

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the Gospel reading of today's mass, we hear Jesus promising his disciples that he would send them the Holy Spirit. "The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you" (John 14:26). The Jews, around the time of Jesus, thought of the Holy Spirit as having three major functions: The Spirit revealed the truth; the Spirit helps a person recognize the truth as it is being revealed; the spirit empowered the person to live the truth that was revealed. The Holy Spirit thus was understood as the spirit of truth. Jesus said much more about the Holy Spirit and his works.....

Jesus said to his disciples: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Advocate** to be with you always, the **Spirit of truth**, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it **remains** with you, and will be in you" (John 14:16-17). "The **helper**, the Holy Spirit will **teach** you everything and make you **remember** all I have told you (John 14:26). The Spirit will give you **courage** to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties (John 15:26-27). The Spirit will **lead you into truth** (John 16:7-8,13). Jesus breathed on them and said: "receive the Holy Spirit" (John 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 could go outside and begin preaching and proclaiming Jesus (Acts 2:15-17).

Jesus spoke of his Holy Spirit as the Advocate, the spirit of truth, one who is always present, the helper, the teacher, one who gives courage, one who leads to truth, one who takes possession and the one who transforms the followers into disciples and proclaimers of the risen Jesus.

The Church's tradition lists seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: gifts of Wisdom, understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord which has roots in Isaiah 11:1-2. Saint Paul gives us a slightly different list of gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Mighty deeds, Prophecy, Discernment of Spirits, Varieties of Tongues and the ability to Interpret them (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). These two men of great wisdom and discernment discovered and described the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their own way. They saw them as means of service, of ministry to the community and not for personal gain/profit.

Let us take a few moments this week to be still and reflect on our gifts and how we are using them for the good of our family and community.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Fifth Week of Easter

April 29 – May 4, 2024

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)

April 29 – Monday, Fifth Week of Easter

Forbearance releases our feelings of vengeance and retaliation.

Acts 14:5-18

Paul healed a crippled man at Lystra. The people, including their priests, came to honor Paul and Barnabas with garlands and oxen to offer them sacrifice. Paul explained to them that they were only men and that the healing was done through the power of Jesus.

May all you do give honor and glory to God!

Psalm 115

Not to us, O Lord, not to us

But to your name give glory

Because of your kindness, because of your truth.....

May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth.....

John 14:21-26

There is much about love in this Gospel passage – Jesus and the Father, the disciples and Jesus, the disciples and other disciples – all in one communion of love and fellowship.

Obedience is presented as the only sign of Love – faithfulness to the word of Jesus is faithfulness and obedience to the word of the Father.

Keep listening and be obedient to the word of Jesus. The word of Jesus is the word of the Father and it is the word of love.

This faithfulness to the word deepens the relationship of love and it facilitates further revelation of love and truth and all that follow. Fidelity not only maintains relationship, but also deepens it. Jesus promised that those who are faithful will experience the indwelling of God, that he and the father will make a dwelling place within. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit. The

Holy Spirit, he said, would teach us all things and help us understand the teachings of Jesus

Fidelity, Obedience and loyalty are not values lived out in monasteries and religious houses. They are lived out where we are - where we live and work - where God has placed us. God is faithful where God is. We are called to be faithful where we are.

Saint of the Day, April 29 - St. Catherine of Siena and 22 other saints are remembered this day.

Caterina di Giacomo di Benincasa was born on March 25, 1347 in Siena, Italy. She was the 23rd child of Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa. The house where Catherine grew up in still exists. Her mother, Lapa, was about forty years old when she gave premature birth to twin daughters Catherine and Giovanna. She had already borne 22 children, but half of them had died. Giovanna was handed over to a wet-nurse and died soon after. Catherine was nursed by her mother and developed into a healthy child. She was two years old when Lapa had her 25th child, another daughter named Giovanna. As a child Catherine was so merry that the family gave her the pet name of "Euphrosyne", which is Greek for "joy."

As a teenager Catherine built a cell inside her mind, from which she could never flee. In this inner cell she made her father into a representation of Christ, her mother into the Blessed Virgin Mary, and her brothers into the apostles. Serving them humbly became an opportunity for spiritual growth. Catherine resisted the accepted course of marriage and motherhood on the one hand, or a nun's veil on the other. She chose to live an active and prayerful life outside a convent's walls following the model of the Dominicans.

She eventually entered the Dominican Third Order at 18 and spent the next three years in seclusion, prayer, and austerity. Gradually, a group of followers gathered around her - men and women, priests and religious. An active public apostolate grew out of her contemplative life. Her letters, mostly for spiritual instruction and encouragement of her followers, began to take more and more note of public affairs.

Her public influence reached great heights because of her evident holiness, her membership in the Dominican Third Order, and the deep impression she made on the pope. She worked tirelessly for the crusade against the Turks and for peace between Florence and the pope.

In 1378, the Great Schism began, splitting the allegiance of Christendom between two, then three, popes and putting even saints on opposing sides. Catherine spent the last two years of her life in Rome, in prayer and pleading on behalf of the cause of Pope Urban VI and the unity of the Church. She offered herself as a victim for the Church in its agony. She died surrounded by her "children" on April 29, 1380 and was canonized in 1461.

April 30 - Tuesday, Fifth Week of Easter

**Forbearance is patient endurance of a person
even when tolerance of what is done seems impossible.**

Acts 14:19-28

Some Jews from Antioch and Iconium stoned Paul and dragged him out of the town. Paul's disciples formed a circle around him and protected him. Paul and Barnabas continued their missionary journey, instructing people and encouraging them to stand strong in the face of difficulties.

Be strong and be faithful even in the face of difficulties!

Psalm 145

**Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord,
And let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
And speak of your might.**

John 14:27-31

Jesus gave his disciples his farewell gift: PEACE. He said that this was not the kind of peace the world would give. It is enduring peace, lasting peace, eternal peace. The word for peace used in this context is "shalom" and shalom means "total Well-being", "the highest good", "that which befits God". It is not the absence or the end of war or conflict. It is the presence of shalom, even in the midst of tension. This is the kind of peace, shalom that Jesus experienced in loving and fulfilling the Father's will.

Pray for:

- respect for the individual
- respect for all persons; unity in families; fellowship in communities; communion of cultures; respect for diversity and tolerance of differences
- hunger for brotherhood, justice, righteousness and peace in the world.
- recognition of the hunger of people and the willingness to share from the abundance we have received, food for the body as well as food for the spirit.

Saint of the day, April 30 - St. Pius V and 18 other saints are remembered this day.

Antonio Ghislieri was born on January 17, 1504 in Bosco in the Duchy of Milan, Italy. At the age of fourteen he entered the Dominican Order, taking the name Michele. Ordained a priest at Genoa in 1528, he was sent by his order to Pavia, where he lectured for sixteen years. At Parma he advanced thirty propositions in support of the papal chair and against the Protestant Reformation.

He became master of novices and was on several occasions elected prior of more than one Dominican priory. During a time of great moral laxity, he insisted on discipline, and strove to develop the practice of the monastic virtues. He fasted, did penance, passed long hours of the night in meditation and prayer, traveled on foot without a cloak in deep silence, or only speaking to his companions of the things of God. As his reformist zeal provoked resentment, he was compelled to return to Rome in 1550, where, after having been employed in several inquisitorial missions, he was elected to the commissariat of the Holy Office.

In 1556 he was made Bishop of Sutri by Pope Paul IV and was selected as inquisitor of the faith in Milan and Lombardy. In 1557 he was made a cardinal and named inquisitor general for all Christendom. Pope Pius IV appointed him Bishop of Mondovi in Piedmont. Before Michele Ghislieri could return to his episcopate, Pope Pius IV died. On January 8, 1566, Michele Ghislieri, was elected to the papal throne, taking the name Pope Pius V.

During his papacy (1566-1572), Pius V was faced with the almost overwhelming responsibility of getting a shattered and scattered Church back on its feet. The family of God had been shaken by corruption, by the Reformation, by the constant threat of Turkish invasion, etc. Pope Pius V was now charged with the task of implementing the sweeping reforms called for by the Council. He ordered the founding of seminaries for the proper training of priests. He published a new missal, a new breviary, a new catechism, and established the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine classes for the young. Pius zealously enforced legislation against abuses in the Church. He patiently served the sick and the poor by building hospitals, providing food for the hungry, and giving money customarily used for the papal banquets to poor Roman converts. His decision to keep wearing his Dominican habit led to the custom of the pope wearing a white cassock.

Pius's ceaseless papal quest for a renewal of the Church was grounded in his personal life as a Dominican friar. He spent long hours with his God in prayer, fasted rigorously, deprived himself of many customary papal luxuries, and faithfully observed the spirit of the Dominican Rule that he had professed.

Pius V died on May 1, 1572 of what is believed to be cancer. Pope Pius V was beatified by Pope Clement X in the year 1672 and was later canonized by Pope Clement XI on 22 May, 1712.

May 1 – Wednesday, Fifth Week of Easter

**Forbearance is self-restraint when retaliation seems easier
and appropriate.**

Acts 15:1-6

The number of Christians continued to increase, and many gentile converts joined the community. Some converted Pharisees demanded that the gentile converts follow the Mosaic Law. This created dissension in the early Church. Paul and Barnabas were delegated to consult the apostles and the elders on this matter.

Psalm 122

**I rejoiced because they said to me,
“We will go up to the house of the Lord.”
And now we have set foot
Within your gates O Jerusalem.**

John 15:1-8

**I am the vine, you are the branches.....remain in me, you will be fruitful.....you can do
nothing without me.....**

Fruitfulness of the branches depends on their union and connection with the vine. The branches become fruitful only in the vine. The vine itself doesn't bear the fruit. Vine bears the branches and feeds the branches, and the branches bear the fruit.

**Abide in Christ....be united with him.... live in his spirit....you will bear much fruit! Be
constantly fed by the “word” of Jesus and the “bread” of life and “cup” of compassion that
Jesus offers. You will be fruitful.**

Fruitfulness also depends on the branches being trimmed, pruned, and cleaned. We could rephrase it to read “fruitfulness depends on being tamed, disciplined, controlled, directed, channeled, etc. – wild branches do not yield.... they become unyielding!”

**Be open and docile to the Holy Spirit! Be open to being pruned, trimmed, cleansed,
disciplined, tamed.....be docile to the pruning process of the heavenly father...wild branches
become unyielding! Be yielding...Be fruitful!**

**Saint of the Day, May 1 - Saint Joseph the Worker and 28 other saints are
remembered this day.**

In 1955, a huge part of the world was being influenced by Communism. Among the efforts of Pope Pius XII to counter the evil effects of Communism's atheistic ideology was the institution of a new feast in honor of St. Joseph the Worker. Pius XII placed it on May 1st, the same day that the Communists held their "May Day" celebration: an anti-religious, purely secular commemoration of labor. To counter the communist view, Pope Pius XII placed before the faithful the example of St. Joseph the Worker, true model of all workers. St. Joseph did his work, quite literally, for God. As a carpenter in Nazareth, he worked in order to support the Child Jesus and His Mother Mary. Jesus learned the carpenter's trade from St. Joseph and worked for the majority of His life as a carpenter Himself. The life of the Holy Family shows us the value, beauty, and sanctity of work.

St. Joseph the Worker is the patron saint of all workers who get up and go to work every day to support the family they love and cherish. Catholic tradition has always held a deep respect for the dignity of human labor as a participation in the creative work of God. The book of Genesis (2:15) tells us of God's command to man to till the earth and let it become fruitful.

Saint Joseph was a carpenter and taught Jesus the trade as well. Jesus spent his early adult years working side-by-side in Joseph's carpentry shop before beginning his ministry. In his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul II stated: "the Church considers it her task always to call attention to the dignity and rights of those who work, to condemn situations in which that dignity and those rights are violated, and to help to guide social changes so as to ensure authentic progress by man and society." Saint Joseph is a model of work with respect and dignity. Let us draw our inspiration from Saint Joseph and participate in the creative activity of our God.

May 2 – Thursday, Fifth Week of Easter

Forbearance is giving generous interpretations of other people's unacceptable behaviors.

Acts 15:7-21

The apostles discerned that the regulations of the Old Testament were meant to be a preparation for Christ and that the Old had passed away giving way to the New. At the close of the discernment process, James encouraged them to be patient and considerate to all converts and not to make the new life difficult for them.

Be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Be open to new ways, opportunities, and possibilities.

Psalm 96

**Sing to the Lord a new song,
Sing to the Lord all you lands,
Sing to the Lord, bless his name.....**

John 15:9-11

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.....Abide in my love.....that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete.”

The secret of the life of Jesus was his contact with the Father. Again, and again, he withdrew to quiet places to be alone with the father. He knew what it meant to “abide” in the Father’s Love. His disciples must do the same.

To “abide” is to be in close contact, to be in touch, to be intimate, to live an intense and personal relationship, to surrender in fidelity, to surrender in obedience, etc.

Stay focused on developing a personal, intense, intimate relationship with the Lord. Stay close...stay connected...be in touch....

Abide in the presence of the Lord, in silence and in solitude.....Speak to the Lord from the depth of your heart.....

Saint of the Day, May 2 – St. Athanasius and 12 other saints are remembered this day

St. Athanasius was born into a Christian family in Alexandria, Egypt in 296. His parents gave him a classical education. A local priest, Alexander, later canonized as St Alexander of Alexandria, recognized his knowledge and talents and tutored Athanasius in theology, Around the age of 19, Athanasius spent a formative period in the Egyptian desert as a disciple of St. Anthony in his monastic community. Returning to Alexandria, he was ordained a deacon in 319, and resumed his assistance to Alexander who had become a bishop.

The Catholic Church, newly recognized by the Roman Empire, was already encountering a new series of dangers from within. A priest named Arius taught that Jesus could not have existed eternally as God prior to his historical incarnation as a man. According to Arius, Jesus was the highest of created beings, and could be considered “divine” only by analogy. Many Christians found it intellectually easier to believe in Jesus as a created demi-god, than to accept the mystery of a Father-Son relationship within the Godhead. By 325, the controversy was dividing the Church and unsettling the Roman Empire.

In that year, Athanasius attended the First Ecumenical Council, held at Nicea to examine and judge Arius' doctrine in light of apostolic tradition. It reaffirmed the Church's perennial teaching on Christ's full deity and established the Nicene Creed as an authoritative statement of faith. Near the end of St. Alexander's life, he insisted that Athanasius succeed him as the Bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius took on the position just as the Emperor Constantine, despite having convoked the Council of Nicea, decided to relax its condemnation of Arius and his supporters. Athanasius continually refused to admit Arius to communion, however, despite the urgings of the emperor. Athanasius was accused of theft, murder, assault, and even of causing a famine by interfering with food shipments. Arian emperor Constantius drove Athanasius into exile at least five times for insisting on the Nicene Creed as the Church's authoritative rule of faith.

Athanasius received the support of several Popes and spent a portion of his exile in Rome. However, the Emperor Constantius did succeed in coercing one Pope, Liberius, into condemning Athanasius by having him kidnapped, threatened with death, and sent away from Rome for two years. The Pope eventually managed to return to Rome, where he again proclaimed Athanasius' orthodoxy.

In 369, Athanasius managed to convene an assembly of 90 bishops in Alexandria, for the sake of warning the Church in Africa against the continuing threat of Arianism. He died in 373 and was vindicated by a more comprehensive rejection of Arianism at the Second Ecumenical Council, held in 381 at Constantinople.

May 3 - Saints Philip and James, Apostles

Forbearance is indulgence towards those who injure us... delay of resentment or punishment.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

In this excerpt, Paul tells us that his call was God's favor or grace and that he was last among the witnesses to whom the risen Jesus had appeared. Paul calls himself "last" and "least" and "one born abnormally." However, he says, he has "worked harder than all the others" and adds "not on my own but through the grace of God within me", "I am what I am by the grace of God" (v. 10). The grace of God has transformed an enemy of the gospel into one of its greatest defenders and proclaimers. He says that he was blessed and brought into the company of many great men like Peter, James, the twelve apostles and other 500 people to whom the risen Christ appeared, by God's Grace...

It is awe-inspiring as well as humbling to remember that we are called and sent with a mission that is far greater than us...far greater than all of us put together!

Psalm 19

**The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
Day pours out the word today;
And night to night imparts knowledge.**

John 14:6-14

“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 said 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 he was and in all 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.... working out His plan through us!

Saint of the Day, May 3 - Saints Philip and 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.

May 4 – Saturday, Fifth Week of Easter

Forbearance is restraint under provocation.

Acts 16:1-10

Paul made a long missionary journey with great success. He took Timothy along as a companion. Paul has a special gift of welcoming good men from the community to accompany him on his missionary journey. He was a good pastor, recognizing and affirming the goodness and generosity of faithful people in the community and calling them to share their gifts with others.

The Church continued to grow and become stronger in faith in spite of many hardships. Paul continued to discern and respond to the movement of the Holy Spirit and proclaimed the good news in many new towns and territories.

Psalm 100

**Sing joyfully to the Lord all you lands;
Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before him with joyful song.
Know that the Lord is God;
He made us, His we are; His people, the flock he tends.**

John 15:18-21

Jesus warned his disciples that they cannot conform to the world’s standards and they would be hated for not conforming to the ways of the world. He told them that they did not belong to the world and that the world would not recognize them because they live a different standard and have a different life-style.....

The price of non-conformity is alienation. Christians throughout the centuries have experienced alienation from the world in many different ways. In fact, anyone who chooses a different

lifestyle from that of the world, at any particular time, is disliked, alienated, even hated and persecuted for it. Socrates was killed just because he challenged men to think and reason and come to certain logical conclusions for themselves.

It is dangerous to be different. The disciples of Jesus must choose to be different, think different, see different, live different and even die different. This is the challenge that Jesus offered his disciples.

Saint of the Day, May 4 – St. Florian and 361 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Florian was born around the year 250 in the ancient Roman city of Aelium Cetium, present-day Sankt Pölten, Austria. He joined the Roman Army and advanced in the ranks, rising to commander of the imperial army in the Roman province of Noricum. In addition to his military duties, he was also responsible for organizing and leading firefighting brigades. Florian organized and trained an elite group of soldiers whose sole duty was to fight fires.

During the Diocletianic Persecution of Christians, reports reached Rome that Florian was not enforcing the proscriptions against Christians in his territory. Aquilinus was sent to investigate these reports. When Aquilinus ordered Florian to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods in accordance with Roman religion, Florian refused. Florian was sentenced to be burned at the stake. Standing on the funeral pyre, Florian is reputed to have challenged the Roman soldiers to light the fire, saying "If you wish to know that I am not afraid of your torture, light the fire, and in the name of the Lord I will climb onto it." Apprehensive of his words, the soldiers did not burn Florian, but executed him by drowning him in the Enns River with a millstone tied around his neck.

His body, recovered and buried by a pious woman, was eventually removed to the Augustinian Abbey of St. Florian, near Linz. St. Florian has been regarded as a patron of Poland as well as of Linz, Upper Austria. In recent years, Saint Florian has come to be honored as the patron saint of firefighters and for protection against fire and floods.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**In God's eyes, love is never absent.
In God's heart, forgiveness is never impossible.
In God's embrace, no one is ever alone or forgotten.**