

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During the past three weeks, we have been reading and reflecting on the very personal and intimate conversation Jesus had with his disciples before his return to His Father. He told them that he was giving them peace as his farewell gift; that he was their true Shepherd and their friend; called them to abide in him and become fruitful; that only in him they could be fruitful; that he was the way to the father, the truth of the father and the life of the father; that he was going to the father who sent him and then he told them that he said all these to them because "you are my friends."

The disciples of Jesus were confused, surprised, bewildered, and grief-stricken at hearing that their master was going to leave them. Jesus comforted them saying that it was for the best. He had to go, so that he could send the Holy Spirit as a gift from the Father. Jesus assured them that this gift of the Spirit would do many things for them that they themselves would be unable to do. The Holy Spirit would guide them to all truth, teach them of things to come, will be a helper who will stay with them forever, give them courage to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties.

Witnessing to Christ is not a matter of carrying a Bible, wearing a cross, saying a few prayers, or teaching church doctrines although they are good and commendable practices. Witnessing is more about our attitudes, our behavior patterns, our lifestyle, our relationships, and the way we are present wherever we may be. Our witness to Christ is inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit from within.

Pope Francis reminds us, "Christianity is not a school of ideas or a collection of beautiful temples and lovely art; it is a living people who follow Jesus and give witness to him every day." He also says, "A Christian who doesn't give witness is unfathomable." But we need the help of the Holy Spirit, especially in difficult moments, when faced with hard choices or when tempted by the world's standards. The Holy Spirit makes us strong and empowers us to give witness to Christ wherever we may be and whatever we may be doing.

Let us be docile to the Holy Spirit who has been given to us! Let us listen to the Holy Spirit whispering from within us and respond with confidence and be witnesses for Jesus Christ as we go about doing our daily chores.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

# **Sixth Week of Easter**

**May 6-11, 2024**

**Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams.  
Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential.  
Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in,  
but with what it is still possible for you to do.  
(Pope John XXIII)**

**May 6 – Monday, Sixth Week of Easter**

**God shows forbearance by holding back judgment  
that the world deserves.**

## **Acts 16:11-15**

We continue to read about the good news being announced to many people in leading cities and districts. Hospitality continues to be one of the greatest virtues among those who came into the early Christian community.

**Be hospitable! May you be a welcoming person and may your home be a welcoming and safe place!**

## **Psalm 149**

**Sing to the Lord a new song  
Of praise in the assembly of the faithful,  
Let Israel be glad in their maker,  
Let the children of Zion rejoice in their king.**

## **John 15:26 – 16:4**

**This excerpt tells us that Jesus promised his disciples to send them his Holy Spirit. He told them that the Holy Spirit would give witness to the good news and would give them courage to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties.....**

It is the Holy Spirit within us who moves us to respond to God. Our witness to Christ is inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit from within. The spirit brings us into this fellowship with Christ and sustains that relationship.

Our witness comes from long, lasting fellowship and intimacy with Christ. The disciples were witnesses because they have been with him. We can witness Christ only when we have been with him. The witness comes from inner, personal conviction. There can be no effective witness without personal conviction. The Spirit empowers, strengthens, and sustains our conviction.

**The witness flows into outward testimony. A Christian witness is a person who not only knows Christ but wants others to know Christ. He is prepared to speak what is in his heart. The Spirit empowers the person to speak the truth that is in the heart. The Spirit gives courage to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties.**

**Saint of the Day, May 6 – St. Dominic Savio and 12 other saints are remembered this day.**

Dominic Savio was born on April 2, 1842 in the village of Riva in northern Italy. He was given the name Domenico at baptism. The name Domenico means "of the Lord" and the surname Savio means "wise". His parents had ten children in all. His father was a blacksmith and his mother, a seamstress. They were poor, hardworking and pious. His parents took great care to give him a Christian upbringing. By the age of four, Dominic was able to pray by himself and was occasionally found in solitude, praying. At the age of five, he learned to serve Mass, and would try to participate at Mass every day as well as go regularly to Confession. Having been permitted to make his First Communion at an early age, he had much reverence for the Eucharist.

Dominic joined Saint John Bosco as a student at the Oratory in Turin at the age of 12. He impressed Don Bosco with his desire to be a priest and to help him in his work with neglected boys. A peacemaker and an organizer, young Dominic founded the Company of the Immaculate Conception which, besides being devotional, aided St. John Bosco with the boys and with manual work. All the members except Dominic, would, in 1859, join St. John Bosco in the beginnings of his Salesian congregation. By that time, Dominic had been called home to heaven.

As a youth, Dominic spent hours rapt in prayer. His raptures he called "my distractions." Even in play, he said that at times, "It seems heaven is opening just above me. I am afraid I may say or do something that will make the other boys laugh." Dominic would say, "I can't do big things. But I want all I do, even the smallest thing, to be for the greater glory of God."

Dominic's health, always frail, led to lung problems and he was sent home to recuperate. As was the custom of the day, he was bled in the thought that this would help, but it only worsened his condition. He died on March 9, 1857, after receiving the Last Sacraments. Some thought that Dominic was too young to be considered a saint. Saint Pius X declared that just the opposite was true and went ahead with his cause. Dominic was canonized in 1954.

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**May 7 - Tuesday, Sixth Week of Easter**

**Understanding God's generous forbearance can help us forbear  
those who offend us and hurt us.**

**Acts 16:22-34**

Paul and Silas were arrested, flogged, chained to a stake, and kept under maximum security. The two kept praying through the night. They and the jailer experienced a tremendous miracle as Paul and Silas were freed and led out of prison through a wide-open gate. The Jailer accepted Jesus, welcomed Paul and Silas into his home and his whole household was baptized.

**Be open to the good news. And take the good news home and share it with others!**

**Psalm 138**

**I will give thanks to you O Lord, with all my heart,  
For you have heard the words of my mouth;  
In the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;  
I will worship at your holy temple,  
And give thanks to your name.**

**John 16:5-11**

The disciples of Jesus were confused, surprised, bewildered and grief-stricken at hearing that their master was going to leave them. Jesus comforted them saying that it was for the best. He had to go so that he could send the Holy Spirit as a gift from the Father.

**Be sensitive! Be compassionate! Reflect on the compassion of Jesus for the bewildered,  
confused disciples!**

Jesus said that this gift of the Spirit, which he would send from the father, would do many things for his disciples that they themselves would be unable to do. The Spirit will convict them of sin, convince them of righteousness and convince them of judgment. It is the Spirit that helps us to know when we are wrong and when we have sinned. It is the spirit that helps us become convinced of what is good and right and just. And it is the spirit that helps us judge and condemn and defeat evil in the world.

**Be open to the Holy Spirit! Be docile to the Holy Spirit! Listen to the Spirit whispering from  
within!**

**Saint of the Day, May 7 - St. Willibald and 21 other saints are remembered this day.**

Willibald was born in Wessex around the year 700. His mother, Saint Wuna of Wessex, was reportedly a sister of Saint Boniface. His father, Saint Richard the Pilgrim, was a chieftain of Wessex. At the age of three, Willibald suffered from a violent illness. His parents prayed to God, vowing to commit Willibald to a monastic life if he was to be spared. Willibald survived and at the age of five entered the Benedictine monastery at Waldheim and was educated by Abbot Egwald.

In 721 Willibald set out on a pilgrimage to Rome with his father and brother, Winibald. After departing by ship the group arrived in Rouen, France visiting shrines and spending much of their time in prayer. Eventually they arrived in Lucca, a city in northern Italy where Willibald's father became gravely ill and died. After burying their father Willibald and Winibald continued their journey, travelling through Italy until they reached Rome. They spent some time in Italy, strengthening in devotion and discipline, but soon the two brothers became ill with the Black Plague.

Willibald left Rome in 724 and continued his pilgrimage through Naples, Ephesus, Cyprus, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Cana, Capharnaum, and Jerusalem and back to Naples approximately seven years after he had left Italy. Willibald and his remaining companion, Tidbercht, joined the Benedictine community at Monte Cassino. Here Willibald taught the community about his travels. He would spend over ten years at Monte Cassino and another local Benedictine monastery where he served roles as, "sacristan, dean, and porter.

In 738 Saint Boniface requested Pope Gregory III to send Willibald to assist him in his missions in Germany. The pope granted the request. Upon arriving at Eichstätt, Willibald was ordained a priest by Boniface on July 22, 741 and asked to begin missionary work in the area. In 742 he and his brother Winibald, founded the double monastery of Heidenheim. In 746 Boniface consecrated Willibald bishop of Eichstätt. Willibald served as the bishop of the region for over four decades, living in the monastery and entertaining visitors throughout Europe who would come to hear of his journey and monasticism. He died in 787 and was canonized in 938 by Pope Leo VII

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**May 8 – Wednesday, Sixth Week of Easter**

**Forbearance describes the patience we have with the failings  
and odd ways of others.**

## **Acts 17:15, 22 – 18:1**

In this excerpt from Acts, we read Paul's famous speech at Athens. He told the people of Athens that he knew the God they worshiped without really knowing him. He affirmed their faith in a God and then proceeded to reveal to them the knowledge and experience he had of God in Jesus. His main theme was, "in God we live and move and have our being". Many were baptized after hearing Paul and others wanted to hear him again.

**Reflect: "In God we live and move and have our being."**

## **Psalm 148**

**Praise the lord from the heavens,  
Praise him in the heights;  
Praise him all you his angels,  
Praise him all you his hosts.**

## **John 16:12-15**

Jesus promised the disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes he would guide them to all truth and that he would teach them of things to come. Reflect on the following sayings of Jesus about the Holy Spirit:

Jesus says to the disciples: I will ask the Father and He will send you another helper who will stay with you forever (Jn.14:16). "The helper, the Holy Spirit will teach you everything and make you remember all I have told you (Jn.14:26). The Spirit will give them courage to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties (Jn. 15:26-27). The Spirit will lead them into truth (Jn.16:7-8, 13). Jesus breathed on them and said: "receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 20:21-22). At Pentecost, the Spirit took "possession" of them (Acts 2:2-3). The Spirit transformed the disciples and Peter, who denied knowing Jesus, and empowered them to go and begin preaching and proclaiming Jesus (Acts 2:15-17).

**Pray that you may experience the Holy Spirit rushing in with gifts that will transform you into "Sons of God". Pray also that you may be gifted with a discerning heart.....**

**Saint of the Day, May 8 - Saint Gregory Grassi and Companions (120) and 18 other saints are remembered this day.**

Gregory Grassi was born in Italy, on December 13, 1833. At the age of 15, he took the Franciscan habit in the Friary of Montiano, Romagna, with the name Gregory. His solemn profession was made one year later, on 14 December. He was then sent to Bologna to do his seminary studies and was ordained priest on August 17, 1856. Then he was sent to Rome for further training to prepare for his mission to China.

In 1860 Gregory Grassi was assigned to Taiyuan, China, where he was appointed Mission Promoter, Director of the mission orphanage, and choirmaster at the seminary. In 1876 he was chosen as the Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic for the Apostolic Vicariate of Shansi. After he assumed authority over the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Shansi on September 6, 1891, he established a novitiate to provide access to Franciscan life for the Chinese of all four vicariates in Shanxi and a rest home for overworked missionaries.

Christian missionaries have often gotten caught in the crossfire of wars against their own countries. When the governments of Britain, Germany, Russia, and France forced substantial territorial concessions from the Chinese in 1898, anti-foreign sentiment grew very strong among many Chinese people. When the short but bloody Boxer Rebellion broke out in Peking in June 1900 and the Empress Dowager Cixi issued the Imperial Decree of declaration of war against foreign powers, Gregory Grassi was urged to flee, but decided to stay.

At the beginning of July, the Governor of Shanxi, Yuxian, ordered the arrest of the European missionaries in the province. Throughout China during the Boxer Uprising, 5 bishops, 50 priests, 2 brothers, 15 sisters and 40,000 Chinese Christians were killed. Gregory Grassi and companions were among the 120 martyrs canonized in 2000 by Pope John Paul II.

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## **May 9 – Thursday, Sixth Week of Easter**

**Gentleness, patience and forbearance go together.**

### **Acts 18:1-8**

Paul takes people into confidence and accepts their support in proclaiming the good news. With increasing opposition from the Jews, Paul began to turn to the Gentiles who welcomed him and many of them were baptized.

**Welcome and appreciate the support of others in your ministry!**

### **Psalm 98**

**Sing to the Lord a new song,  
For he has done wondrous deeds;  
His right hand has won victory for him,  
his holy arm.....**

## **John 16:16-20**

The Jews believed that all time was divided into two ages: the present age and the age to come. The present was all bad and the age to come was the golden age of God. Between the two ages was the coming of the Messiah who will bring in the new age. This “between two stages” was the Day of the Lord, a terrible day when the world would be shattered into fragments before the golden age is ushered in. This is what Jesus referred to when he spoke about the weeping and mourning, and grieving being turned into joy.

**Jesus looked beyond the present time to the age to come. He called his disciples to look beyond.....**

**Jesus proclaimed hope and promised the strength of the Holy Spirit during testing times. Times of trials will pass, and the Holy Spirit will empower you.**

**Faithful endurance will bring Blessings and Grace. See in trials and difficulties new opportunities, new possibilities. Stand strong in the Spirit of Jesus.**

**This too will pass! You will find joy again! The joy that the world gives passes away. The joy that Christ brings is lasting joy, not momentary pleasure.**

**The joy that Christ brings is not a “little bit of joy” or “better than”, but complete and perfect. There is nothing lacking in this joy. This is the “Bliss” of the Beatitudes.**

**Saint of the Day, May 9 - St. Augustine Zhao Rong & Companions and 52 other saints are remembered this day.**

Augustine Zhao Rong and his 119 companions, are the Martyr Saints of China. The 87 Chinese Catholics and 33 Western missionaries, from the mid-17th century to 1930, were martyred because of their ministry and, in some cases, for their refusal to apostatize. Many died in the Boxer Rebellion, in which anti-colonial peasant rebels slaughtered 30,000 Chinese converts to Christianity along with missionaries and other foreigners.

Christianity arrived in China by way of Syria in the 600s. Depending on China’s relations with the outside world, Christianity over the centuries was free to grow or was forced to operate secretly. The 120 martyrs in this group died between 1648 and 1930. Eighty-seven of them were born in China, and were children, parents, catechists, or laborers, ranging in age from nine years to 72. This group includes four Chinese diocesan priests. The 33 foreign-born martyrs were mostly priests or women religious, especially from the Order of Preachers, the Paris Foreign Mission Society, the Friars Minor, Society of Jesus, Salesians of Don Bosco and Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.



Augustine Zhao Rong was a Chinese soldier who accompanied Bishop John Gabriel Taurin Dufresse of the Paris Foreign Mission Society to his martyrdom in Beijing. Not long after his baptism, Augustine was ordained as a diocesan priest. He was martyred in 1815. Beatified in groups at various times, these 120 martyrs were canonized together in Rome on October 1, 2000 by Pope John Paul II.

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## **May 10 – Friday, Sixth Week of Easter**

**All have sinned but are justified by God's grace of forbearance.**

**(Romans 3:23-26)**

### **Acts 18:9-18**

Paul continued to encounter many difficulties, oppositions and persecutions. He was brought to trial, but the judge saw it as a political trial and discontinued hearing. The Lord continued to bless him on his journey with many who supported him and gifted him with courage to proclaim the good news.

**Be faithful to your calling even in times of trials!**

### **Psalm 47**

**All you peoples, clap your hands,  
Shout to God with cries of gladness,  
For the Lord, the most high, the awesome,  
is the great king over all the earth.**

### **John 16:20-23**

In this Gospel passage Jesus describes the experience of the disciples at his leaving them in terms of childbirth. The process requires time and patient endurance, but the result will be the joy that will never be taken away. The joy the world gives is at the mercy of the world. The joy Christ gives is independent of anything the world can offer. The joy which Christ gives is complete, enduring, pure, unmixed, and perfect. The world's joy is incomplete, wears out and passes away.

In Christian joy, the pain which went before is forgotten. If a person's fidelity costs much, he/she will forget the cost in lasting joy. There will be fullness of knowledge. Jesus says, "you will not need to ask any more questions". There are always unanswered questions, unsolved problems, and uncertain future. But there is fullness of knowledge in Christ. In Christ you come to know yourself fully, you come to know humanity in its fullness and you come to know God as God is. Our knowledge is fragmented.

**In Christ fragmented knowledge finds unity and integrity and wholeness.**

**In Christ we have a new relationship with God because we know God as God is, we know the heart of God, we know the heart of Love. In this relationship, Jesus says, we may ask anything and are sure to get it. Our knowledge is complete and our joy is full and pure and indestructible.**

**Saint of the day, May 10 - St. Veronica Giuliani and 14 other saints are remembered this day.**

Veronica was born Ursula Giuliani at Mercatelli, Italy on December 27, 1660. She was the youngest of seven sisters, three of whom embraced the monastic life. At the age of three years Giuliani supposedly began to show great compassion for the poor. She would set apart a portion of her food for them, and even part with her clothes when she met a poor child scantily clad. Her mother died when Ursula was seven years of age. It is said that when her mother was dying she called her five daughters to her bedside and entrusted each of them to one of the five wounds of Jesus. Veronica was entrusted to the wound below Christ's heart.

At the age of 17, Veronica joined the Poor Clares directed by the Capuchins. Her father had wanted her to marry, but she convinced him to allow her to become a nun. In her first years in the monastery, she worked in the kitchen, infirmary, sacristy, and also served as portress. At the age of 34, she was made novice mistress, a position she held for 22 years. When she was 37, Veronica received the stigmata. Life was not the same after that.

Church authorities in Rome wanted to test Veronica's authenticity and so conducted an investigation. She lost the office of novice mistress temporarily and was not allowed to attend Mass except on Sundays or holy days. Through all of this Veronica did not become bitter, and the investigation eventually restored her as novice mistress. Though she protested against it, at the age of 56 she was elected abbess, an office she held for 11 years until her death. Veronica was very devoted to the Eucharist and to the Sacred Heart. She offered her sufferings for the missions, died in 1727, and was canonized in 1839.

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**May 11 – Saturday, Sixth Week of Easter**

**Love “bears all things, believes all things,  
hopes all things, endures all things.”**

(1 Corinthians 13:7)

### **Acts 18:23-28**

Paul continued his travels encouraging and reassuring his disciples in the many towns that he had preached. In this excerpt, we read about Apollos, a very spiritual man who knew the teachings of John the Baptist and had sound knowledge of Scriptures, teaching people about Jesus. “Aquila and Priscilla took him home and explained to him God’s new way in great detail”. This is another example of the “welcoming character” of the early church and the sense of hospitality that strengthened the early Church.

**Be encouraging and supportive...Be hospitable and welcoming!**

### **Psalm 47**

**All you peoples, clap your hands,  
Shout to God with cries of gladness,  
For the Lord, the most high, the awesome,  
Is the great king over all the earth.**

### **John 16:23-28**

In this excerpt, we read about Jesus teaching the disciples to pray and pray with confidence... “Ask and you shall receive..... that your joy may be full”. We read about Jesus assuring his disciples that the Father loves them and that the Father would give them anything they ask in his name..... Jesus said, “I do not say that I will ask the Father for you, because the Father himself loves you.....” You can go to God because he loves.... you can ask God because he loves you....God will respond to you because he loves you.....

**Asking God is an act of trust that God has power over our lives - that God loves us so much that we can trust him with our lives - our lives’ concerns, needs, etc. We place ourselves in the hands of Our Father who loves us and knows our needs more than we know ourselves.**

**We stand before him with open arms to receive or to let go. We surrender ourselves to him and remain open to receive His Gifts. God has more ways to answer our prayers than simply saying “Yes” and granting our wish.**

## **Saint of the Day, May 11 - St. Benedict and 15 other saints are remembered this day.**

Saint Benedict was born into a noble family in Norcia on March 2, 480. After attending primary schools in Norcia, Benedict went to Rome to broaden his knowledge of literature and law. However, since he was probably disgusted by the dissolute lifestyle of his peers and by Rome's difficult political situation, he retired to Affile with a group of priests.

At Affile, Benedict withdrew from social life and took shelter in a cave in the ruins of Nero's village, near Subiaco, where he began to live as a hermit. Immersed in solitude, his only contact with the outside world was with a monk called Romanus, whose monastery was nearby. He gave Benedict a monk's habit and provided for his spiritual and material needs. Three solitary years followed. Some shepherds befriended Benedict. They began to follow his teachings and the pastoral and apostolic principles of the Benedictine Order took root. Benedict is considered the father of western monasticism.

Benedict moved from a noble family to a hermitage and from the hermitage to a monastery – from an affluent life to the quiet life of the hermitage and from hermitage to life in a community. He taught people a way to use prayer and Christ-like attitudes to overcome their fears and mistrust of each other. He taught his followers, nuns and monks, to live a life of prayer and solitude and to see hospitality as the quality of their community life.

Benedict died on March 21, 547. He foresaw his coming death, informing his close and faraway disciples that the end was near. Six days before dying, he had the grave which he was to share with his deceased sister Saint Scholastica, opened. Then, completely exhausted, he asked to be taken into his oratory where, after taking his last Holy Communion, he died supported by his monks. He was Canonized in 1220 by Pope Honorius III

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Let unifying love be your measure; abiding love your challenge;  
self-giving love your mission!  
(Pope Benedict XVI)**