

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Brothers and Sisters,

Yesterday, we reflected on witnessing to the risen Christ as the Scripture reading of the third Sunday called us to. I invite you to reflect a little more on witnessing to Christ during this week. The challenge of witnessing continues through the Scripture readings of the daily masses of this week. Witnessing was a command, not a suggestion or recommendation or an option. Jesus said, "You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

We are living in difficult, troublesome and uncertain times. Our brothers and sisters are becoming more disturbed, troubled and afraid as well. Witnessing to the risen Lord in these times is a real challenge. And yet, that is what we must do. Only those of us who can walk in hope, be grounded in faith and steadfast in our commitment to Christ can bring comfort and hope to a troubled world. We cannot make excuses of our lack of faith or knowledge or experience or having our own troubles. We must give witness to our faith in the risen Lord. Pope Francis says, "What we say and how we say it, our every word, ought to express God's compassion, tenderness and forgiveness for all."

Peter was a man who denied Christ and he was able say, "silver and gold I have not, only faith in Jesus." Paul did not have any resources either...he was so poor that he was often hungry and went without necessary food. Timothy was in poor health. The widow had only a small coin. The little boy had only five loaves and two fish. Each of them gave what they had and did what they could and gave witness to Christ.

St. John Chrysostom advises us not to insult God. He says, "If you say that a Christian cannot help others, you have insulted God and called Him a liar... Do not say then that it is impossible. The opposite is impossible. Do not insult God. If we have put our affairs in order, these things will certainly come to be and will follow as a natural consequence. The light of a Christian cannot escape notice. So bright a lamp cannot be hidden."

I invite and encourage you take a few moments each day of this week to reflect on the quality of your witnessing to the risen Christ and look at the possibility of raising the quality of your witness as you go about doing your daily chores.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Third Week of Easter

April 20 -25, 2026

Christianity means giving witness to Christ every day.

Giving witness always bears fruit, whether it is just one's daily witness to Christ, witness during very difficult times, during persecution or witness that ends with death.

The church becomes sterile when it closes up inside itself, when it believes itself to be a 'school of religion' with lots of beautiful ideas, with many beautiful temples, with many fine museums, with many gorgeous things.

(Pope Francis)

April 20 – Monday, Third Week of Easter

Serenity is the balance of mind, body, and spirit.

Acts 6:8-15

Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, without fear and with great courage faced his trial and gave witness to the risen Christ. Stephen was at one with his commitment to the risen Christ and the people saw the reflection of this oneness with Christ on his face, his “face seemed like that of an angel”.

Psalm 119

**Remove from me the way of falsehood,
and favor me with your law.**

**The way of truth I have chosen;
I have set your ordinances before me...**

John 6:22-29

After the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, Jesus, realizing the move to force him to be their king, had withdrawn from the crowd up the mountain. So the crowd went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

Keep looking, searching for Jesus, the Messiah in your life. Never stop looking! Even when you feel you have found him...keep looking and let Jesus become MORE for you!

They met him on the other side of the lake and Jesus began to teach them a new wisdom. He told them that they “should not be working for perishable food” ...but they must begin to work for “food that remains unto life eternal, food which the son of man will give...” They asked him

what they had to do...and he told them that they must have faith in the one God, the Father, sent.

God alone can satisfy the hunger of the “soul”, the eternal hunger of every person! To satisfy this hunger, we must know Jesus, whom the Father sent. In him we come to know the Father, the Father’s truth, the Father’s love, the Father’s presence in compassion and wisdom. To know him does not mean gathering lots of information about him, but to become one with him, to be intimate, to be in close contact, to be in communion and fellowship.....

Saint of the Day, April 20 - St. Conrad of Parzham and 9 other saints are remembered this day.

Conrad was born on December 22, 1818, on the family farm in Bad Griesbach, now a part of the town of Parzham, then in the Kingdom of Bavaria, now part of Germany. Baptized Johann Evangelist, he was the second youngest of 12 children, five of whom died in infancy.

John spent his early years on the family farm. His mother died when he was 14 and his father two years later. After attending a parish mission in 1838, he decided to enter the religious life. The following year, at the age of thirty-one, and after distributing his inheritance, he was admitted, as a lay brother among the Capuchin Franciscan friars. He made his profession in 1852 and was assigned to the friary in Altoetting. Conrad spent most of his life, about 41 years, as porter in Altoetting, Bavaria, letting people into the friary and indirectly encouraging them to let God into their lives.

He had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and each day fervently recited the Rosary. On feast days he frequently made a journey to some remote shrine of the Blessed Mother. During such pilgrimages, always made on foot, he was engaged in prayer, and when he returned in the evening, he was usually still fasting. Conrad spent hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He regularly asked the Blessed Mother to intercede for him and for the many people he included in his prayers. On April 21, 1894, Conrad died in the friary where he had served for 41 years. He was canonized in 1934.

April 21 – Tuesday, Third Week of Easter

**Serenity is the ability to stay centered,
no matter what life throws at you.**

Acts 7:51-8:1

Stephen appealed to the conscience and heart of the elders and scribes and called them to listen to the Holy Spirit and not oppose the work of the Spirit as their fathers did. They became

angry and stoned him. Stephen, filled with Spirit and power, praised God and prayed for forgiveness for his persecutors and died.

Most of us do not experience the kind of persecution that Stephen experienced. However, we do experience criticisms, rejections, prejudices and other such slings and arrows from time to time. We are challenged to bless those who do not bless us and pray for those who burden us and inconvenience us!

Psalm 31

**Into your hands Lord, I commend my spirit;
You will redeem me, O Lord, O faithful God.
My trust is in the Lord;
I will rejoice and be glad of your kindness.**

John 6:30-35

The context of this conversation is that Jesus, after feeding the crowd, had asked them to begin to work for imperishable bread rather than perishable ones. He asked them to trust him whom the father sent.

The crowd asked for a sign as a proof of his claim to have come from the Father so that they may put their trust in him. They recalled how their ancestors were fed with manna in the desert. Jesus used this opportunity to reveal a new wisdom, hard for them to understand. They had to take him in as their bread of life, the imperishable bread.

Jesus said, “no one who comes to me shall ever be hungry, no one who believes in me shall thirst again”. Jesus satisfies the hunger and thirst of our hearts!

We are called again, today, to take in Jesus as our bread of life, our imperishable bread, the bread that brings us to life eternal.

Saint of the Day, April 21 – St. Anselm of Canterbury and 11 other saints are remembered this day.

Anselm was born in or around Aosta in Upper Burgundy, now part of Italy, sometime around 1033. At the age of fifteen, Anselm wanted to enter a monastery, but was refused acceptance because of his father’s opposition. Twelve years later, after careless disinterest in religion and years of worldly living, he finally fulfilled his desire to be a monk. He entered the monastery of Bec in Normandy, was elected prior three years later, and 15 years later, was unanimously chosen abbot.

Considered an original and independent thinker, Anselm was admired for his patience, gentleness, and teaching skill. Under his leadership, the Abbey of Bec became a monastic

school, influential in philosophical and theological studies. During these years, at the community's request, Anselm began publishing his theological works, comparable to those of Saint Augustine. His best-known work is the book *Cur Deus Homo* ("Why God Became Man").

Against his will, Anselm was appointed archbishop of Canterbury in 1093, at the age of 60. His appointment was opposed at first by England's King William Rufus and later accepted. Rufus persistently refused to cooperate with efforts to reform the Church. Anselm finally went into voluntary exile until Rufus died in 1100. He was then recalled to England by Rufus' brother and successor, Henry I. Disagreeing fearlessly with Henry over the king's insistence on investing England's bishops, Anselm spent another three years in exile in Rome. His care and concern extended to the very poorest people. Opposing the slave trade, Anselm obtained from the national council at Westminster the passage of a resolution prohibiting the sale of human beings.

Indifferent toward religion as a young man, Anselm became one of the Church's greatest theologians and leaders. He received the title "Father of Scholasticism" for his attempt to analyze and illumine the truths of faith through the aid of reason.

April 22 – Wednesday, Third Week of Easter

**Serenity is the peaceful acceptance of life's incompleteness
and imperfections.**

Acts 8:1-8

Stephen was stoned to death and he became the first Christian Martyr. Great persecution began, led by Saul, and many men and women were thrown into jail. However, the apostles with great courage and wisdom continued their mission of proclaiming the good news of the resurrection of Jesus, preaching God's Word and healing the sick.

Be strong! Stand your ground! Be men and women of courage and hope and virtue and the good news of the risen Jesus.

Psalm 66

**Shout joyfully to God all you on earth,
Sing praise to the glory of his name;
Proclaim his glorious praise.....
Let all the earth worship and sing praise to you.....**

John 6:35-40

Jesus continued to call them to trust him and take him into their life. He told his listeners that he was the bread of life; that no one who comes to him will ever be hungry or thirsty; that no one who turns to him will ever be rejected by his Father; that he came to do the will of the Father and that it was the will of the Father that everyone who believes in the son would have eternal life.

We are called to turn to the risen Jesus and welcome him into our life and let his word, his way, his truth, his life, his values and his attitudes transform our life.

We are called to trust that Jesus will feed us with his life, sustain us and bring us into life eternal.

We are called to trust that in him, through him and with him, we will never be lost.

Saint of the Day, April 22 - St. Adalbert of Prague and 22 other saints are remembered this day.

Adalbert was born in 956 into an illustrious family of Bohemia. In childhood he was taken by a fatal illness and his parents made a vow to the Holy Virgin to offer him to the priesthood if he would be cured. Their prayers were answered, and the boy recovered his health. They sent their son to Magdeburg to the saintly Archbishop of Magdeburg, who oversaw his education in religion and science.

In 973 he received holy orders from the Bishop of Prague. Later, this Bishop died a bad death, screaming in despair on his deathbed that he would be condemned for his negligence to his duties and ardent pursuit of honors, wealth and pleasures. A witness to this sad end, Adalbert never forgot it, taking it as a lesson for the rest of his life. The next year he was chosen as Bishop of Prague.

He entered Prague barefoot and was joyfully received by the people. The Diocese was in a deplorable situation. Some of its inhabitants were still idolaters, and many Catholics were well entrenched in shameful vices. In vain St. Adalbert tried to correct them and to bring them to religion and piety. When his efforts proved fruitless, he obtained papal permission to leave the Episcopate and enter a monastery in Rome. After five years, Pope John XV sent him back to Prague with the provision that he could again leave the Episcopate if the people did not correspond.

A second time he was received joyfully, and the people promised to correct themselves and leave their heathen practices. These hasty promises were soon forgotten, however, and the Saint determined to abandon them forever and return to his monastery. On his way back to

Rome, he met with a great success in Hungary, where he converted many to Catholicism. With this, the Pope ordered him to not come to Rome, but to return to Prague. At this news, the elites of Prague became enraged and killed many relatives of the Saint, stole his belongings, and burned the family castles.

Adalbert went to Boleslaus, his friend, son of the Duke of Poland. In this country he again converted many idolaters. On a missionary trip to Prussia he converted some of the inhabitants of Danzig. It was there that he met his death when a group of pagans attacked him. When he received the first blow, he thanked God for giving him the opportunity to suffer for Him. Then the pagan priest leading the idolaters pierced his body with a two-headed lance, saying: "Be joyous, then, since you want nothing more than to suffer with your Christ." It was April 23, 997. Opposition to the Good News of Jesus did not discourage Adalbert, who is now remembered with great honor in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Germany.

April 23 – Thursday, Third Week of Easter

Serenity is the quiet confidence that comes from within.

Acts 8:26-40

Philip, on his journey to Gaza, in a mysterious way, met a young man who was anxious to hear the Gospel. He explained to the young man the prophesy about the suffering servant, shared with him the good news of Jesus and baptized him at his request. **Share the good news with others on your journey. All our journeys give us opportunities to witness to the good news of Jesus.**

Psalm 66

**Bless our God, you peoples, loudly sound his praise.
He has given life to our souls and has not let our feet slip.**

John 6:44-51

The Jews judged things by human values and external standards. They didn't see any more in Jesus than "a carpenter's son" from Nazareth. How could a carpenter's son have a message from God? God's messengers don't fit the human standards and expectations!

Would one reject a gift because the wrappings don't fit the standard? God's message comes to us through the most unexpected and surprising people, events, situations, and ways.

The Jews didn't listen. Their minds were closed. They heard with resentment, anger,

superiority, indifference.... not with openness to learn. So, they didn't learn and they didn't hear God. **The only listening, that is worthwhile, is that which hears and learns.**

Jesus began to speak about eating his body and drinking his blood. And this eating and drinking gives life that will last - eternal life. To "eat and to drink" is to take in. So long as Jesus remains a historical figure or a figure in a holy book, he is external to us. But when he enters our life (our hearts, minds), we can feed upon the life and the power and the strength and the vitality and the spirit that He gives to us. Another way of saying it would be: "stop thinking of Jesus as a subject for theological debate....just take him into your life...hen you will have real life...you will begin your journey into the eternal.

Revitalize your life with the life of Jesus until you are filled with the life of God!

Saint of the Day, April 23 - St. George and 9 other saints are remembered this day.

Very little is known about St. George's life. He was probably a high-ranking officer in the Roman army. Tradition speaks of Emperor Diocletian torturing St. George to make him deny his faith in Christ. However, despite some of the most terrible tortures even for that time, St George showed incredible courage and faith and was finally beheaded near Lydda in Palestine. His head was later taken to Rome where it was interred in the church dedicated to him. His death may have been on April 23, 303 A.D.

Stories of his strength and courage soon spread throughout Europe. The best-known story about St. George is his fight with a dragon, but it is highly unlikely that he ever fought a dragon, and even more unlikely that he ever visited England, however his name was known there as early as the eighth-century.

April 24 - Friday, Third Week of Easter

**Serenity is found when you let go of expectations
and find peace in the moment.**

Acts 9:1-20

Saul was on his way to Damascus while persecuting the Christians. He had a great fall and lost his sight. He heard a voice instructing him to go to the city for further directions. In the city, he met Ananias who prayed over him. With this, Saul experienced a radical transformation of his life and began a new life proclaiming the risen Lord.

Psalm 117

**Praise the Lord, all you nations;
Glorify him, all you peoples!
For steadfast is his kindness towards us,
And the fidelity of the Lord endures forever.**

John 6:52-59

**“If you do not eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal....he abides in me and I in him”.
This is the central theme of today’s Gospel reading.**

Jesus said: “This piece of bread is my Body” - this piece of bread is my very self, no longer in type, but in reality. Therefore, when you eat it, you are no longer eating a symbol, a foreshadowing of a future reality. You are eating my very self. Whenever, you eat this, remember that I am truly present in it and therefore in you. I AM REAL - IN YOU, HERE AND NOW. YOU EAT ME AND YOU BECOME MY BODY.

IN THE EUCHARIST THE CHURCH BECOMES THE BODY OF CHRIST- THE CHURCH BECOMES HIS PRESENCE.

The Eucharist is REMEMBERING JESUS - His life, death, resurrection - entering into the MYSTERY of His whole being. Eucharist is re-living the MYSTERY - mystery, not in the sense of something mysterious, something that we cannot understand - but in the sense of a very PROFOUND REALITY which we can only celebrate, experience and live - a reality that transforms our life as we celebrate it - just as bread and wine are transformed in the celebration, we are transformed. The Eucharist is a redeeming, transforming, life-giving, fulfilling, joy-filled celebration.

Saint of the Day, April 24 - St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen and 10 other saints are remembered this day

St. Fidelis was born Mark Roy or Rey in 1577 in Sigmaringen, a town in modern-day Germany. He studied law and philosophy at the University of Freiburg. Roy subsequently taught philosophy at this university, ultimately earning the degree of Doctor of Law. He practiced law as a counselor or advocate, at Colmar, in Alsace, France where he came to be known as the 'poor man's lawyer'. He scrupulously forbore all invectives, detractions, and whatever might affect the reputation of any adversary. Disenchanted with the evils associated with his profession, he was determined to join his brother George as a member of the Capuchin friars. Fidelis was his religious name. His wealth was divided between needy seminarians and the poor.

As a follower of Saint Francis of Assisi, Fidelis continued his devotion to the weak and needy. During a severe epidemic in a city where he was guardian of a friary, Fidelis cared for and cured many sick soldiers. If a poor man needed some clothing, Fidelis would often give the man the clothes right off his back. Complete generosity to others characterized this saint's life.

He was appointed head of a group of Capuchins sent to preach against the Calvinists and Zwinglians in Switzerland. Those who observed the mission felt that success was more attributable to the prayer of Fidelis during the night than to his sermons and instructions.

He was accused of opposing the peasants' national aspirations for independence from Austria. While he was preaching at Seewis, to which he had gone against the advice of his friends, a gun was fired at him, but he escaped unharmed. A Protestant person offered to shelter Fidelis, but he declined, saying his life was in God's hands. On the way back, on April 24, 1622, he was killed by a group of armed men. Fidelis was canonized in 1746. Fifteen years later he was recognized as a martyr.

April 25 – Saint Mark, Evangelist

Serenity is the quiet strength that comes from within.

1 Peter 5:5-14

Peter encourages us to be humble before God and toward one another with complete trust in God's loving kindness. He calls us to be steadfast in living in the grace of God.

Psalm 89

**The favor of the Lord I will sing forever;
Through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness.
For you have said, "My kindness is established forever";
In heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.**

Mark 16:15-20

This is an amazing story. In verse 16:14, we read about Jesus taking the disciples "to task for their disbelief and their stubbornness since they had not put faith in those who had seen him after he had been raised". In verse 15, the excerpt of today, we read about Jesus trusting the same men with all their "disbelief and stubbornness" and sending them with his mission of bringing good news to the world.

Today, we, with all our limitations and inconsistencies are trusted with this good news and called to bring this good news of Jesus to the world

Saint of the Day, April 25 - Saint Mark, Evangelist and 12 other saints are remembered this day.

We know very little about the early life and other details about Mark. Some people think that the young man who followed Jesus at a distance in the garden of Gethsemane and ran away naked when the crowd arrested Jesus, was Mark. Mark was not an apostle. He was probably a member of one of the first Christian communities. His mother's house in Jerusalem is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as a center where Christians gathered. Mark was baptized by Peter. Then they both moved to Rome, where Mark served as Peter's secretary. Mark also traveled with Paul and his cousin Barnabas on their first missionary journey, evangelized Alexandria, established a Church there and founded the first Christian School. Later, during Paul's two prison terms in Rome, Mark helped him to continue his work.

Mark is the author of the earliest canonical Gospel. Mark's gospel is simple and direct. It challenges the reader to share in Jesus' sufferings. It is filled with details that help us to understand the human side of Jesus. Mark's symbol is a winged lion. The lion is a desert animal and Mark's gospel begins with the story of John the Baptist in the desert. Traditions say that Mark went to Alexandria in Egypt. He worked there for ten years before he was martyred on April 25, 68 in Alexandria. The city of Venice in Italy has Mark for its patron saint. His bones are said to rest in the great cathedral there. Mark is patron of attorneys, lawyers, stain glass workers and insect bites

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Christians who don't give to others
the new life they've been given by Christ remain sterile.
Pray to the Holy Spirit who makes us strong
in order to take the path of witness.
(Pope Francis)**

