

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Second Sunday of Lent. All our Scripture readings are about faithfulness on the journey even when things are unclear, unsure and uncertain. We are encouraged to trust in the providential care of our God and be steadfast on our journey even when we lack clarity and direction.

Our first reading today is the story of Abraham's faithfulness on his journey to where God had directed him. God had called Abraham to leave his country and people and promised to make him a great nation and a blessing to all peoples (Genesis 12:1-3). Trusting in God's promise, Abraham began a journey into the unknown, leaving his home and people.

**Like Abraham and Sarah, our fidelity to God calls us to journey, to move on, our roots sunk into no earthly place, our source of security in God and God alone. We must move on, trusting in the providential care of our God.**

Genesis Chapter 15 tells us that Abraham had faith that God would always be faithful to his covenant. God's fidelity is dramatically described in today's first reading (Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18). Ordinarily those who entered into the covenant stood between the calved animals and declared their oath to one another, signifying that they would submit to a similar fate if they breached their agreement. But in the covenant described here, God alone passed between the slaughtered animals. By not requiring Abraham to do likewise, God acknowledged and accepted human limitations. The covenant between Abraham and God was an unconditional and everlasting bond.

Abraham trusted in God's promise for a new home and people. He knew that God, who called him to enter into a covenantal relationship, would always remain faithful. He had to leave the safe and the familiar and embrace something new and untried. His confidence in God made it possible for him to make this difficult choice.

**Like Abraham and Sarah, we are often called to make difficult choices. The Holy Spirit empowers us with good and wise counsel to make the difficult choice as the Lord often calls us to and remain faithful to the choice we made.**

In the second reading of today's mass, we hear St. Paul instructing the Philippians to imitate

Jesus and to remember that their citizenship is in heaven and that their conduct must reflect their citizenship (Philippians 3:17 - 4:1). He also encouraged them to be aware of those whose lives were scandalous and not follow them. He challenged them to “stand fast in the Lord” and be faithful to Jesus and his way.

In the Gospel of today, we read about the voice of God declaring Jesus as the “beloved Son” and calling all disciples to listen to him (Luke 9:28-36). In the presence of Jesus, transfigured in glory, Peter, James and John felt secure, happy and at home and did not want to continue their journey. Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah....while he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my chosen Son; listen to him.” (Luke 9:33-35)

They had found a temporary serenity and security and wanted to stay there. But the journey of Jesus was not complete, and the disciple’s journey was not complete either. They had to leave this experience, come down the mountain, continue their journey with Jesus faithfully and accept life with all its joys and sorrows, even accept the cross and eventual death.

They had to continue their journey into the unknown and insecure future with trust in God as their only security. They had to walk in mystery! The journey of Jesus would take him to the cross and then to unending glory. His disciples must follow and travel a similar path. On their way, Jesus would serve as their map, their route, their guide and eventually their way - and the way, the journey, the direction and the end of the journey become one.

Like Abraham and Sarah, Peter, James, John, and Paul, we too are called to faithfully continue our journey with our source of security in God and God alone. Let us strive to develop a habit of saying “yes” to God with our lives and be always faithful. Let us be strong, stand strong and walk faithfully even in difficult, uncertain, and trying times, into the unknown future.

Besides our lifelong journey with Jesus, we are now on our Lenten journey. We begin our Lenten journey in Ashes. From the ashes of destruction, we make our way to the cross of Christ and beyond the cross to the fire of Easter. Unlike the fire of destruction, we encounter a purifying, life-creating fire that gives light to a dark and despairing world. It is the fire that lights the Paschal candle which proclaims, “the light of Christ.” It is the fire that brings us into the light of Christ and lights up our own path. This journey will end in Baptism and the renunciation of the forces of evil for some and for the rest of us a renewal of our baptismal promises.

**Take a few moments, during this second week of Lent, to reflect on how you will make this journey from the Ashes of Ash Wednesday to the Fire of Easter, faithfully and joyfully! May God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.**

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

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

# **Second Sunday of Lent**

**March 16, 2025**

**Lent is a fitting time for self-denial.  
We would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help  
and enrich others by our own poverty.  
Let us not forget that real poverty hurts.  
No self-denial is real without this dimension of penance.  
(Pope Francis)**

## **Collect**

**O God, who have commanded us  
to listen to your beloved Son,  
be pleased, we pray,  
to nourish us inwardly by your word,  
that, with spiritual sight made pure,  
we may rejoice to behold your glory.  
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.

**Life gains depth and richness  
when purpose becomes the narrative of our existence.**

## **Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18**

God's directive was simple: "go forth from the land of your kinsfolk ..... to a land I will show you" (Gen.12:1).

Trusting in God's promise, Abraham began a journey. Like him, we are called again and again to leave the safe and familiar, the sound and the sane, to venture into territories unknown, uncharted, and unsure.

Genesis Chapter 15 tells us that Abraham had faith that God, who called him to enter into a covenantal relationship, would ever remain faithful. God's fidelity is dramatically described in the excerpted text referenced above. Ordinarily those who entered into the covenant stood between the calved animals and declared their oath to one another, signifying that they would submit to a similar fate if they breached their agreement. But in the covenant described here, God alone passed between the slaughtered animals. By not requiring Abraham to do likewise, God acknowledged and accepted human limitations. The covenant between Abraham and God was an unconditional and everlasting bond.

**Like Abraham and Sarah, our fidelity to God calls us to journey, to move on, our roots sunk into no earthly place, our source of security in God and God alone.**

**Abraham's act of obedience began a lifelong habit of saying "yes" with his life to whatever God planned. Dwell on this thought for some time.**

**Letting go is not easy and to let go of a sure and certain and secure thing in order to welcome something new and untried is even more difficult. That is the challenge!**

## **Psalm 27**

Psalm 27 proclaims the firm faith and boundless hope that God is all that the Psalmist longs for and God will bring deliverance, salvation. The psalmist longs for the presence of God in the Temple and protection from all enemies. He says, "I believe" and "I trust" and speaks of "seeking his face". To "seek the face" is to be in God's presence, to be in communion with God.

**The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom should I fear?  
The LORD is my life's refuge;  
of whom should I be afraid?**

## **Philippians 3:17 - 4:1**

Paul invited the Philippians to be fellow-imitators of Christ. He also encouraged them to be aware of those whose lives were scandalous and not follow them because "our citizenship is in heaven". Paul was saying to them that they must never forget that they are citizens of heaven and that their conduct must match their citizenship.

**Remember who you are! You are fellow citizens with the saints! Be faithful to your calling!**

He instructed them to "stand fast in the Lord". The meaning of "Stand Fast" as Paul uses is like the soldier "standing fast" in battle with the enemy surging down upon him.

**Be strong! Stand fast in the Lord! Be rooted and growing in the Lord!**

## **Luke 9:28-36**

In this excerpt from Luke, we read about the voice of God declaring Jesus as the “beloved Son” and calling all disciples to listen to him. In the presence of Jesus, transfigured in glory, Peter, James and John felt secure, happy, at home. They felt they had reached the end of their journey and they were not ready to move on - they just wanted to stay in their experience of comfort, joy, security and glory.

**Remember and rejoice in experiences of joy, success, greatness, wonder, glory, happiness - all of life’s peak experiences and be grateful!**

They had found a temporary serenity and security. But the journey of Jesus was not complete and the disciple’s journey was not complete either. They had to leave this experience, come down the mountain and accept life with all its joys and sorrows, even accept the cross and eventual death. They had to continue their journey into the unknown, uncertain and insecure future. They had to walk in mystery! The journey of Jesus would take him to the cross and then to unending glory. His disciples must follow and travel a similar path. On their way, Jesus would serve as their map, their route, their guide and eventually their way - and the way, the journey and the end of the journey become one.

**Be prepared to accept the inconveniences, suffering, pain, cross - all of life’s struggles. Be strong and stand strong in faith during difficult times.**

**Be Still for a few moments!**

**Pray for your needs and those of your family and community.**

## **Spiritual Communion**

Lord Jesus, I believe in your real presence in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Altar. I place myself in your presence and adore you, worship you and glorify you. I am unable to receive you in Holy Communion at Mass today. I hunger and thirst for your way, your truth and your life. Come into my heart Lord and satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst. Bless me that I may give witness to your presence in my life. Amen

**Be Still for a few moments!**

## **Saint of the Day, March 16 - St. Clement Mary Hofbauer and 13 other saints are remembered this day.**

St. Clement Hofbauer was born in Tasswitz, Moravia (now the Czech Republic) on December 26, 1751. In his early youth, after the death of his father, he worked as an apprentice baker. Having become a servant in the Norbertine Abbey at Klosterbruck, he was able to follow the call to the priesthood by completing first his secondary schooling and then his catechetical, philosophical, and theological studies in Vienna, Austria. During this time he made yearly pilgrimages to Rome, where he encountered the Redemptorists.

One day after serving Mass at the Cathedral of St. Stephen, he called a carriage for two ladies waiting there in the rain. In their conversation they learned that he could not pursue his priestly studies because of a lack of funds. They generously offered to support both John and his friend Thaddeus, in their seminary studies. The two went to Rome, where they were drawn to Saint Alphonsus' vision of religious life and to the Redemptorists. The two young men were ordained together in 1785.

Drawing candidates to the congregation, they were able to send missionaries to Poland, Germany, and Switzerland. These foundations had to be abandoned because of the political and religious tensions of the times. After 20 years of difficult work, Clement Mary himself was imprisoned and expelled from the country. He returned to Vienna, where he was to live and work the final 12 years of his life. He quickly became "the apostle of Vienna," hearing the confessions of the rich and the poor, visiting the sick, acting as a counselor to the powerful, sharing his holiness with all in the city. His crowning work was the establishment of a Catholic college in his beloved city.

Persecution followed Clement Mary, and there were those in authority who were able for a while to stop him from preaching. An attempt was made at the highest levels to have him banished. But his holiness and fame protected him and prompted the growth of the Redemptorists. Due to his efforts, the congregation was firmly established north of the Alps by the time of his death in 1820. Clement might be called the second founder of the Redemptorists, as it was he who carried the congregation of Saint Alphonsus Liguori to the people north of the Alps.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Give something, however small, to the one in need.  
For it is not small to the one who has nothing.  
Neither is it small to God, if we have given what we could.  
(St. Gregory Nazianzen)**