

Wellspring

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Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Thoughts of Love permeate all the Scripture readings of today as well as the responsorial psalm. It is not the kind of love that is talked about in friendship circles and social gatherings. It is the kind of love that God has revealed in Jesus – the all-embracing, other-centered, sacrificial, steadfast and unfailing love. The first reading speaks of the covenant relationship that demands genuine love, especially for the marginalized in the community. People of the covenant must act toward one another as God acted toward them. They must reflect God's compassion and concern for all people.

The Responsorial Psalm sings of God taking "delight" in delivering his people. God has given himself to his people in love and his love is loyal, steadfast, and unconquerable. In the second reading, we read about St. Paul appreciating and congratulating the Thessalonian community for their works of love. In the Gospel, we hear Jesus proclaiming the essence of the whole law as "love of God and love of neighbor." Love is not an abstract word. It is a living word, dynamic and active. It is full of life and energy and power. It is not a piece for a conversation or study or discussion or for writing an article or a book. Love must be felt, meditated, contemplated, and lived to its fulness. Pope Benedict described the commandment of love as "performative language."

For the patriarchs, prophets and Jesus, love was never an abstract concept. It was and still is always concrete and specific to people and situations. This reminds me of the following story. A priest gave a wonderful sermon on love – all about love being unconditional, generous, sacrificial, other-centered, etc. The next day, he got someone to pour concrete around the steps in the backyard and a path through the middle of the backyard to the street. A little while later, he heard voices of children in the backyard and looked out to find the children drawing stuff on the concrete. The priest went out and screamed at the kids and asked them to leave without messing up the concrete. One of the boys said, 'Father you gave a wonderful sermon on love yesterday. What happened to it?' The priest replied, "Yes, I believe everything I said about love, and I love God and people as I said yesterday...but not in the concrete!"

Ha! Ha! Ha! Not in the concrete!!! Israel was called to listen and respond to the cry of the poor "in the concrete" because God hears the cry of the poor (first reading of today's mass). Jesus gave us a concrete example of "performative love" when he fed the hungry crowd of five thousand men (John 6). He also gave us the example of the Good Samaritan, who cared for the

person beaten and left for dead on the side of the road...love in the concrete! It is not enough to have a nice conversation about love. Love must be lived as simply and fully as we can, doing the best we can to tenderly care for others, to be compassionate to our brothers and sisters in need, to reach out and help the poor and the marginalized, to better the situation in which people live and to let the love of God guide all that we are, all that we do and in all our relationships.

Jesus loved people “in the concrete,” and he called all his followers and calls us today to love in the concrete – every day and in all situations as we go about doing our daily chores. The way of love that Jesus called us to practice is not an abstract idea, a lofty ideal or a doctrine of the Church. It is the very life of God, the way of God and the truth of God which we must embrace and live. This love must define who we are and how we live; how we treat ourselves and others around us; how we treat the world and respond to what the world has to offer us and define us into the future.

Four friends brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus so that Jesus could touch him and heal him (Luke 5:17-26). They tried to bring him in front of Jesus but could not because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and let him down in front of Jesus through the tiles. Jesus healed the man. What an amazing act of love! The many acts of kindness from bringing the paralyzed man to Jesus to going up the roof, to lowering the mat, to facing the crowd’s reactions – all of these acts of loving kindness made healing possible...this is love in action, what Pope Benedict calls, “performative love!”

The wise man advises us, “Do not let loving kindness and fidelity leave you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. Then will you win favor and esteem before God and human beings” (Proverbs 3:3).

St. Francis De Sales reminds us that God loves every person and that God’s love is unfailing and unconditional. Sometimes it is hard to believe that God loves us without conditions. After all, we are not all lovable and none of us is lovable all the time. But we can be thankful that God’s love does not depend upon us. It is simply in God’s nature to love us. He calls us to love just as he loves... “love one another as I have loved you,” says the Lord (John 13:34). Saint Francis de Sales tells us, “We will not often have the opportunity to do great things, but every day, we will have the opportunity to do little things with great love.” Love in action doesn’t have to include spectacular events! Greatness lies also in doing little things and doing it well with love!

I encourage you to take a few moments each day of this week to be still and to reflect on letting your love come alive and let it be love in action... “performative love!”

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Scroll down to read the reflections on the Scripture readings of today’s mass....

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 25, 2026

**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.

**Forgiveness is an important and necessary virtue
and a prerequisite for peace and serenity.**

Exodus 22:20-26

This excerpt is part of the book of the Covenant (Exodus 20:22 - 23:33) and it deals with laws of social conduct. We need to read the whole section in order to get a good appreciation of what the legal code prescribed for Israel. Israel is called to be just toward the less privileged in their community. God hears the cry of the poor because he is compassionate, and God's people must do the same.

Justice for Israel meant right relationship with God and one another. Biblical justice is fidelity to covenantal relationship. People of the Covenant are related to one another and this relationship demanded that they care for one another. They were to act toward one another as God acted toward them. They were also to act toward the widows, orphans and the aliens as God acted toward them. God's compassion must characterize God's people.

Psalm 18

This is a royal thanksgiving Psalm for a military victory. The whole Psalm is found in 2 Samuel 22. David wrote this Psalm after he had finally won all his battles. He uses words that describes how he feels about the God who gave him victory over his enemies. He sees God as his strength, rock, fortress, deliverer, shield, Altar, stronghold and so on. He has learned to trust in God's provident care. He expresses his complete confidence, "I call, and He answers".

God's act of deliverance is described in poetic language.... God came riding on the cherubs and on the wings of the wind; He drew me out of many waters and brought me to a broad place.....He delivered me because, "He delighted in me". Even in the midst of natural disasters, God cares for me. God has given himself to his people in love and his love is loyal, steadfast, and unconquerable.

This Psalm carries much for our reflection and prayer. Read and prayerfully reflect over this Psalm. Use your imagination. Visualize if you can, "God riding on the cherubs", "riding on the wings of the wind", "leaning toward me" because "He delights in me".

**I love you O Lord my strength,
O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.
My God, my rock of refuge,
My shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.**

I Thessalonians 1:5-10

Paul wrote to the Thessalonian community encouraging them and affirming them in their works of love. He told them how much he appreciated their faith and how encouraged and supported he felt when he came to know of their faithfulness in love. He assured them of remembering them constantly in prayer.

Paul encouraged them to be strong in faith and to be bold and courageous in the practice of their faith. He was convinced that believers in Jesus should never be afraid or ashamed of their commitment to Christ. They must be prepared to live out their faith in the midst of a difficult and challenging world. Paul saw the conversion of the Thessalonians as part of the good news that was being proclaimed in Macedonia and Achaia and other places. He saw Thessalonian's conversion and their Lifestyle as a "living Gospel". They had turned away from false gods to the true and living God. This is what Paul remembered, appreciated, and affirmed in the Thessalonian community.

Say a word of encouragement and support to someone today!

Remember in prayer those who serve you in faithfulness and love!

Mathew 22:34-40

A lawyer asked Jesus what he thought was the greatest commandment. This was an attempt to trap Jesus into making some statement that could be used against him.

Jesus used even an attempt to trap him as an opportunity to proclaim profound truth. This teaches us and calls us to use every opportunity, including unpleasant ones, to proclaim and reveal God's truth and goodness and love.

Jesus placed love of God as the first and the greatest and love of neighbor as the second. The essence of the whole law is proclaimed as "love of God and love of neighbor". Love of God must guide all that we are, all that we do and all our relationships. Love of man and the world must be grounded in the love of God.

At the Last Supper, Jesus gave his disciples this final commandment and declared love to be the defining characteristic of Christianity: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). Jesus went on to say, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). This sacrificial love of Jesus is what his disciples are called to follow.

Saint of the Day, October 25 - Pope Boniface I and 20 other saints are remembered on this day

Pope Boniface I was Pope from 418 - 422. Little is known of his life before his election as Pope. He was a priest at Rome and served as papal delegate to Constantinople under Innocent I. When Pope Zosimus died in December 418, a majority elected Boniface pope, and a minority elected Eulalius pope. Pope and antipope were consecrated on the same day. He was ordained by Pope Damasus I. The Council of Spoleto was convoked in 419 to settle the dispute. Symmachus the Prefect supported Eulalius, and the Emperor Honorius supported Boniface, who was enthroned as Pope after the council. Boniface condemned Pelagianism and encouraged St. Augustine to write against it. He ordered the singing of the Gloria in excelsis on Holy Thursday and regulated several points of Church discipline. He defended the rights of the Holy See. Boniface I died on Sept. 4, 422, in Rome.

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.**

