

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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July 29, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, Monday, July 29, we remember Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. They were friends of Jesus. Their home was where Jesus had the freedom to just walk in and feel at home. This is a home where Jesus showed real human feelings, including show of tears at the death of Lazarus. One day, Jesus came to the house of Martha and Mary and Martha welcomed him. Martha got busy with the details of hospitality and Mary sat at the feet of Jesus listening to him. Martha wished that if Jesus could just get Mary into the kitchen, together they could finish the work and spend time with the guest. But Jesus invited Martha to discern what was necessary.

Martha developed a reputation over the centuries as the practical and active Christian. She is often pictured with a cooking ladle or a set of household keys. She is the patron saint of cooks and of hospitality. Being practical and being contemplative are not opposed to each other - they are not mutually exclusive. It is very possible to blend the two. The way this story has been passed on to modern readers of the Gospel is disappointing. I believe that Christians through the ages have misunderstood the whole episode. Many have thought that the struggle was in trying to keep a good balance between contemplative prayer and active ministry and that Jesus was encouraging us to choose the former over the latter.

While every disciple feels the tension of wanting to pray more and being pulled to respond to the urgent needs of the day, Jesus would never have preferred one over the other (if you know Jesus, that is). In fact, he told us over and over that a good disciple is one who hears the word and then puts it into practice (Lk.8:15; 11:28). We also know, in spite of his busy schedule and the pressures of those who needed him, he withdrew into quiet places to be alone with his Father, to discern his Father's plans, to draw strength and courage to do his Father's will.

Saints Anne, Joachim, Mary the mother of Jesus, Martha and Mary, her sister were people of simple faith, waiting in readiness to welcome the Lord into their hearts and homes. They are models and important symbols of spiritual life and wisdom. They teach us to blend the active and the contemplative, and the practical and the reflective aspects of spiritual life. These people we meet are carriers of spiritual wealth. We must listen to them and learn from them.

Let us take a few moments each day of this week to be still, to be with Jesus and listen. Bless yourself with a few quiet moments to be still and listen to the voice of God...

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

July 29 - August 3, 2024

**Dismiss all anxiety from your minds.
Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and in petitions full of gratitude.
Then God's own peace, which is beyond all understanding,
will guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:4-7)**

July 29 – Saint Martha, Mary and Lazarus

Forbearance is the state of patient endurance under confusing, difficult and trying circumstances, situations and times.

1 John 4:7-16

John tells us today, "Love is of God who is love...love consists in this that God has loved us..." It is in this love, this excerpt says, that we can respond to the command to "love one another". The source of our love is God...the place where we learn to love is God and God's love...The opposite also is true, says this excerpt...one who does not love knows nothing of God...he/she is not in God and so has not learned to love...

Send your roots deep into the mystery God's life and love! Abide in His Love!

Psalm 34

**I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the Lord;
The lowly will hear me and be glad.**

Luke 10:38-42

One day, Jesus came to the house of Martha and Mary and Martha welcomed him. Martha had lots to do. Guest had come and the guest was her friend, her brother's friend and her sister's

friend and a Rabbi, a Prophet and much more. Martha had lots to do to attend to the details of hospitality. There were no cans to open, no frozen foods, no freezers, no fast-food places to go, no 800 numbers to call.....Martha had to get busy. Martha wished that if Jesus could just get Mary into the kitchen, together they could finish the work and spend time with the guest. But Jesus invited Martha to discern what was necessary.

Jesus invites us today as he invited Martha... Be still, sit with me and listen!

Saint of the day, July 29 - St. Martha of Bethany and 41 other saints are remembered this day.

We have very little information about Martha's birth and early life. Martha, Mary and Lazarus were friends of Jesus. Their home was where Jesus had the freedom to just walk in and feel at home. This is a home where Jesus showed real human feelings - including show of tears. Martha's conversation with Jesus shows that she was able to say just what she thought without inhibitions or any pious considerations. At the dinner honoring Jesus' visit, Martha asked the support of Jesus in getting her sister Mary to pitch in and help. In reply, Jesus invited her to sit with her sister and listen - to "choose the better part". In a culture where women were not permitted to study with a rabbi, Jesus took a bold stand in treating these two friends the way he did.

Martha was bold, free, uninhibited. When Lazarus died, she said to Jesus: "I know you are the Messiah". Even a practical, down-to-earth person is capable of deep spiritual insights. Being practical and being contemplative are not opposed to each other - they are not mutually exclusive. It is very possible to blend the two. Martha developed a reputation over the centuries as the practical, active Christian. She is often pictured with a cooking ladle or a set of household keys. She is the patron saint of cooks and of hospitality.

July 30 - Tuesday, Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Forbearance is perseverance in the face of delay.

Jeremiah 14:17-22

Overwhelmed by the destruction of the nation and the suffering his people, Jeremiah laments and prays to God for deliverance. He affirms that only Yahweh, the God of Israel can do this.

Psalm 79

**Help us, O God our savior,
Because of the glory of your name;
Deliver us and pardon our sins,
For your name's sake.**

Mathew 13:36-43

The disciples asked Jesus to explain to them the parable of the weeds in the field. Jesus used the parable to reveal to them many important truths about God and God's ways. Among them the following are important for us to reflect on and pray about.

Take a moment.... prayerfully reflect over the following:

- **there are negative forces in the field and so be cautious.**
- **it is often difficult to distinguish between good and bad and so turn to those who have knowledge and wisdom for guidance and direction.**
- **don't be too quick to draw conclusions or make judgments; only God can and will make the final judgment, so leave the judgment to God.**
- **pray for the gift of discernment**

Saint of the Day, July 30 - St. Peter Chrysologus and 14 other saints are remembered this day

Few details of St. Peter Chrysologus' biography are known. He was born in the Italian town of Imola in either the late fourth or early fifth century. Cornelius, bishop of the Diocese of Imola, baptized him, educated him, and ordained him a deacon. He was made an archdeacon through the influence of Emperor Valentinian III. Around the year 433, Pope Sixtus III appointed Peter as Bishop of Ravenna, the capital of the West at that time.

People knew Saint Peter Chrysologus for his very simple and short but inspired sermons, for he was afraid of fatiguing the attention of his listeners. His piety and zeal won universal admiration. After hearing oratory of his first homily as bishop, Roman Empress Galla Placidia supposedly gave him the surname Chrysologus, meaning "golden-worded."

In his homilies, Bishop Peter explained Biblical texts briefly and concisely, condemned Arianism and Monophysitism as heresies, explained the Apostles' Creed, the mystery of the Incarnation,

and other topics in simple and clear language. He dedicated a series of homilies to Saint John the Baptist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Peter advocated daily reception of Eucharist. He urged his listeners to confide in the forgiveness offered through Christ. Archbishop Felix of Ravenna in the early eighth century collected and preserved 176 of his homilies. Various authors edited and translated these works into numerous languages. St Peter died around the year 450 during a visit to Imola, the town of his birth.

July 31 – Wednesday, Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Forbearance is staying on the task in adverse conditions,
without acting on annoyance or anger in a negative way.**

Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21

Jeremiah laments his birth. He lived a good life; heard and responded to God's call; tried to fulfill the mission God had given him; made God's word the joy of his heart "devoured them" as he says....but he became a man of contention and strife to all in the land, he says. As he lamented, the Lord promised to be with him in his strife and make Jeremiah his mouthpiece.

Psalm 59

**Rescue me from my enemies, O my God;
from my adversaries defend me.
Rescue me from evildoers,
from bloodthirsty men, save me.**

Mathew 13:44-46

Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a treasure buried in a field. A man found it, hid it, rejoiced in his find, and sold all he had and bought that field. He did not just pick up the pearl...he bought the whole field.

The kingdom is buried deep within, here and now.....and not something yet to happen. The kingdom is found within the context our daily life and responsibilities and not in some extraordinary, earth-shattering event. All that surrounds the kingdom gains a new meaning

because the treasure of the kingdom has been found. This treasure is worth sacrificing everything that we have.

Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a pearl of great value for which a merchant would sell all he owns. A pearl was the most beautiful thing that the listeners of Jesus could imagine.

The kingdom is presented as the most beautiful thing that one can dream of and contemplate and it is worth all the sacrifice that one has to make.

Saint of the Day, July 31 - St. Ignatius of Loyola and 359 other saints are remembered this day.

Ignatius was born in the ancestral castle of the Loyolas in the Basque province of Guipúzcoa, Spain, on October 23, 1491. He became a page in the service of a relative and then a knight in the service of another relative, who employed him in military undertakings and on a diplomatic mission. While defending the citadel of Pamplona against the French, Ignatius was hit by a cannonball on May 20, 1521, sustaining a bad fracture of his right leg and damage to his left. During his long recovery, the only books available to him for reading were about the life of Christ and biographies of the saints. Ignatius was captivated by what he read. Inspired by the lives of Christ and the saints, he gave up all his ambitions and surrendered everything “for the greater glory of God”.

Ignatius was a man who was once disinterested in education and was ambitious to be a military officer. He was, on his own admission, in his Autobiography, “a man given to the vanities of the world, whose chief delight consisted in martial exercises, with a great and vain desire to win renown.” He was now a changed man. He spent many months in prayer discerning what God wanted for him. Other men were attracted to his spirituality and became his companions. Ignatius instructed them to “seek the greater glory of God” and the good of all humanity.

In 1534, at the age of 43, he and six others, one of whom was Saint Francis Xavier, vowed to live in poverty and chastity and to go to the Holy Land. They became known as the Society of Jesus. All were ordained into the priesthood in 1537. Ignatius became the Order’s first Superior General, and he sent his fellow Jesuits as missionaries to the East Indies, Morocco, the Congo, Ethiopia, and South America. At the time of his death in 1556, there were 1000 Jesuits in 100 different educational institutions throughout the world. Georgetown University, the first Jesuit school in the United States, opened in 1789 in Washington D.C. Today there are over 21,000 Jesuits on six continents and in 127 countries. Jesuits are involved in education, evangelization, pastoral ministry, retreats, and other works.

August 1 – Thursday, Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Forbearance is self-discipline and self-control.

Jeremiah 18:1-6

Jeremiah uses the image of the clay in the hands of the potter as a way of describing the absolute dependence of Israel on Yahweh. Yahweh has called them, formed them, and continues to form them as his people. Israel must surrender to the ways of Yahweh.

Psalm 146

**Praise the Lord my soul,
I will praise the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to my God while I live.**

Mathew 13:47-53

Once again, Jesus used examples from daily work situations to speak about the kingdom and the things of heaven. The kingdom was compared to a net cast into the sea which gathers all kinds of things. The net was drawn to land and the catch was separated – the good was put into containers and the useless material thrown away.

The net thrown into the sea can not discriminate....it draws all kinds of things, its contents will be a mixture... it is the nature of the kingdom on earth...all kinds of people, the good, the bad, the useful, the useless and so on. It describes the nature of the kingdom and the nature of the Church as all inclusive. The Church must remain open to all.

The parable also teaches us that eventually, separation will happen...good will be separated from the bad. Jesus said, "Angels will come" for the separation. Judgments must be left to God and it is not ours to make.

Cultivate non-judgmental attitude! Reflect on the all-embracing love God.

Saint of the Day, August 1 - St. Alphonsus Liguori and 33 other saints are remembered this day.

Alphonsus Maria de Liguori was born on September 27, 1696 in Marianella near Naples, Italy. His parents provided him with an exceptional education in philosophy, literature, and the arts. At the University of Naples, he received, at the age of 16, a doctorate in both canon and civil law. When he was 18, like many nobles, he joined the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mercy with whom he cared for the sick at the hospital for "incurables," washing afflicted bodies, feeding the helpless, changing bedclothes and devoting himself to works of mercy and compassion.

Following his father's will he became a lawyer and before he was 20, he was regarded as one of the most gifted lawyers working in the kingdom of Naples. After losing what was the most important court case he had ever taken on, Alphonsus left the legal profession to enter the priesthood, much to the disappointment of his father. He was ordained a priest in 1726 and concentrated his pastoral efforts on parish missions, hearing confessions, forming Christian groups.

He founded the Redemptorist congregation in 1732. It was an association of priests and brothers living a common life, dedicated to the imitation of Christ, and working mainly in popular missions for peasants in rural areas. The congregation was formally approved 17 years later. Alphonsus' great pastoral reforms were in the pulpit and confessional, replacing the pompous oratory of the time with simplicity, and the rigorism of Jansenism with kindness. He fought for the liberation of moral theology from the rigidity of Jansenism. His moral theology, which went through 60 editions in the century following him, concentrated on the practical and concrete problems of pastors and confessors.

He was made bishop at the age of 66 and at once instituted a thorough reform of his diocese. At the age of 71, he was afflicted with rheumatic pains which left incurable bending of his neck. He suffered a final 18 months of "dark night" scruples, fears, temptations against every article of faith and every virtue, interspersed with intervals of light and relief, when ecstasies were frequent. He died August 1, 1787 at Pagani, Italy

August 2 – Friday, Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Saint Paul advises us as he did the Corinthians, "Be steadfast, persevering, my beloved brothers, fully engaged in the work of the Lord."

(1 Corinthians 15:58)

Jeremiah 26:1-9

Once again, the Lord asked Jeremiah to call his people to repent and return to the observance

of God's law. When Jeremiah finished speaking God's word, the priests, prophets and all the people turned against him and said: "you must be put to death".

Psalm 69

**I pray to you, O Lord,
for the time of your favor, O God!
In your great kindness answer me,
with your constant help.**

Mathew 13:54-58

They admired his eloquence but rejected his message. And what they rejected was "GOOD NEWS" - liberty to captives, sight to the blind - a year of Grace.

They failed to look beyond. Hence, they saw only a local carpenter.

Lord, help me to look beyond what I see. Give me a clearer and deeper vision of your presence in all that I encounter on my journey of life.

Prejudice blinds the mind and narrows the heart.

Lord, give me the wisdom to recognize and accept my own prejudices and the courage to overcome them.

To his own people he came. But they did not accept him.

Lord help me to be more sensitive, understanding and accepting of the goodness of all I encounter.

Jesus went about doing good and teaching and proclaiming good news in the neighboring villages.

Lord, empower me with your Holy spirit, that I may proclaim your good news.....

Saint of the day, August 2 - St. Eusebius of Vercelli and 10 other saints are remembered this day

Eusebius was born in Sardinia, around March 2, 283. After his father's martyrdom, he was taken to Rome by his mother. He became the first bishop in Vercelli in northern Italy around the year 340, elected by the local leaders recognizing his piety. He founded a priestly community in

Vercelli that resembled a monastic community. He was the first bishop to live in common with the clergy, devoting his best energies to form them in piety and zeal.

In 354, He was sent by Pope Liberius to persuade the emperor to call a council to settle Catholic-Arian troubles. When it was called at Milan, Eusebius went reluctantly, sensing that the Arian block would have its way, although the Catholics were more numerous. He refused to go along with the condemnation of Saint Athanasius; instead, he laid the Nicene Creed on the table and insisted that all sign it before taking up any other matter.

The emperor put pressure on him, but Eusebius insisted on Athanasius' innocence and reminded the emperor that secular force should not be used to influence Church decisions. At first the emperor threatened to kill him, but later sent him into exile in Palestine. There the Arians dragged him through the streets and shut him up in a little room, releasing him only after his four-day hunger strike. They resumed their harassment shortly after.

His exile continued in Asia Minor and Egypt, until the new emperor permitted him to be welcomed back to his see in Vercelli. Eusebius attended the Council of Alexandria with Athanasius and approved the leniency shown to bishops who had wavered. Once back in Vercelli in 363, he continued to be a leader with Hilary of Poitiers in defeating Arianism in the Western Church and was one of the chief opponents of the Arian bishop Auxentius of Milan. Eusebius died peacefully in 370 or 371 in his own diocese at an advanced age.

August 3 – Saturday, Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Forbearance is being firm, determined, steadfast, tenacious
and persevering in purpose.**

Jeremiah 26:11-16, 24

Jeremiah met with the opposition of the priests and the leaders. He boldly proclaimed that he was speaking in the name of the Lord and challenged them to reform their lives. The people listened to Jeremiah and put their faith in his word.

Psalm 69

**Rescue me out of the mire;
May I not sink!
May I be rescued from my foes,
And from the watery depths.**

Mathew 14:1-12

Herod heard about the reputation of Jesus and wondered whether this could be John the Baptist, who has risen from the dead. Herod feared John and respected him at the same time. It was as though he was haunted by the goodness of John and his own sinfulness at the same time. He was afraid!

Herod made a thoughtless and unwise choice. He acted on impulse, afraid of what people might think or say. He made a foolish oath and broke a great and noble law and had neither wisdom nor courage to admit and correct the error.

Herodias shows us what bitterness can do to a person. She was vindictive, immoral, unfaithful and out for revenge. She was, as we would call today, a child abuser...she abused her daughter, manipulated her and persuaded her to commit a crime against an innocent person, John the Baptist.

John the Baptist shows us what courage and faithfulness can do. His life also reveals to us the cost of such courage and faithfulness.

Reflect on the three characters and their qualities and get in touch with what they call forth from you.

Saint of the day, August 3 - St. Peter Julian Eymard and 11 other saints are remembered this day

Peter Julian Eymard was born on February 4, 1811 at La Mure, Isère in the French Alps. When his mother died in 1828 Julian resolved to enter the novitiate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and, despite his father's opposition, did so in June 1829. His first attempt as a seminarian ended because of serious illness. Throughout his life, he suffered from poor health, particularly 'weakness of the lungs' and migraine headaches.

After his father's death in 1831, he succeeded, with the help of his former superior, in gaining admission to the major seminary of the Grenoble diocese. On July 20, 1834, he was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Grenoble and was assigned as assistant pastor at the town of Chatte, and three years later, appointed pastor of Mount Saint-Eynard. He was dissatisfied with parish

work and decided to join the Marists (the Society of Mary). On August 20, 1837, he entered the Society of Mary seminary at Lyon and made his profession in February 1840. He worked with lay organizations promoting devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the Eucharist, particularly in the Forty Hours Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He rose to the position of Provincial of the Society at Lyon in 1844.

After praying at the shrine of Our Lady of Fourviere on January 21, 1851, Peter Julian Eymard moved to establish a Marist community dedicated to eucharistic adoration. However, his desire to establish a separate fraternity promoting adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was not seen as part of the charism of the Marists. His superiors disapproved, transferring him to the Marist College at La Seyne-sur-Mer. Eventually, he resolved to leave the Society of Mary to begin his new religious congregation with the diocesan priest Raymond de Cuers.

On May 13, 1856, the Paris bishops consented to his plans for a 'Society of the Blessed Sacrament'. After many trials, Peter Julian Eymard and Raymond de Cuers established public exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in Paris on January 6, 1857.

The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament began working with children in Paris to prepare them to receive their First Communion. It also reached out to non-practicing Catholics, inviting them to repent and begin receiving Communion again. Father Eymard established a common rule for the members of the society and worked toward papal approval. A second community was established in Marseille in 1859, and a third in Angers in 1862. Pope Pius IX granted a Decree of Approbation in June 1863. Peter Julian Eymard died on August 1, 1868 and was canonized on December 9, 1962 by Pope John XXIII.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Knowledge must become our action,
Theory must become our practice,
Theology must become our life,
Spirituality must become incarnate,
and touch every aspect of life and relationships.**