



Fr. Peter Mermier

Spiritual Moments



St. Francis de Sales

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*'Be Your Best
Give Your Best
Do Your Best
and
Leave the Rest
to the Lord.'*

Fr. Gus

Wellspring

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 440
Whitehouse, TX 75791

TELEPHONE:

903-839-1280

EMAIL:

retreatsatwellspring@gmail.com
frgusmsfs@gmail.com

WEBSITES:

www.wellspringcommunity.net
www.retreatsatwellspring.com



EDITORIAL

One day the sun and the wind were talking. The wind boasted, "I am stronger than you." The sun just smiled. "If you don't believe me let's have a competition." said the wind. The sun reluctantly agreed. Just then, they saw a man wearing a jacket passing by. The wind said, "Whoever separates the jacket from the man is stronger." The sun agreed and asked the wind to try first. The wind started to blow as hard as he could. The man held his jacket tightly. The wind blew harder and harder, but the stronger the wind blew the tighter the man held onto his jacket. The wind blew until it was exhausted but couldn't remove the jacket from the man.

Next, it was the sun's turn. At first, the sun shone very gently on the man. The man started feeling a bit warm. As the sun went on shining brighter and brighter the man felt warmer and warmer. Finally, he took off his jacket. The sun came out as the clear winner in the challenge.

A quiet, simple and gracious approach to achieving goals and solving problems yield quicker and better results than an aggressive approach. My experience has been that gentle persuasion is better than force, and that is the power of "forbearance," the virtue that our Wellspring community is studying this year. Forbearance is gentle persuasion, encouraging positive results, withholding the exercise of power and control and using graceful and peaceful approaches to solving problems. There is an old wisdom saying, "Slow and steady wins the race." Forbearance is a determined, focused, resolute and tenacious approach to achieving goals, fulfilling purpose, solving problems and not pressurizing immediate results.

This issue of Spiritual Moments brings you articles, images, stories and thoughts on the virtue of forbearance. I hope that they will offer you a good start on the study of forbearance and inspire you to deeper reflection and a prayerful search for ways of growing in this virtue. May forbearance become your gift to those around you.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs



BE GRATEFUL

Begin this new year with gratitude
for all that has been, all that is
and all that is yet to come.
May you rise each day with
desire and a decision to love life,
love people, love God's creation
and love our God with all
that you are.

EACH AND EVERY DAY

PRAYER FOR FORBEARANCE

Dear Readers,

I pray for you, our readers and all who participate in our programs and all who support our ministry at Wellspring, that you begin this new year with gratitude for all that has been and with hope for all that is yet to come. I invite you to pray the following prayer for forbearance with me each day of the new year.

Fr. Gus

Ever Loving Father, bless me, form me, shape me and transform me with forbearance. Fill me with your gift of patient endurance in moments of sorrow and suffering.

Teach me to be gentle and patient with myself and with those around me. May I seek to be gentle and patient so as to ease the burdens and pressures of others. May my forbearance enable me to bear with my own imperfections, failures and shortfalls as well as those of others around me.

May forbearance become the quality of my presence that I may not become a burden to others. Bless me with forbearance when those around me are irritable and stressed, tired and weary.

Lord grant me the gift of forbearance that I may make space and time for myself and those around me to forgive, to heal and be free of the burden of all forms of failures, imperfections, shortfalls and weaknesses. And above all, thank you Lord, for Your gracious forbearance toward me.

Amen



2024

REFLECTION THEME

FORBEARANCE

**NO ONE THING
DOES HUMAN LIFE
NEED MORE THAN
A KIND
CONSIDERATION
OF THE FAULTS OF
OTHERS. EVERY
ONE SINS;
EVERYONE NEEDS
FORBEARANCE.
OUR OWN
IMPERFECTIONS
SHOULD TEACH US
TO BE MERCIFUL.**

HOWARD WARD BEECHER

We reflected on “Steadfast Love” as our theme in 2023. Our theme for reflection in 2024 is “forbearance.” We want to let “forbearance” define our character and let it become our way of being, of living and of acting. Forbearance is “temperance,” one of the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. Forbearance is a healthy and sound “spiritual discipline” that is essential to our spiritual growth. It is the discipline that helps us develop our spiritual muscles that enable us to gain control of our emotions, desires and cravings so that we can take charge of them and they don’t take charge of us.

God has created many desirable goods. Sometimes our priorities get disordered and our desires get out of hand and we begin to pursue them as our most important goal. Forbearance moderates our appetite for these goods, ensuring balance in our lives, enabling us to control our desires rather than our desires controlling us. Forbearance is balance, moderation, patience, endurance, restraint, self-control, tolerance, and avoidance of extremes that support and sustain personal integrity and maturity. Join me in striving to understand this virtue and let it form and shape our character as disciples of Jesus.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**“GOD, TEACH ME TO BE PATIENT, TEACH ME TO GO SLOW,
TEACH ME HOW TO WAIT ON YOU WHEN MY WAY I DO NOT KNOW.
TEACH ME SWEET FORBEARANCE WHEN THINGS DO NOT GO RIGHT
SO I REMAIN UNRUFFLED WHEN OTHERS GROW UPTIGHT.
TEACH ME HOW TO QUIET MY RACING, RISING HEART
SO I MIGHT HEAR THE ANSWER YOU ARE TRYING TO IMPART.
TEACH ME TO LET GO, DEAR GOD, AND PRAY UNDISTURBED UNTIL
MY HEART IS FILLED WITH INNER PEACE AND I LEARN TO KNOW YOUR WILL.”
HELEN STEINER RICE**

FORBEARANCE

"A fight is going on inside me." said an old man to his son. "It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One wolf is evil. He is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other wolf is good. He is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. The same fight is going on inside you." The son thought about it for a minute and then asked, "Which wolf will win?" The old man replied simply, "The one you feed."

Forbearance is taming the wolf – controlling the evil one and feeding the good one, overcoming evil tendencies and cultivating good ones, eliminating vices and nurturing virtues.

We are gifted with human virtues that govern our choices, decisions, actions and passions and guide our conduct in ways consistent with our faith and reason, our moral standards and spiritual values and our commitment to our God-given purpose in life. They are grouped around four virtues called the cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. "Cardo" in Latin means "hinge." Cardinal virtues form the "hinge" or "axis" on which our moral life turns. These are the strengths, the skills needed to journey through life's many conflicting situations. Every virtue is derived from them and in some way manifests them.

Cardinal virtues are infused or inherent virtues. Prudence discerns; justice maintains right relationship with God and the world, gives what is due to God and to others; fortitude helps us stand "steadfast" and endure all for the sake of what is loved; temperance "tempers" emotions up or down, gives proper expression of feelings in action, balances emotion. And that is what "forbearance" is about. It is the discipline that helps us develop our spiritual muscles that enable us to gain control of our emotions, desires and cravings so that we can take charge of them and they don't take charge of us.

Many words are used to describe forbearance and each of them represent a virtue that "hinges" around the virtue of "forbearance" – temperance, moderation, patience, self-control, restraint, tolerance, toleration, resignation, endurance, leniency, lenity, clemency and indulgence. All of them are little virtues that emerge from the great virtue of forbearance. Each of these little virtues require deeper reflection and intentional practice if we wish forbearance to become our virtue and be part of our character. Nurturing these little virtues is the finest way to form, shape and transform our character as mature and committed disciples of Jesus.

Forbearance is a great virtue that covers the imperfections, shortfalls and weaknesses of others. It helps us to overlook their failings, hide their weaknesses and forgive their offenses in silence. It enables us to bear with the anger or the abuse that come our way. Mahatma Gandhi advises us, "We should meet abuse by forbearance. Human nature is so constituted that if we take absolutely no notice of anger or abuse, the person indulging in it will soon weary of it and stop." Dalai Lama says, "Hardship, in forcing us to exercise greater patience and forbearance in daily life, actually makes us stronger and more robust." The virtue of forbearance builds, forms, shapes and transforms our character.

Forbearance is patience under testing and trying circumstances, which contributes to building strength of character. Jesus taught his disciples to patiently do everything possible to correct an erring brother or sister. Jesus said, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat



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continued from page 5

him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector." (Matthew 18:15-17) Then Peter asked him how often he is expected to forgive his brother and asked if "seven times" would be adequate. Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:21-22)

Forbearance is the quality of a noble, royal, holy and godly character. To forbear is to hold back or withhold and implies patience and self-control. It is making allowance for each other's faults and forgiving the offender. St. Paul advised the Colossians, "Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection." (Colossians 3:12-14) Forbearance is perceived as "bearing with one another and forgiving one another" and as a way of showing the "loving kindness" of our God.

We tolerate hardship with God's grace. We practice self-restraint. According to an old Hebrew legend, Abraham was sitting outside his tent one evening when he saw an old man, weary from age and journey, coming toward him. Abraham rushed out, greeted him, and then invited him into his tent. There he washed the old man's feet and gave him food and drink. The old man immediately began eating without saying any prayer or blessing. So Abraham asked him, "Don't you worship God?" The old traveler replied, "I worship fire only and reverence no other god." When Abraham heard this, he became incensed, grabbed the old man by the shoulders, and threw him out of his tent into the cold night air. When the old man had departed, God called to his friend, Abraham, and asked where the stranger was. Abraham replied, "I forced him out because he did not worship You." God answered, "I have suffered him these eighty years although he dishonors me. Could you not endure him one night?"

St. Paul advises us, "We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves; let each of us please our neighbor for the good, for building up. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you fall upon me." (Romans 15:1-3)

May tolerance be one of your virtues.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs



Endeavor to be always patient of the faults and imperfections of others; for thou hast many faults and imperfections of thine own that require forbearance. If thou art not able to make thyself that which thou wishest, how canst thou expect to mold another in conformity to thy will?"

Thomas à Kempis

WELLSPRING RETREATS AND PROGRAMS

Below is the schedule of our retreats and programs in 2024. We have many activities and opportunities for spiritual growth at Wellspring. Consider coming to Wellspring to spend time in retreat and prayer. We all need time away from our daily chores to reflect, pray and grow in virtue. To schedule a group or individual retreat, please contact us for schedule availability. For more information about our programs, visit our websites, call or email us. All are welcome.

MONTHLY RETREAT SCHEDULE

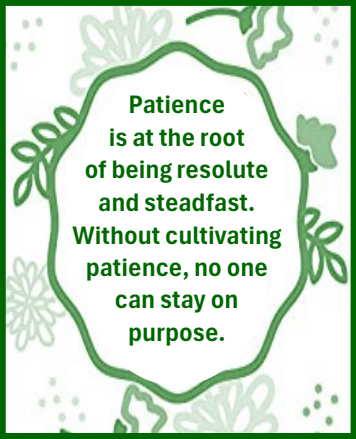
- **New Year Retreat**
January 6, 2024
- **Lenten Retreat**
February 10, 2024
- **Holy Week Retreat**
March 23, 2024
- **Monthly Virtue Retreats**
April 13, 2024
May 11, 2024
June 8, 2024
July 13, 2024
August 10, 2024
September 14, 2024
October 12, 2024
November 9, 2024
- **Advent Retreat**
December 7, 2024

PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES

- St. Vincent de Paul Retreats
- Diocese of Tyler - Marriage Preparation Retreats
- Retreats for Parish Organizations
- Personal, Silent or Group Retreats - By appointment
- Men's Ministry - Second Monday of each month
- Ministry to the Homebound
- Ministry to the Bereaved
- Support for Missions Abroad
- Spiritual Direction - By appointment
- Daily Mass and Adoration and Sunday Masses
- Wellspring Publications
- Weekly Community Outreach - Emailed weekly
- Spiritual Moments - Published biannually
- Daily and Weekend Reflections - Emailed weekly and published on our website



PATIENT ENDURANCE



Patience
is at the root
of being resolute
and steadfast.
Without cultivating
patience, no one
can stay on
purpose.

Patience is one of the little virtues that emerge from the great virtue of forbearance. It is a way of being present on our journey. It is the state of endurance under difficult circumstances. It is perseverance in the face of delay. It is being focused and staying on the task in adverse conditions, without acting on annoyance or anger in a negative way. It is forbearance under strain especially when faced with long-term difficulties. It is self-discipline and self-control. Patience is the quality of being steadfast, firm and persevering in purpose. St. Paul advises us, "Be steadfast, persevering, my beloved brothers, fully engaged in the work of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

It has never been easy to be patient. It is probably harder now than at any time in history as we are living in a world where messages and information can be sent across the world instantly, and everything is available with only a few clicks of the mouse or an 800 number. Fortunately, patience is a virtue that can be cultivated and nurtured over time. It is one of the virtues that call us to try and try again...seven times seventy times. Patience is at the root of being resolute and steadfast. Without cultivating patience, no one can stay on purpose.

Patience is presented as a prominent virtue and an important personal trait in the Hebrew scriptures. "As for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God hears me." (Micah 7:7) "The patient man shows much good sense, but the quick-tempered man displays folly at its height." (Proverbs 14:29) "An ill-tempered man stirs up strife, but a patient man allays discord." (Proverbs 15:18) "A patient man is better than a warrior, and he who rules his temper, than he who takes a city." (Proverbs 16:32) "Better is the patient spirit than the lofty spirit. Do not, in spirit, become quickly discontented, for discontent lodges in the bosom of a fool." (Ecclesiastes 7:8-9)

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. But when the promise was first given, (Genesis 12:1-3) Abraham and his wife Sarah did not have any children. God continued to restate His promise to Abraham through the years. (Genesis 13:6; 15:1-6; 17:6-8; 18:10) Abraham, though known as a man of faith, took his wife's suggestion and had a child with Sarah's handmaid. The son's name was Ishmael. But this was not the son God intended for Abraham. (Genesis 16) Finally when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old, God gave them their son, Isaac. Though it took years of patient waiting, they received the promise of God. Hebrews 6:15 says of Abraham, "And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise."

Jesus said, "A man scatters seed on the ground. He goes to bed and gets up day after day. Through it all the seed sprouts and grows without his knowing how it happens. The soil produces of itself first the blade, then the ear, finally the ripe wheat in the ear. When the crop is ready, he wields the sickle for the time is ripe for harvest." (Mark 4:26-29) The seed that is sowed in the field grows of itself without the sower being aware of it. The farmer must wait patiently for a good harvest. Jesus gave us another parable about a farmer sowing good seed and the enemy sowing bad seed while the farmer was asleep. The servant suggested that they pull the weeds. The farmer said, "Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." The farmer had the wisdom to be patient and wait for a time when good choices and proper discernment could be made. (Matthew 13:30-35)

St. Paul advises us as he did the Galatians, "Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9) St. James advises us as he did the early Christians. "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is

at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful." (James 5:7-12)

St. Francis de Sales advises us, "Be patient with everyone but especially with yourself; I mean that you should not be troubled about your imperfections and that you should always have courage to pick yourself up afterwards. There is no better way of getting there in the end in the spiritual life than always starting all over again and never thinking that you have done enough."

Be patient with everyone but especially with yourself; I mean that you should not be troubled about your imperfections and that you should always have courage to pick yourself up afterwards. There is no better way of getting there in the end in the spiritual life than always starting all over again and never thinking that you have done enough."

St. Francis de Sales

Have you ever watched a spider? As the spider spins the web, the key factor will become patience. Many hours after the web is completed, the spider waits and waits. The spider must be very still and quiet. The spider has a plan, but the plan can never develop without patience. As the spider waits, one day the spider will feel the web moving, the food has come suddenly. But there was nothing sudden about it. It was patience released and rewarded.

There was a monk who was very impatient. The more he tried, the more impatient he became. So he decided that he must get away to learn to be more patient. So he built himself a little home deep in the woods, far away from civilization. Years later, a man was traveling in those woods and met him. The man was amazed to find anyone living so far away from the rest of the world, so he asked the monk why he was there all by himself. The monk said that he was there to learn to be patient. The traveler asked how long he had been there, and the monk replied, "Seven years." Stunned, the traveler asked, "If there is no one around to bother you, how will you know when you are patient?" Annoyed, the monk replied, "Get away from me...I have no time for you."

Every time you feel that you are becoming impatient, remember the monk. Learn patience where you are, with people and situations that challenge your patience.

Be patient and persevering...let forbearance become your virtue.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

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As the spider waits, one day the spider will feel the web moving, the food has come suddenly. But there was nothing sudden about it. It was patience released and rewarded.

THE PEAR TREE AND THE SEASONS OF LIFE

*The acts of daily forbearance,
the headache, or toothache,
or heavy cold; the tiresome
peculiarities of husband or
wife, the broken glass...
all of these sufferings,
small as they are, if accepted
lovingly, are most pleasing
to God's goodness.*

St. Francis de Sales



Forbearance isn't a word that I often hear in my daily conversations. In fact, I looked it up in the dictionary to be sure that I knew what Fr. Gus was talking about when he shared that the Wellspring reflection theme for 2024 was forbearance. Reading some of Fr. Gus' reflections on forbearance has given me a greater understanding of this virtue. Fr. Gus reminds us that forbearance helps us overlook the failures and shortfalls of others. It helps us to hold back, to practice patience and self-control.

This virtue of forbearance is so beautifully illustrated in the story of *The Pear Tree and the Seasons of Life*.

There was once a man who had four young sons. Wanting to teach them about the dangers of judging things too rapidly, he decided to send each of them on a journey, one after the other, to a distant pear tree.

Each son took the journey in a different season, the first in winter, the second in spring, and so on. At the end of the year the man brought his sons together and asked them what they'd seen. The son who'd travelled in the winter described a gnarled, twisted, and barren tree that stood stark and ugly against the land. The son who went in the spring disagreed. "No," he said, "the tree seemed full of hope and promise, with green buds along its branches." The third son, who'd travelled in the summer, disagreed even more. The pear tree he'd seen was covered in beautiful blossoms that looked and smelled divine. Finally, the last son, who'd made the journey in the fall, also disagreed, describing a tree laden with sweet and delicious pears that tasted better than any he'd eaten before.

When each son had spoken, the father said that they were all correct, because they'd only seen but one season of the pear tree's life. He explained to his sons that it's foolish and impossible to judge something in this manner. The essence of something, whether it's a tree or their fellow man, can only be measured as a whole – in fullness and not in parts. To make your judgment in winter is to miss the promise of spring, the beauty of summer, and the fruit in fall.

What a wonderful story and important reminder that we are not to judge ourselves or others based on just one failure or success or what seems to be a season of failure or success for that matter. We live in a time when many are quick to judge and dismiss others because they don't meet our expectations, have a different vision of the world, belong to a different political party, religious denomination or even belong to the same denomination yet live out their faith in different ways.

Forbearance helps us to withhold judgments, look beyond the visible, embrace differences, overlook imperfections, tolerate shortfalls, accept failures and wait for success in good time, in God's time.

There are so many different aspects of the virtue of forbearance that we will study this year at Wellspring. I look forward to learning more about this wonderful virtue of forbearance and the opportunities to practice forbearance, patience, self-control and tolerance in the coming days.

Bari Walker

THE SAREE SHOP

When my children were young, I used to read them stories that taught moral and spiritual lessons. Recently I heard a story titled "Saree Shop" from Uncle Lion's Tales.

A saree is a woman's garment, from the Indian subcontinent, that consists of an un-stitched stretch of woven, lightweight fabric. The fabric is often embroidered silk or cotton and can be five to seven yards long. A saree is worn wrapped around the body as a robe, with one end attached to the waist, while the other end rests over one shoulder as a stole, sometimes baring a part of the midriff.



In the story, an older man owned a saree shop. He was a soft-spoken man. Customers liked to shop in his store because of his good nature and patience. His shop was full of beautiful fabrics.

One day a rich man came to his store. His spoiled and pampered young son was with him. The boy held up a piece of fabric and asked, "How much does this saree cost?" The shop owner said, "Two hundred rupees sir." Then the boy tore the saree in half and asked the old man, "How much does half the saree cost?" "One hundred rupees sir." replied the shop owner. Then the boy tore the fabric again and asked, "How much does this quarter saree cost?" The shop owner replied, "Fifty rupees sir."

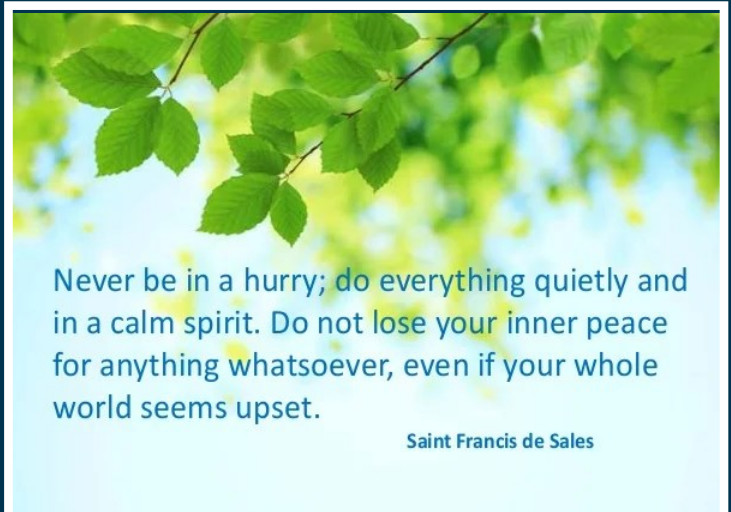
The boy was quiet and asked the shop owner how he was so calm despite his mischief. The shop owner replied, "The saree that you tore was only worth two hundred rupees, but if I were to get angry I would lose my peace of mind which is invaluable to me."

This children's story gives me a good example of forbearance in action. It teaches me never to let anyone steal my inner peace. The shopkeeper was calm, gentle and forbearing with the spoiled child. I want to grow in this virtue by practicing kindness and patience with others.

St Francis de Sales advises us, "Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset."

The other day the local weather man referred to the weather condition as a "bluebird day," with mild temperatures and a light southerly wind. It is easier to be forbearing if your day is a "bluebird day," but some days are stormy. I want to strive to be gentle, patient and forbearing even during the stormy and turbulent days. I will keep praying as Fr. Gus advises us, "Lord, teach me to be gentle and patient with myself and with those around me. Bless me, form me, shape me and transform me with the gift of forbearance."

Patricia Cussen



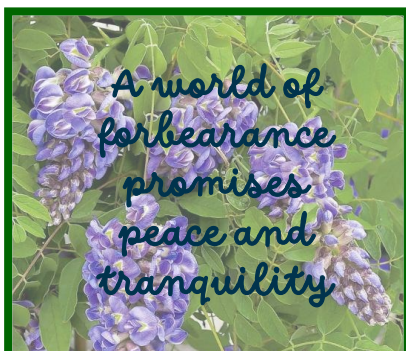
OUR FAVORITE
Forbearance
QUOTES



LOVE

does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1 CORINTHIANS 13:5



WE SHOULD MEET ABUSE BY FORBEARANCE. HUMAN NATURE IS SO CONSTITUTED THAT IF WE TAKE ABSOLUTELY NO NOTICE OF ANGER OR ABUSE, THE PERSON INDULGING IN IT WILL SOON WEARY OF IT AND STOP

GANDHI

Your enemy can teach you forbearance or intolerance. Choose what you want to learn.

Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near.

...
Phil. 4:5

Ephesians 4:1-3

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.



There is not a person we employ who does not, like ourselves, desire recognition, praise, gentleness, forbearance, patience.

HENRY WARD BEECHER

THERE IS NOTHING TO DO WITH MEN BUT TO LOVE THEM; TO CONTEMPLATE THEIR VIRTUES WITH ADMIRATION; THEIR FAULTS WITH PITY AND FORBEARANCE, AND THEIR INJURIES WITH FORGIVENESS

ORVILLE DEWEY

FOR NOTHING IS MORE COMMENDABLE, NOTHING MORE BECOMING IN A PREEMINENTLY GREAT MAN THAN COURTESY AND FORBEARANCE

MARCUS TILLIUS CICERO

LOVE SHOULD BE THE SILVER THREAD THAT RUNS THROUGH ALL YOUR CONDUCT

- J.C. RYLE -

"Spiritual Moments" is published each year by Wellspring, Fransalian Center for Spirituality. Its main purpose is to share "spiritual moments" and articles on various aspects of spirituality along with information on programs and events at Wellspring. It is circulated, primarily, among the many volunteers, participants, friends and wells-wishers of Wellspring and the Fransalian Missionaries.

Editor: Fr. Augustine Tharappel

Managing Editor: Bari Walker