a toddler and suffered severe asthma for the rest of her life. She attended the day school conducted by the Sisters of Charity. She could read and write very little due to her frequent illness. She spoke the language of Occitan, which was spoken by the local population of the Pyrenees region at that time and to a lesser degree today. Bernadette joined the Sisters of Charity at Nevers in 1866.

From February to July 1858 near Lourdes, France, a “Beautiful Lady” appeared eighteen times to Bernadette. The Beautiful Lady asked for prayers for the conversion of sinners and penance. Large crowds came to the grotto to hopefully witness some miracle. On February 25, the Beautiful Lady told Bernadette to drink from the fountain and bathe in it, but there was no obvious fountain or spring in the spot shown to her. She began to dig in the moist soil with her hands, and water began to trickle out. Bernadette drank the water and washed her face in it.

Within two days, at the site where Bernadette dug in the mud, there was a pool of water overflowing the rocks.

Miraculous cures have been attributed to this water. On February 28 and March 3, the Lady relayed a message to Bernadette to give to the clergy - "Go and tell the priests that a chapel must be built here." Bernadette told her priest Abbé Peyramale who replied that he needed the identity of the mysterious lady. It was during the visit on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, that the Lady revealed, "I am the Immaculate Conception." A basilica was built at the site of the grotto and was completed in 1876. She died on April 16, 1879 and was canonized on December 8, 1933.

April 17 – HOLY THURSDAY

**Jesus washed the feet of his disciples to fulfill the purpose for which he came.
He came to serve and not to be served.**

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14 This day shall be a memorial feast for you.

Psalms 116 12-16 My vows to the Lord, I will pay.

I Corinthians 11:23-26 Do this in remembrance of me

John 13:1-15 As I have done for you, you should also do.

We remember Jesus having his last supper with his disciples. Great things happened during this meal. He had washed the feet of his disciples and called them to follow his example in gracious and self-sacrificing service. Listen to him calling you!

Try to imagine this scene. You are sitting at the table with Jesus and his friends on the night before he died. A confusing sorrow overshadows you. Yet a mysterious hope has settled in your heart.

Remember Jesus bending his knees before his disciples with a bowl of water, to wash their feet...take a moment.... imagine him with an apron around his waist and a bowl of water in his hands, on his knees, before you!

God in an apron with a bowl of water ready to wash your feet!!!

We would feel more comfortable, if we could trade places.... We wouldn't mind kneeling before

Jesus to wash His feet...We can't let Him love that much! But He said, you can't belong with me, unless I wash your feet....I need to do this for you!!!

This is a gift that he offers us. We must accept this gift of "washing", the cleansing, forgiving, healing and transforming power of "foot-washing" and we must do this for one another....be "foot-washers"!!!

Remember: the Christian image is that of mother and child. However much the child may wash himself, the mother finally washes the child and attends to areas the child has not been able to reach.....Mother knows best!

Accept the gift of love in this "foot-washing" and share it with others. Remember the times you have refused this gift!

Take a moment.... remember: you and I stand in constant need of foot washing!

Saint of the Day, April 17 - St. Benedict Joseph Labre and 13 other saints are remembered this day.

Benedict Joseph Labre was born on March 25, 1748 in the village of Amettes, in northern France. He was the eldest of fifteen children of a prosperous shopkeeper, Jean-Baptiste Labre, and his wife, Anne Grandsire. At the age of sixteen, he approached his uncle, a parish priest, about becoming a Trappist monk, but his parents told him he would have to wait until he grew older. When Benedict was about eighteen, an epidemic fell upon the city, and uncle and nephew busied themselves in the service of the sick. While the uncle took care of the souls and bodies of the people, Benedict cared for the cattle. His uncle was among the last victims of the epidemic.

Benedict Joseph Labre tried to join the religious orders of the Trappists, the Carthusians and the Cistercians, but did not come up to their requirements. He was under age, he was too delicate; he had no special recommendations. Then, at age 18, a profound change took place. Benedict lost his desire to study and gave up all thoughts of the priesthood. He became a pilgrim, traveling from one great shrine to another, living off alms. He wore the rags of a beggar and shared his food with the poor. Filled with the love of God and neighbor, Benedict had special devotion to the Blessed Mother and to the Blessed Sacrament. In Rome, where he lived in the Colosseum for a time, he was called "the poor man of the Forty Hours devotion" and "the beggar of Rome." The people accepted his ragged appearance better than he did. His excuse to himself was that "our comfort is not in this world."

On April 16, 1783, the last day of his life, Benedict dragged himself to a church in Rome and prayed there for two hours before he collapsed, dying peacefully in a nearby house.

Immediately after his death, the people proclaimed him a saint. Benedict Joseph Labre was canonized by Pope Leo XIII in 1881.

April 18 – FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Jesus carried the cross to fulfill the purpose for which he came.

Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12; Psalm 31; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1 to 19:42

We remember Jesus being betrayed, tried, judged, condemned and crucified. We remember him dying on a cross. We remember Him giving himself totally in life and in death... obedient unto death on the cross.

In the cross, we meet Jesus, the one who took away the sins and overcame death in dying for us. We see much more in this cross. We see the infinite value of human life; we see Jesus dying out of love for humanity; we see redemption; we see the one who left the glory of heavenly home and entered into our earthly life and into our death.

**In the cross we see hope, we encounter love.
The cross tells us that in the love of God nothing is lost.**

We remember the cross, the sign of shame and punishment, becoming the symbol of sacrifice, healing, unconditional love, total giving, redemption and salvation. We remember and relive the passion, the cross and the death of Jesus.

God is found in the most unexpected places and situations. No one expected to find the Messiah on the cross. But that is just the way God revealed the power of His generous, unconditional, unconquerable, benevolent love.

Conflict between good and evil reached climax with the arrest and death of Jesus. To the world Jesus was condemned and finished. To the believer, Jesus being lifted on the cross is the Victory of Grace and the Ultimate revelation of God as LOVE. The death of Jesus reveals the victory of Grace and the power of God's Love.

The one lifted on the cross reveals glory and not shame. The creator of the world comes to the world; walks on the earth which he created; falls to the earth; goes deep into the earth; walks into places where he was rejected!

The creator of the flesh becomes flesh - makes his abode in the flesh. The creator of the tree hangs on the tree and gives up his life for those who rejected him. Acting out of love to the extent of dying on a cross is a mystery hard to grasp! We carry our crosses carefully, trying to make sure they don't take too much out of us!

Reflect on the kind of crosses that you need to carry and the kind of death that you need to experience to come more fully alive in Christ!

Saint of the Day, April 18 - Saint Athanasia of Aegina and 16 other saints are remembered this day.

Athanasia was the daughter of Christian nobles, Niketas and Irene. She grew up in a pious family and early in life felt drawn to the religious life. Legend says that she experienced a mystical union of a star merging with her heart while weaving at the loom when she was a young girl. However, at her parent's request, she married at age 16 to an army officer. Widowed after 16 days of marriage when her husband died in battle against invading Arabs. She again considered the religious life, but an imperial edict required all single women of marriage age to marry soldiers.

She again married this time to a deeply religious man who felt drawn to become a monk and left with her blessing to do so. She became a nun, gave away the bulk of her possessions, converted her home into a convent, obtained a spiritual director named Matthias, had other sisters move in with her, served as abbess, and lived a life of severe austerity. She built three churches.

The community later moved to Timia where Athanasia became widely known for miraculous healings. To escape the press of people who were drawn to her reputation of holiness, and return to the quiet, prayerful life, she and two sisters fled in secret to Constantinople where she lived as an anchoress in a cell for seven years; while walled away, she was an advisor to Empress Theodora. After seven years, she returned to Aegina, where she died of natural causes three days later at Timia on August 14, 860.

April 19 – HOLY SATURDAY

**When you are purposeful, your mind transcends limitations
and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world.**

Waiting at the tomb.....

Journey through Lent has brought us to the tomb of Jesus. We want the tomb to release its contents! We want Jesus to come forth, but we must wait...three days!

Jesus did die and was buried in a tomb. Jesus had told us that His Father is a Caring, Loving, Faithful, and Searching Father. His WORD that became flesh also experienced death. The Love of the Father was so great that he did not spare His Son our death. The Journey to Jerusalem did not stop at the Cross - it continued into the tomb and beyond. The mystery of hope unfolds before the tomb holding Jesus - only an eye of faith can see it as it unfolds.

The Cross and the tomb do not offer "quick fix, easy healing" - they do call us to wait in Hope for victory/glory beyond understanding. We can withdraw from the tomb - OR look deep inside and find it empty - look around and find HIM alive and moving and calling us.

The forces of pain, suffering, rejection and death are too much with us - the rock remains across the tomb. To the one grown/matured in faith, the rock has been rolled away, the burden has been lifted - Jesus is alive and is going before us to places and situations that we will meet, to people we will encounter, to suffering we will endure, to rejection we will experience, to death we will face, etc.

He is alive! He goes ahead of us into our Galilee, just as He promised His disciples to go into their Galilee.

We did make a journey with Jesus through Lent and have come to experience Easter. It was a great journey. The mystery of following Jesus cannot be put into simple words. The mystery of dying and rising with Christ is an experience at the depth of our hearts which no word can describe. We may not look different - we may not even feel different. We will continue to meet testing times - may even fight a few demons. We will have our periods of fatigue and despair, fear and anxiety, doubts and frustrations. We may make wrong turns and "U" turns. Yet deep inside of us, we are different because we met him in life and in death – we have risen with him – we are new persons and a new people because the one who died and was laid in the tomb is alive – He now lives and holds out to us the hope of a new life.

Saint of the Day, April 19 - St. Gianna Beretta Molla and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

Gianna Beretta was born in Magenta near Milano on October 4, 1922, the 10th of Alberto and Maria Beretta's 13 children. When she was three the Berettas relocated to Bergamo where she

grew up. Beretta made her First Communion on April 4, 1928 and received her Confirmation in the Bergamo Cathedral on June 9, 1930. The Berettas moved to Genoa where she attended school and became an active participant in parish life in the parish of Saint Peter. In 1938, she made the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius.

In 1942 she began her studies in medicine in Milan. Outside of her schooling she was an active member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and a leader in the Catholic Action movement. She earned degrees in medicine and surgery from the University of Pavia, eventually specializing in pediatrics. In 1952, Gianna opened a clinic in the small town of Mesero, where she met engineer Pietro Molla and got married. In the next four years they had three children, two pregnancies following ended in miscarriage.

Early in her sixth pregnancy, doctors discovered that Gianna had both a child and a tumor in her uterus. She allowed the surgeons to remove the tumor but not to perform the complete hysterectomy that they recommended, which would have killed the child. Seven months later in April 1962, Gianna Emanuela Molla was born at the hospital in Monza, but post-operative complications resulted in an infection for her mother. The following week, Gianna Molla died at home in Mesero, where she was buried. Gianna Emanuela went on to become a physician herself. Gianna Beretta Molla was beatified in 1994 and canonized 10 years later.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**With Christ the unbearable becomes bearable,
the impossible becomes possible.**



*The week
that
changed the
world!*