

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

P. O. Box 440, Whitehouse, Texas 75791

www.wellspringcommunity.net

frgusmsfs@gmail.com

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Gospel reading of today, Monday, the seventh week of Easter (John 16:29-33) tells us about the disciples of Jesus finally surrendering and making a real leap of faith in Jesus, their master. They told Jesus that they had come to know the truth and that they didn't need to ask any more questions. The Gospel readings of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday speak of Jesus praying and asking the father to consecrate his followers. Friday and Saturday, the Gospel speaks of Jesus calling his men to make that final choice to follow him and fulfill his mission.

The whole week is centered on the prayer of Jesus. Jesus, first, prayed for himself as he was preparing himself to face the cross. Then he prayed for his disciples that the father would consecrate them in truth and that the father would protect them and keep them safe. Then his prayer took a sweep into the distant future and into the distant lands and prayed for all who would believe his word and that is you and me. It is amazing and comforting to know that Jesus prayed for you and me when he was preparing himself to face the cross!

His prayer was that all will be one - all will experience the kind of oneness that he experienced with the Father; that all will be one in the oneness of himself and the Father; that the world will believe that the Father sent him; that the unity of all will be complete; that all will have a vision of the gift of glory that comes from the Father's love and that the Father's love will abide in all. The prayer of Jesus centers on abiding in him, in love, in unity, in harmony and in the eternal glory of the Father - God living in us and we, living in God. It is this unity that will convince the world of the truth of Christianity, the truth that Jesus came to proclaim and the place of Jesus in our life and the life of the world. Only the love that abides in the hearts of men and women of deep abiding faith can tear down the barriers that keep us apart and bring us into communion with God and others.

I encourage you take a few moments each day of this week to share this prayer of Jesus. Take time to pray as Jesus did: pray for yourself, pray for your family circle and pray for all others beyond your family circle. Pray with utter confidence that the God to whom we pray is a God of love, who is more ready to answer our prayer than we are ready to pray. We come to our God who wills to give. We come with desire in our hearts and words on our lips: "Thy will be done."

God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus

Seventh Week of Easter

May 22-27, 2023

Many people have no stable points of reference on which to build their lives, and so they end up deeply insecure. There is a growing mentality of relativism, which holds that everything is equally valid, that truth and absolute points of reference do not exist. But this way of thinking does not lead to true freedom, but rather to instability, confusion and blind conformity to the fads of the moment.

(Pope Benedict XVI)

May 22 – Monday, Seventh Week of Easter

The measure of love is to love without measure.

(St. Francis de sales)

Acts 19:1-8

Paul met twelve men at Ephesus, baptized them and confirmed them with the Holy Spirit. They were men who were baptized in the tradition of John the Baptist. Now, filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to spread the good news.

Psalm 68 - The just rejoice and exult before God...

John 16:29-33

In this excerpt, John tells us that the disciples finally surrendered! They made a leap of faith! We know! We have seen! We are convinced! You are speaking plainly! We don't even need to ask you! You know our questions before we ask!

Even as the disciples make this great leap of faith, Jesus cautioned them that they would desert him. Jesus knew their weakness, he knew their failure, he knew that they would let him down in the moment of his real need - still he loved them. What is even more amazing is that Jesus knew his men at their worst and still loved them!

It is a very difficult thing to forgive someone and still trust them. In Jesus, we find a merging of forgiveness and trust. Jesus loved them and trusted them even in their weakness! Jesus teaches us to forgive and to trust the person who is guilty of failure.

It is amazing how Jesus was not thinking of how his disciples' failure would hurt him, but how

it would hurt them. Love unconditional it is! It is as though he said to them: “I know what’s going to happen. Your disloyalty will not come as a shock to me and it does not make any difference to my love. When you think about it afterwards, don’t despair”. Jesus gave his gift to the disciples: courage and peace.

Saint of the Day, May 25 - St. Rita of Cascia and 23 other saints are remembered this day.

Rita was born in 1386 in Roccaparena, Umbria, Italy. She was married at the age of 12 to a violent and ill-tempered husband. He was murdered 18 years later and she forgave his murderers, praying that her twin sons, who had sworn to avenge their father’s death may also forgive. She was granted this grace, and her sons, who died young, died reconciled to God.

After the death of her husband and sons, Rita tried to join the Augustinian nuns in Cascia. She was refused at first because she was a widow, but eventually allowed to enter the convent where she lived the last 40 years of her life in prayer, mortification and service to the people of Cascia. Rita was bedridden for the last four years of her life, consuming almost nothing except for the Eucharist. She died of tuberculosis at the age of 70 on May 22, 1456 and was canonized in 1900 by Pope Leo XIII.

May 23 – Tuesday, Seventh Week of Easter

**God is ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger
and abounding in steadfast love.**

(Nehemiah 9:17)

Acts 20:17-27

In this excerpt from Acts, we meet Paul who has come to a sense of total dedication, putting no value on his own personal life, surrendering totally to the mission that he has come to love. As he says, “I put no value on my life if only I can finish my race and complete the service to which I have been assigned by the Lord Jesus, bearing witness to the Gospel of God’s Grace”.

Be faithful to your calling and bear witness to the Good news of God’s Grace!

Psalm 68 - Blessed day by day be the Lord...

John 17:1-11

In this chapter, we read the prayer of Jesus, first for himself that he may glorify the Father, then for his chosen disciples and for all who will believe in him and his word that they may have eternal life. Jesus remained faithful to the mission that the father gave him and fulfilled that mission. He says that his disciples too have remained faithful to God's word. He prayed to the father that he would keep his disciples faithful since they have to continue his mission in the world.

He describes eternal life as knowing the only true God and his son Jesus. To know is to become one with what is known and not a gathering of information or ideas or concepts. To know, in the sense used here, is to become intimate, to become one with, to enter into that which is known. In this sense, eternal life is to enter into the mystery of God's life and love, to be "baptized", to be immersed into God's Life.

This week, make the prayer of Jesus your prayer...pray for being more fully immersed into the eternal, into the mystery of God's life and love...pray for grace and courage to be faithful in completing your mission in life...

Saint of the Day, May 23 - St. John Baptist de Rossi and 25 other saints are remembered this day.

John Baptist de Rossi was born into a poor family on February 22, 1698, in Genoa. When his father died, he lived with his cousin, Lorenzo de Rossi, who was the canon at St. Mary's in Cosmedin. He began his studies at the Collegium Romanum under the guidance of the Jesuits. He then studied philosophy and theology at the Dominican College of St. Thomas. During this time, it was discovered that he had epileptic seizures.

John wanted to become a priest, but his epilepsy was an impediment for becoming a priest. However, John was given a dispensation and was ordained a priest on March 8, 1721.

As a priest, he worked in Rome, caring for the homeless who wandered the streets of the city. He tended to the needs of the sick and assisted in helping find a hospice for homeless women. He aided prisoners, helped workers, and literally touched thousands of needy people—the sick, the homeless, prostitutes, transient cattle drivers who came to market in Rome, and other rough sorts. By day he devoted himself to the sick poor in Rome's hospitals. By night he ministered to street people at a refuge. He did this for over forty years.

From around 1748, his health began to deteriorate, and his epileptic seizures became more violent, and he was confined to the sick bed. He died on May 23, 1764 and was canonized on December 8, 1881 by Pope Leo XIII

May 24 – Wednesday, Seventh Week of Easter

God's steadfast love and faithfulness are tenacious.

(Psalms 86, 145, and 103)

Acts 20:28-38

Paul entrusted the care of the Church at Ephesus to the elders and called them to “keep careful watch....and shepherd the church! He warned them about those who would distort the truth. He prayed for them and with them and expressed deep felt affection for them before he bid farewell to them, knowing that he would never see them again...**Cast your cares into the hands of the Lord!**

Psalm 68 - You kingdoms of the earth sing to God...

John 17:11-19

Jesus prayed for the safety and protection of his disciples. He knew that he was leaving them in the world. He knew that they didn't belong to the world's standards, that they had to live a different life style and that they would face difficult situations.

Be safe! Pray for those who are unsafe to be with and pray for those living in unsafe conditions! Pray for those who are exposed to difficult situations!

Jesus prayed that the disciples would be happy...to its fullness. He said to them that all said and did was to bring them joy to its fullness.

Remember those who do not experience joy in life. Pray with those who are sad, lonely, depressed, unhappy.....

Jesus prayed that the disciples may be consecrated in truth. To “consecrate” means to empower a person with the necessary qualities of mind and heart and character to fulfill his/her mission in life.

Pray that you will be empowered with the necessary qualities of character to fulfill the mission God has given you!

Saint of the Day, May 24 - Feast of Mary Help of Christians and 16 other saints are remembered this day.

Saint John Chrysostom was the first person to use this Marian title in the year 345 as a devotion to the Virgin Mary. In 1572, during the expansion of the Islamic Ottoman Empire intended to

invade Christian Europe, Pope Pius V invoked Christian armies and its victory achieved was consequently attributed to the intercession of Mary under this title.

Saint Don Bosco and Saint Vincent Pallotti also promoted Marian devotion under this title. Don Bosco built a huge basilica in her honor in 1868 and founded a religious congregation for women, under the title of, "The Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians". The title of Mary Help of Christians is associated with the defense of Christian Europe, the north of Africa and the Middle East from non-Christian peoples during the Middle Ages.

The feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians as we have it today, was instituted by Pope Pius VII. When Napoleon returned to Paris and Murat became king of Naples in March 1815, Pope Pius VII fled to Savona. After the Congress of Vienna and the battle of Waterloo, the pope returned to Rome in July 1815. To give thanks to God and Our Lady, he declared May 24, the anniversary of his return to be henceforth the feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians.

May 25 – Thursday, Seventh Week of Easter

**The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger
and abounding in steadfast love.**

(Psalm 103)

Acts 22:30; 23:6-11

Paul was arrested in Jerusalem at the close of his third journey and brought before the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin. Serious dispute arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees over their differences with Paul. Paul was blessed with courage and given the assurance that he would witness to the resurrection of Jesus in Rome just as he did in Jerusalem.

Psalm 16 - I bless the lord who counsels me...

John 17:20-26

Jesus, first, prayed for himself as he was preparing himself to face the cross. Then he prayed for his disciples and God's power for them. Now his prayer takes a sweep into the distant future and into distant lands and prays for all who will believe.

His prayer was that all will be one - all will experience the kind of oneness that he experienced with the Father; that all will be one in the oneness of himself and the Father; that the world will believe that the Father sent him; that the unity of all will be complete (perfect); that all will

have a vision of the gift of glory that comes from the Father's love; that the Father's love will live in all....

The prayer of Jesus centers on abiding in him, in love, in unity, in harmony, in eternal glory - God living in us and we living in God. It is this unity, harmony, oneness that will convince the world of the truth of Christianity, the truth that Jesus came to proclaim and the place of Jesus in our life and the life of the world.

Only the love that abides in the hearts of men and women can tear down the barriers that keep us apart and bring us into communion with God and one another.

Saint of the Day, May 25 - St. Bede the Venerable and 23 other saints are remembered this day.

Bede was born in the year 673 near the English town of Jarrow. At an early age, his parents entrusted him to the care of the abbot of the Monastery of St. Paul, Jarrow. The abbot and a group of other monks instructed Bede not only in scripture and theology, but also in sacred music, poetry and the Greek language.

Recognizing his remarkable devotion to prayer and study, Bede was ordained a deacon at the age of 19 and ordained a priest at the age of 30. After becoming a priest, he began working on farming, baking, and other works of the monastery, besides celebration Mass. He gave priority to prayer, fasting and charitable hospitality. He showed excellence in a wide range of subjects.

Bede declined a request to become abbot of his monastery. Instead, he concentrated on writing, and produced more than 45 books – primarily about theology and the Bible, but also on science, literature, and history. He also taught hundreds of students at the monastery and its school, which became renowned throughout Britain.

Bede died in Jarrow on May 26, 735 praying his favorite prayer, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As in the beginning, so now, and forever” shortly after finishing an Anglo-Saxon translation of the Gospel of John. Pope Leo XIII canonized and declared him a Doctor of the Church in 1899.

May 26 – Friday, Seventh Week of Easter

**God will not always accuse us, nor will he keep his anger forever
because he is steadfast love.**

(Psalm 103)

Acts 25:13-21

The authorities were confused over Paul's arrest and the accusation brought against him. This arrest and imprisonment brought much good. Paul used this opportunity to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus. Many Roman officials including the king came to know about the resurrection of Jesus.

People of faith, like Paul, discover grace and strength even in disappointing and difficult experiences.

Psalm 103 - Bless the Lord O my soul...

John 21:15-19

"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these..." "More than these..." It just may be that Jesus swept his hand around the boat, the net, the fishes, etc. and asked Peter, "do you love me more than these..." Are you prepared to give them all up, to abandon all hope of a successful career, to give up a steady job, to give up your people...and work with me?...a challenge to Peter for a final decision!

What does it mean to you, in terms of your own personal life, at this point in time? What do you feel challenged to do today?

It may be that Jesus looked at the rest of the group and asked Peter: "do you love me more than these?" Remember Peter saying, "though they all fall away, I will never..." (Mt.26:33). Now, Peter has to remember how he thought he alone could be faithful and how his courage eventually failed, and he denied his master three times.

What does this say to you, personally?

If Peter denied three times, now he affirms three times. How gracious! Three new opportunities for affirmation, for loyalty after threefold denial! Threefold affirmation of Love! This declaration of Love brought Peter great responsibility.

Reflect on this experience of Peter.

Saint of the Day, May 26 - St. Philip Neri and 19 other saints are remembered this day.

Philip was born into a noble family in Florence, Italy, on July 21, 1515. He received his early education from the friars at San Marco, the famous Dominican monastery in Florence.

At the age of 18, Philip was sent to his uncle, Romolo, a wealthy merchant at San Germano to assist him in his business, and with the hope that he might inherit his uncle's fortune. He gained Romolo's confidence and affection, but soon after coming to San Germano Philip had a religious conversion. From then onward, he no longer cared for things of the world, and decided to live in Rome and began to talk to people on the streets about Jesus. For thirteen years Philip ministered on the streets and had a following of many, including the rich and the poor. So great was his ministry that he formed a group of laypersons that would meet for prayer, faith sharing, and service.

Philip had studied philosophy and theology for three years, but he had given up the idea of being a priest. However, at the urging of his confessor, he was ordained in 1551. Some of his followers also became priests, and they lived together in community. This was the beginning of the Oratory, the religious institute he founded. The Oratory was finally approved after suffering through a period of accusations of being an assembly of heretics, where laypersons preached and sang vernacular hymns!

As a priest, Philip was an outstanding confessor, and his advice was sought by many, including royalty and the clergy. He was influential in converting many of the influential people within the Church itself to personal holiness. Philip's advice was sought by many of the prominent figures of his day. He is one of the influential figures of the Counter-Reformation, mainly for converting to personal holiness many of the influential people within the Church itself.

Philip Neri died on May 25, 1595, the Feast of Corpus Christi that year, after having spent the day hearing confessions and receiving visitors. He was canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622

May 27 – Saturday, Seventh Week of Easter

**God does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities because He is steadfast love**
(Psalm 103)

Acts 28:16-20, 30-31

Paul was brought to Rome and kept under house arrest. He continued to proclaim the good news of Jesus to many during this period of imprisonment. He said, "I wear these chains solely because I share the hope of Israel".

Psalm 11 - The Lord is in his holy temple...

John 21:20-25

Jesus had warned Peter about the kind of life that he would have to live and the kind of sacrifice he would have to make and the eventual surrender of his will to God's will. Then he said to Peter, "Follow me".

At this point Peter asked Jesus about John. Jesus, said to Peter that he had his call and he had to respond to that call and he didn't have to worry about the call and response of John.....it is another way of saying, "you have your mission.....you don't have to compare yourself with others....."

Why worry about what another may or may not do..... You have your mission.

Carry on your mission, if you really love...Your love must transcend comparison, competition and control...reach out in service.....go beyond the call of duty.....walk the extra mile.....

Each one has his/her gift.....you have yours.

Each one has his/her call.....you have yours.

Each one has his/her place.....you have yours.

Each one has/her mission.....you have yours

Each one has his/her prayer.....you have yours.

Saint of the day, May 27 - St. Augustine of Canterbury and 6 other saints are remembered this day

Augustine's date of birth and the details of his early life are not known. Most likely born in Rome to a noble family, he entered monastic life as a young man. The community he joined had been recently founded by a Benedictine monk named Gregory, who would go on to become Pope and eventually be known as St. Gregory the Great. The friendship between Gregory and Augustine had great historical consequences, as it was the Pope who would eventually send his fellow monk to evangelize England

In the year 596, Pope Gregory sent Augustine, by then a Benedictine monk, and 39 other monks to England as missionaries. As they passed through Gaul, the locals convinced the monks that the Anglo-Saxons were savages, and they warned them that the English Channel was too dangerous to cross. Augustine decided that the danger was too great, and they returned to Rome. Pope Gregory allayed their fears and strengthened them to resume their journey.

Augustine and his monks landed in the Kingdom of Kent that was ruled by the pagan king, Ethelbert. Ethelbert was married to a Christian woman, and so he was familiar with the faith.

The king provided the monks with hospitality, and within a year the king himself was baptized. In 597, Augustine was appointed Bishop of Canterbury. Because England was a pagan land, Augustine faced many obstacles converting the people. However, Pope Gregory had given him the missionary principle that helped him change hearts and minds. Instead of destroying pagan temples, he transformed them into churches. Pagan rites and festivals were transformed, as much as possible, into Christian ones. He died on May 26, 604 in Canterbury, United Kingdom.

Augustine achieved limited success in his eight years as Bishop, but his work and successes planted the seeds of Christianity that would eventually lead to the conversion of all of England by the year 680 A.D.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**To be alive is to be transformed from within,
open to the energy of God's love.
(Pope Benedict XVI)**