

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the fifth Sunday of Easter. Our Scripture readings of today's mass call us to nurture a deeper and more personal relationship with Jesus and let Jesus become our way, our truth and our life. The first reading speaks of the struggle of the early Christian community to maintain their unity in Christ. The second reading speaks of Peter advising the community to be rooted in Christ and growing in him. The Gospel speaks of Jesus as the way and the truth and the life.

Jesus spoke about going to the father and Thomas wanted to know where that was. And Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me. If you know me, you will also know my father." I have heard the story of a missionary who was lost in the African jungle. When, finally, he reached a primitive village, he asked one of the villagers to lead him out. After more than an hour of hacking their way through thick jungle growth, the missionary said to his guide: "Are you sure, this is the way? Where is the path? His guide responded, "Sir, in this place there is no path. I am the path." In this jungle of our world – in the midst of doubts, fears, immoralities, political, racial and religious conflicts, poor political, ethical, moral and spiritual leadership, uncertainties, violence and war – Jesus is our way, our truth and our life.

Once, a farmer lost a calf. He went searching for it following the path that the calf had made (calf path) through the field, into the woods, into the jungle. His wife became worried since he had not returned in the evening. She sent her oldest son in search of the Father. He too followed the calf path and didn't return. The whole family went one after the other in anxious search - then the neighbors went and their neighbors. Soon, before anyone realized, "the calf path" became a highway.

This is how many habits are formed. This is how the paths of others become our own. This is how many prejudices are created and maintained. This is how many wrong paths are created and perpetuated. It doesn't have to be this way. We can choose to follow the good and noble paths of others and make them our own. We can be inspired and moved by the good habits and practices of others and make them our own. We can and we must listen to Jesus, be inspired and moved by his word, challenged by his life and let him be our way, our truth and our life.

When Jesus spoke about going to the father, Philip asked him to "show us the Father" and that is all that Philip wanted. Jesus' response was, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.... I

am in the Father and the Father is in me.” Jesus is the image of the Father and to know the Father is to know Jesus. Jesus also said, “I am the way, the truth and the Life.” Jesus is the way to the Father, to the truth of the Father and to the life of the Father.

I remember the story of a young monk who spoke and taught about knowing and experiencing God. Some of the theologians in his community began to get upset with this new teaching. They confronted the young monk and questioned him about the source of his knowledge and experience. They asked him to describe the relationship between the Father and Son and Holy Spirit in the Holy Trinity if he had such an experience of God. The young monk simply told them, “I look at the Son Jesus, in him I see the Father, inspired by the Holy Spirit.” This is exactly what Jesus told Philip, “whoever has seen me has seen the Father.... I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” Jesus is the image of the Father and to know the Father is to know Jesus.

We, the disciples of Jesus, are called to encounter Jesus and in that encounter come to know the father inspired by the Spirit. To know the father is not to have knowledge about him. Real knowledge is born of relationship. It is not a gathering of information or of details of an event that can be verified scientifically or otherwise. To know is to relate, to trust, to be intimate, to be in communion, to meet, to encounter and to experience personally. To know Christ is to experience Christ. To know God is to experience God.

What the world lacks and urgently needs today is not more religion or church or doctrine or sacred scriptures or theologians, but men and women who have a deep, intimate and personal experience of God, who have encountered God, whose life has been changed and transformed by their God-Experience; men and women who are grounded in Christ; who have chosen His way, His truth, and His life.

The world needs men and women of deep faith, profound hope and are inspired and moved by the steadfast, unconditional, and all-embracing love of God in Jesus! Our world needs men and women who know God and have a personal experience of God. We do have many who know about God. We need those who have an experienced God, who are grounded in their faith in God, who can speak about God from the authority of their experience and not from a book they read or a theology class they attended or a doctorate they hold in systematic theology. We need men and women who have experienced a transformation of their life because they know God and their life is in a continuous process of transformation

I want to encourage you to take a few moments each day of this week to be still and to reflect on how your day has been. Reflect also on the need to deepen your experience of God and to renew your commitment to Jesus as your way, your truth and your life.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

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

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2026

**Every believer in this world of ours must be a spark of light,
a center of love, a vivifying leaven amidst his fellow men.**

**And he will be this all the more perfectly,
the more closely he lives in communion with God
in the intimacy of his own soul.**

(Pope John XXIII)

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,
that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism
may, under your protective care, bear much fruit
and come to the joys of life eternal.
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.

**Serenity is the inner peace found in accepting the present moment,
releasing control and maintaining stillness amidst chaos.**

Acts 6:1-7

In this excerpt from the Acts of the Apostles, we see Seven men of virtue being chosen in prayerful discernment and being commissioned with restoring and maintaining harmony in the community. There was disharmony, disunity, and partiality in the community. The chosen seven were commissioned to reach out to those who were ignored in the community, the widows and the orphans, women and children – the less privileged and the most marginalized at that time.

They were also commissioned to reach out to those outside the circles of the Jewish community, the Hellenists. There were four outstanding virtues which the community recognized in the seven chosen ones and which the community commissioned them to live out fully: Harmony, hospitality, justice, and compassion.

What does this mean to you today as you reflect on your own call to discipleship?

How would you respond to this challenge?

How would you participate in peacemaking; justice keeping; nurturing harmony; and compassionate living?

Psalm 33

The Psalmist calls us to sing a new and joyful song because God is always doing new and surprising things and God's word is faithfulness, loyal love, covenant love, steadfast love, unfailing love and it is everywhere! The Lord's eyes rest upon those with whom he has covenanted in love. Such is the wisdom of God. His covenant love is expressed in tender care of all he has created. His word is "Covenant Love", Unfailing, and steadfast love. What else to do but sing a joyful and new song!

**Exult you just in the Lord;
Praise from the upright is fitting.
Give thanks to the Lord on the harp;
With the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises.**

1 Peter 2:4-9

Peter invites his readers to turn to Jesus the living stone, rejected by men but accepted as precious in the sight of God. He challenges them and us today to be such living stones being built into a "spiritual house" – a community, not an isolated, individualistic, solitary religion. It is on the fidelity of the believers and their relationship to one another that the Church is built. I

t is our connection to Jesus, the living corner stone and our concern for one another that creates and sustains the Church. Peter challenges us today to be rooted in Christ and growing in him and in our relationship to one another as a community of faith.

Be what you are called to be, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own" praising him who "called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

John 14:1-12

“Do not let your hearts be troubled...there are many dwelling places in my father’s house.....”

“I am the way, the truth and the life.....”

The ultimate meaning of Christ’s life, death and resurrection was to reveal the God who...

- makes a way out of no way,
- brings triumph into tragedy,
- creates something new from old,
- generates light in darkness,
- brings victory into defeat,
- generates hope where there is despair,
- brings good into evil,
- brings life into of death

“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father... I am in the Father and the Father is in me.....the man, who has faith in me will do the works I do and even greater than these...because it is the father who lives in me accomplishing his works...” Jesus says that the things he said and the things he did, did not come from himself, his own initiative, or his own power or his own knowledge, but from God. His word was God’s word, his work was God’s work, his power was God’s power, his life was God’s life...God came through in all that he was and in all that he said and in all he did.

In Jesus we meet God...God’s message, God’s mind, God’s heart... And in us, today, the world must meet all that is from God and of God.

Jesus said that the disciples would do what he did and even greater. We, the disciples of today must continue the mission of Jesus.

We must trust the promise of Jesus that it is God, the Father, doing His work in us, speaking His word through us and working out His plan through us.

Saint of the Day, May 3 - Saints Philip & James, Apostles and 12 other saints are remembered this day

We know nothing about James, Son of Alphaeus, except his name, and that Jesus chose him to be one of the 12 Apostles. He is not the James of Acts, son of Clopas, and later bishop of Jerusalem and the traditional author of the Letter of James. James, son of Alphaeus, is also known as James the Lesser to avoid confusing him with James the son of Zebedee, also an apostle and known as James the Greater.

Philip came from the same town as Peter and Andrew, Bethsaida in Galilee. He is specially remembered as the man who found Nathanael and told him of the “one about whom Moses wrote” (John 1:45). It took him a while to understand Jesus and his ways. On one occasion, Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread for the people to eat (John 6). Philip’s response was that two hundred days’ wages would not be enough to provide even a little food for all. On another occasion (John 14) when Jesus was speaking about going to the father, Philip asked Jesus to “show us the Father” and that is all he wanted. Jesus’ response was, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”

It did take Philip and all the Apostles some time to understand Jesus and his ways. Philip and James call us to be patient, to recognize our imperfections in knowledge and experience and keep striving to know Jesus more and follow him more closely.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Every Christian must be convinced of his fundamental
and vital duty of bearing witness to the truth
in which he believes and the grace that has transformed him.
(Pope John XXIII)**

