



Fr. Peter Mermier

# Spiritual Moments



St. Francis de Sales

Volume 10, Issue 2

Wellspring - Fransalian Center for Spirituality  
Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales

September 15, 2011

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

*Fr. Gus*



If I had to pick my favorite virtue, it would definitely be joy! Each year Fr. Gus chooses a virtue for study for the year. I can't tell you how excited I was when he chose the virtue of joy this year. Since January, we've had months to focus on being joyful, living joyfully, and becoming joyful people.

Wow, the teachings on joy this year have been amazing! I attend the Tuesday Faith Sharing class, and this year our meditations have focused on "becoming joyful."

In one of the classes, we discussed the poems, "The Soulful Life" and "Desiderata."

There is a line in "The Soulful Life", that says:

*Does your own vast potential fill you with awe?*

Yes, my potential does fill me with awe when I think about the possibilities of transformation and becoming more joyful. That is why I enjoy studying the virtues, and why I have especially enjoyed this series on joyfulness because it helps me to see that I can be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is great joy in thinking about the possibilities.

In the poem, "Desiderata", the last line says:

*With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.*

When I meditated on that line, it reminded me of a song I sang when I was a Catholic elementary school student. Our weekly Masses at school were always filled with upbeat praise songs. My favorite song from those weekly Masses was "God Loves a Cheerful Giver." The words from the refrain of the song were:

*God loves a cheerful giver,  
give it all you've got. He loves to hear you laughing when you're in an awkward spot. When the odds add up against you, it's time to stop and sing, Praise God, to praise him is a joyous thing.*

I wish I could sing it for you. It reminds me that even in times of difficulty, it's important to remain "cheerful" and to be joyful. In one of Fr. Gus' meditations on joyfulness, he shares the thought that day by day, God gives us new pieces to fit into the puzzle of our lives. Some of the pieces are beautiful and well-fitting. Others are sharp and painful. Only God knows the beauty that is possible when all the pieces have been faithfully put into place. I believe it is a little easier to remain joyful during trying times if you look at your situation in that light.

As I look back on difficult times in my life, I can see God's hand. One of the beautiful

things about growing older is that we have the experience of seeing God at work. We see how good can come from difficult situations. I remind my children of that as they struggle with issues. I simply tell them, "God has a plan; God sees the future, and He will carry you through whatever comes your way." It is not always easy but it is possible.

My aunt, Sadie, was 106 years old when she passed away a couple of years ago. She endured many difficulties in her life yet she remained gentle, joyful and faithful. She was a remarkable woman who rarely complained. In her later years, whenever someone asked her how she was feeling, even if she didn't feel well, she refrained from complaining. Her response was, "God never promised me a rose garden."

As I reflect on the kind of life my aunt lived and the teachings on joyfulness, it encourages me to look for opportunities to nurture joyfulness. My meditations have shown me that I can nurture joyfulness by choosing to appreciate all I have and all I am becoming. I know that God is giving me new opportunities to be joyful. I only have to look around me to see that the world really is a good place with many good and holy people and many possibilities. By focusing on the hope and joy in my life, the possibilities for transformation are endless!

Bari Walker

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# EDITORIAL

The past week has been disturbing on the one hand and inspiring and challenging on the other. It has been disturbing as we were presented with the many images of the terrible events of September 11, 2001. We saw, once again, images of anger, hatred, violence, death and destruction and relived the hurt, the pain, the fear, the suspicion and other similar emotions. We pondered over events that changed America and the world. My thoughts went far beyond these disturbing images to the more inspiring and challenging memories. Images of men and women who weathered adversity and acted with great courage give us hope for a better world. Images of patriotism, courage, generosity, self-sacrifice, love for God, people and country have been inspiring and challenging. They hold promise of a future that could be safe and secure and peaceful. Those who destroyed the World Trade Center and attacked the Pentagon hoped to demoralize people, disrupt the economy, destroy structures of government and create fear and distrust among people.

Despite the destruction they caused, we have seen great courage and self-sacrifice that began to recreate, restructure and rebuild the nation while renewing faith in each other and in those traditional values that held the society together. The actions of the brave passengers of United Airlines Flight 93, who sacrificed their own lives in order to prevent their airplane from striking Washington D. C., will always call us to be prepared to sacrifice ourselves for the good of others. As we reflect back on the events that changed our lives, we must remember the heroic responses of those men and women who made great sacrifices and honor their lives by being and becoming more courageous and self-sacrificing and teach our children those values that hold us together as a people of faith.

May peace and harmony be our gift to the world as we remember and ponder over the tragic events of the past.

Fr. Gus

Visit the New and Improved Wellspring Website!  
**WWW . WELLSRINGCOMMUNITY.NET**

- ◆ Visit our daily reflections page. We bring you reflections on the Scripture readings of daily and weekend Masses. You may also receive the daily reflections via email. Just email Fr. Gus at [frgus@suddenlink.net](mailto:frgus@suddenlink.net) and he will add you to our mailing list.
- ◆ Check out our weekend meditations on joyfulness and enrich your spiritual life.
- ◆ Find information about the Fransalians and about Wellspring, as well as links to other sites of the Fransalians.



# Fall 2011- Spiritual Growth Opportunities & Classes



## Faith Sharing \* Tuesdays, 7:00-8:30 pm

### *Meditations on the Beatitudes*

*September 6 to November 15th, 2011*

Would you like to become a peacemaker? Would you like to be kinder, gentler, more humble, compassionate and joyful? Then join us at Wellspring as we study the beatitudes. Fr. Gus will conduct a ten week series on the Beatitudes. Each class will consist of 20 minutes of personal prayer and meditation followed by shared prayer and study of the eight beatitudes.

## Sunday Scripture Series \* Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 pm

Do you need help with understanding the Sunday Scripture Readings? Would you like to know and understand the background of the Sunday Scripture Readings? Join Fr. Gus every Wednesday evening for our Sunday Scripture series. Each class will consist of 20 minutes of personal prayer and meditation on Sunday Scriptures followed by shared prayer and study of the Scripture Readings for the following Sunday.

## Beyond Retirement \* 2nd Wednesday of each Month, 10:00 am—1:00 pm

Opportunity for retired men and women, irrespective of age, to meet for prayer and reflection, offering support to each other and nurturing community. Lunch is provided.

## Ministry of Compassion & Hope \* 2nd Sat. of each Month, 9:00 am—12:00 pm

All who are experiencing difficult and testing times, personal loss and grief through separation, divorce, death and dying situations, meet for prayer and reflection, while learning from each other, offering support to others with similar needs, creating solidarity with others and nurturing a community of compassion and hope. Lunch is provided.

## Meditation \* Saturdays, 7:00 –8:30 am

Group gathers to experience the contemplative way & cultivate a contemplative presence in the world.

## Wellspring Community \* 3rd Monday of each Month, 6:30-8:30 pm

A community of men & women gather to seek wisdom and cultivate compassion and contemplation as a way of life. A visit with Fr. Gus is necessary for joining the community.

## \* Spiritual Direction \*

Fr. Gus offers spiritual direction for individuals and couples who desire to grow spiritually and guidance for those who struggle in their relationship with God, and those who are in the process of discerning direction for their life.

## \* Retreats \*

Community retreats are offered throughout the year. Retreats are also offered to individuals, couples and groups on request and are personalized to meet the needs of participants. Guest rooms are available for retreats.



# NURTURING JOYFULNESS

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This year Wellspring community has been reflecting on nurturing joyfulness, which is an inner power, a strength of our will and a gift of Grace. Things that happen to us and around us may bring us happiness and circumstances may increase this happiness or mar it. But joy endures, flows through troublesome and trying times, through nights and days, through conflicts and tensions, through persecutions and oppositions, even through death and dying times. Joy is the fountain welling up inside, the "spring within" that Jesus speaks of in the Gospel of John Chapter 4:14. Happiness depends on what may or may not happen. Joy is the spring within.

We find Jesus urging his disciples to find their joy in their names "being inscribed in heaven" and not in having authority over the demons (Luke 10:17-24). We find Jesus expressing His own deep joy on the plan of the Father for the salvation of all and on His role in this salvation. Jesus called the disciples to remember the ancient saints, who longed to see God's salvation, but who were not privileged to see what the disciples' eyes were seeing. Jesus called the disciples' attention to the many reasons for joy, not in their own accomplishments, but in what God had been doing for them, in them, through them and with them.

Jesus sent the seventy disciples with simple, but challenging instructions to proclaim the good news of the presence of the Kingdom of God (Luke 10:1-9). How would you feel if you were sent out with the following instructions: Harvest is rich, but only few workers; you were being sent out as "lambs among wolves"; you were sent out with no provisions, not even sandals on your feet; you were told to eat whatever you were served; you may experience rejection...and so on. There does not seem to be much to look forward to....joy doesn't seem part of the deal!

Wouldn't you feel like saying, "Master, are you really serious?" What the master seemed to offer is less than desirable....it doesn't sound joyful! The seventy disciples accepted the challenge of their master and went out to proclaim the good news which their master gave. They returned jubilant, joy-filled and joyful! They have been successful. They have done well, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name" (Luke 10:17).

What an experience! An experience beyond imagination and expectations! What else can you expect, except pure joy, excitement, jubilation! "Even the demons are subject to us" – they had power over demons. There was a time when they couldn't do it. The Evangelist, Luke describes a situation when nine disciples could not cast the demon out of a boy (Luke 9:37-40). Now they have done it and so they have reason to rejoice.



Jesus called them to find their joy in their "names being inscribed in heaven" and not in the devils being subject to them (10:17-20). Their joy was misplaced! They had to re-focus their joy. The falling of "Satan", the adversary, is definitely a source of joy. Jesus said, "I saw Satan fall...like lightning". They were now able to face and overcome the adversary and, in fact, the adversary was "falling". They were able to "trample on serpents and scorpions" as Jesus promised. No such dangers could defeat or hinder them from fulfilling their mission. They were now doing what Jesus had commanded them to do. On their mission, they became invincible, unconquerable. In this they can rejoice.

But the real joy, the ultimate joy is not in this fall...it is in their "names being inscribed in heaven", being accepted into the Kingdom of God. They must rejoice in the fact of their salvation, rather than in the downfall and defeat of evil forces. "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" ( Luke 10:20). To have "names written in heaven" means to be accepted, to belong in heaven. It is the joy of being and belonging with God rather than doing and accomplishing for God.

The joy of the Christian should not be primarily in the destruction of evil forces, but in belonging to God. The disciple must find joy in being a disciple rather than in his accomplishments just as the Master found joy in fulfilling the will of the Father who sent him.

Another source of finding joy is in knowing that God finishes what He starts, and God has started our salvation. He accomplished our salvation in Christ on the cross of Calvary. And it is He who will bring that salvation to its completion in us. As St. Paul says, "Be confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). And as the Psalmist says in Psalm 138, "The Lord will complete what he has begun."

Still another source of joy is in being welcomed into the eternal because you have been faithful in small things....you have been faithful to your noble character!

The Gospel of Mathew, Chapter 25:31-46, gives us a vivid picture of the last judgment. In this chapter, Mathew invites us into an imaginative courtroom scene where judgment of those who are worthy to be welcomed into eternal life is taking place.

The highlight of the scene is the criteria for the judgment of worthiness: loving kindness. Loving persons do loving acts. Kind people do kind deeds. It is help in simple, ordinary things, response to daily needs of ordinary people: giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, comfort to the sick – things that anyone can do, things that do not require special training or a diploma from a university. It is not performance of miracles or preaching of great sermons or donations of large sums of money or holding higher positions in society or any recognition offered to a person by the world, but in simple acts of loving kindness which has become part of the very nature, character of a person.

Acts of kindness are done not for a reward, not even thinking that it is done for the Lord, but it has become part of a person's nature. It is help which is uncalculating. In the parable, those who helped did not know that they were helping Christ and gaining merit for eternal life. And those who failed to help said, "If we had known it was you, we would have helped." Acts of loving kindness flow from loving hearts, from loving people without expecting praise, reward and merits....it is the nature, the character of loving people to do loving things in response to the simple, everyday needs of ordinary people.

The following story is about having a big heart and doing little things from a big heart.

It was an unseasonably hot day. Everybody, it seemed, was looking for some kind of relief, so an ice cream store was a natural place to stop.

A little girl, clutching her money tightly, entered the store. Before she could say a word, the store clerk sharply told her to get outside and read the sign on the door, and stay out until she put on some shoes. She left slowly, and a big man followed her out of the store.

He watched as she stood in front of the store and read the sign: "No shoes, No service." Tears started rolling down her cheeks as she turned and walked away. Just then the big man called out to her. Sitting down on the curb, he took off his size 12 shoes, and set them in front of the girl saying, "Here, you won't be able to walk in these, but if you sort of slide along, you can get your ice cream cone."

Then he lifted the little girl up and set her feet into the shoes. "Take your time," he said, "I get tired of moving them around, and it'll feel good to just sit here and eat my ice cream." The shining eyes of the little girl could not be missed as she shuffled up to the counter and ordered her ice cream cone. He was a big man, big belly, big shoes, but most of all, he had a big heart....and from his big heart came loving kindness and great joy for a little girl!

The judgment is about what you have become and not what you have done or not done. You have become a new creation. You have become a joyful and noble person. You have become sons of God. You have become sensitive to those around you. You have become especially sensitive to the marginal people in the community. You have reached out in kindness because you just couldn't do otherwise. Noble people must live noble lives. Loving people must do loving deeds. Kind people must do acts of kindness.

Lasting joy does not come from favorable circumstances, but from the Spirit of God. Deep within us is a place, a sacred space where we have found God and God has found us. Deep down there, there is a presence, a presence of Grace, peace, love, joy, an indwelling of God, the joy of our soul, our very being. Look beyond! Don't ever stop looking, because it is there! Be patient! Be optimistic! Be positive! Be joyful!

Joy springs from within. No one makes you joyful; you choose to be joyful. The world will not dedicate itself to making you joyful. Dedicate yourself to finding joy deep within you and bringing joy into the world.

Joyfulness is that virtue that enables us to accept each moment of the day as coming from the Lord and the profound faith that we have only the present moment to live our lives.

"From joy springs all creation, By joy it is sustained, towards joy it proceeds, and unto joy it returns." (Upanishads)

"Rejoice in the Lord always! I say it again. Rejoice! Everyone should see how unselfish you are. The Lord is near. Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and in petition full of gratitude.....( Philippians 4:4-9)

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

# Wellspring's 13TH ANNIVERSARY

Dear Friends and Well-wishers:

Please accept my sincere thanks and appreciation for your encouragement and support for the establishment and maintenance of Wellspring and your prayerful presence at many of our activities. You have supported Wellspring from the time of its founding and without your support, our ministry would have been impossible. Your generosity is always appreciated.

We began on January 24, 1998 on the feast of St. Francis de Sales, in a small house on Fleishel in Tyler and moved to our present location on Rhones Quarter Road in Whitehouse on September 15, 1998, the feast of Our Mother of Compassion. I invite you to join me and the Wellspring community to thank God for all his blessings on our ministry during the past thirteen years in Whitehouse.

We have much to be grateful for and we have many people to be grateful to. God has been good to us by giving us opportunities to minister to his people, our brothers and sisters. Words are inadequate to express our gratitude to God for what He has been doing for us and with us. Gratitude is our "return gift" to the Lord for all that He has been to us. Please accept my sincere thanks and appreciation for your encouragement and support and your prayerful presence.

I pray with you every day as the day begins and I especially remember your children and those of you who have special needs. If you have a special need that you would like me and the Wellspring community to pray for, please call our prayer line at 903-839-3486 and leave a message or email [frgus@suddenlink.net](mailto:frgus@suddenlink.net). I look forward to praying and worshipping with you and serving you well as the Lord blesses me with new opportunities.

May God bless you and your family and keep you safe in the center of His love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel,msfs

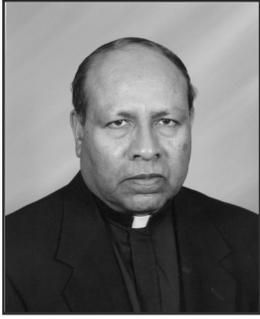
**joy.**

THE JOY THAT THE WORLD GIVES WILL  
PASS AWAY, BUT THE JOY THAT CHRIST  
BRINGS IS A LASTING JOY,  
NOT A MOMENTARY PLEASURE.



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR  
OUR ADVENT RETREAT...**

*Saturday, December 3rd...9 am - Noon*



**MEET** Fr. Joseph Charles Pednekar,  
msfs. of Pune Province  
**WHOM MOST OF YOU HAVE NOT MET.....**

Fr. Joseph Charles Pednekar, msfs was born into a faith-filled Brahmin family, on August 12, 1930 in Bastora, Goa, India. Brahmins are the upper-caste Hindus of traditional Indian Society. His parents Sonu Pednekar and Shawanti Bai had six sons and six daughters and Chandrakant, now Fr. Joseph Charles Pednekar, was the second son. He was baptized into the Catholic faith on September 15, 1952 after which he had not gone back to his family, although his mother tried three different times to take him home as the family was not pleased with his conversion to the Catholic faith from the Brahminic traditions. He was educated by the Fransalians in Goa. Archbishop Eugene D'Sousa, also a Fransalian, baptized, confirmed and gave him his first communion on the same day. Chandrakant changed his name to Joseph Charles at his Baptism.

He made his first religious profession on May 11, 1959 and was ordained a priest on October 3, 1962. After his ordination to the priesthood, he worked in the missions as secretary to Bishop Joseph Rosario of Amaravati, associate pastor in different parishes and as a teacher in our school. He went to Rome in 1966 to study pastoral Sociology and then to USA in 1968 for pastoral ministry. Since his arrival in USA, he has been in the diocese of Cleveland, Ohio where he continues to work as a parochial vicar at St Patrick Church.

I had the privilege of visiting him on August 30, 2011. He picked me up at the airport, treated me to lunch in a nice restaurant and visited with me for a couple of hours. He took me to his house, settled me in and went for a meeting in the parish. Later, he gave me a grand tour of the facilities in his parish. He made sure that I had dinner in the evening and talked with me for another couple of hours till very late in the night. Early next morning, he dropped me off at the airport for my journey to Tennessee for the meeting of our community there.

He turned age 81 on August 12, 2011. At this tender age, he continues to work in the parish like any other priest who is able to work. He drives long distances for making mission appeals for his Province of Pune, India. He is an inspiring Fransalian missionary, who exemplifies the spirit of simplicity, hospitality, prayerfulness and missionary zeal. I am blessed to know him. Meeting him was the highlight of all my recent journeys. I am amazed at the simplicity with which he lives, the energy that he puts into his work and into his appeals for the support of his Province and the hospitality he shows to all who visit him. I pray that God continues to bless him with good health and many more years of fulfilling and joyful ministry. I also pray that the rest of us will draw inspiration from his missionary zeal.

Fr. Gus

# Retreats

THIS PAST YEAR, WE HAVE HOSTED MANY INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP RETREATS. MANY HAVE COME TO WELLSRING TO PRAY, MEDITATE AND ENJOY THE QUIET BEAUTY OF OUR SPIRITUALITY CENTER. GUEST ROOMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR GUIDED RETREATS FOR INDIVIDUALS, COUPLES AND GROUPS.

THE BEAUTIFUL GROUNDS, WATER FEATURES, LABYRINTH, AND OUR STATIONS OF THE CROSS PROVIDE THOSE WHO ARE HERE ON RETREAT AN OUTDOOR SPACE THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO PRAYER, MEDITATION AND REFLECTION. RECENTLY STEVEN MCKNIGHT, A BOY SCOUT IN OUR COMMUNITY, COMPLETED HIS EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT AT WELLSRING. STEVEN RESTORED AND REFASHIONED THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS ALONG THE PATH THROUGH THE WOODED AREA OF THE WELLSRING GROUNDS. THE NEW CROSSES ARE BEAUTIFUL AND ALL WHO COME TO MEDIATE ON THE STATIONS ARE BLESSED BY STEVEN'S WORKMANSHIP AND GENEROSITY.

WELLSRING IS AVAILABLE FOR GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL RETREATS. TO SCHEDULE A RETREAT, PLEASE CONTACT FR. GUS AT [FRGUS@SUDDENLINK.NET](mailto:FRGUS@SUDDENLINK.NET).

# THOUGHTS ON Joyfulness...

**If you believe that God will never abandon you, then joyfulness will be yours.**

SEE THE GOOD THAT YOU ARE ALREADY DOING AND YOU WILL FIND JOY TODAY.



BELIEVE THAT THE FUTURE HOLDS HOPE AND PROMISE, AND YOU WILL FIND JOY TODAY.

ATTITUDES ARE MAGNETIC AND EVERY MOMENT YOU SPEND IN JOY MAGNETIZES AND ENERGIZES ANOTHER MOMENT OF JOY.

*Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy. (Thich Nhat Hanh)*

BEING JOYFUL IS NOT SOMETHING THAT MAY HAPPEN IN SOME DISTANT FUTURE. IT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF NOW, THIS MOMENT.

**Every moment you spend in joy generates another moment of joy.**

**If you find yourself in a situation where there are no joyful people, then strive to be an agent of joy.**

**JOY IS ONE OF THE GREATEST GIFTS WE CAN GIVE TO THE WORLD.**

**LEARNING TO LIVE IN THE MOMENT IS THE PATH OF JOY.**

**Acknowledge the joy you already have in your life, and you will feel it even more often.**

**Be a welcoming person!  
Hospitality brings you joy.**

Shared joy is a double joy; shared sorrow is half a sorrow. (Swedish Proverb)

“Spiritual Moments” is published twice a 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.

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