

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jesus said to the host who invited him, "When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment" (Luke 14:12). This excerpt is from the Gospel reading of the mass today, Monday the thirty-first week in Ordinary time. Jesus calls us to new way of giving which made no claims, no conditions and no expectation of return. On another occasion, Jesus said to the disciples, "Give, and it shall be given to you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will they pour into the fold of your garment. For the measure you measure with will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

In Jesus' time, people worked on the farms with their hands and handheld tools. Modern farming equipments were not available. People wore ankle-length robes at that time. The method of sowing seed was for the Sower to grab the hem of his garment at the knees and pull the garment up toward the waist and crate a pocket. The landowner poured seeds into this pocket as much as it could hold. The pocket could be shaken and pressed down for it to hold more seeds. And that is what Jesus refers to when he says, "good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be poured into the fold of your garment,"

Jesus calls us to be generous in giving, especially to those who can not return the favor... "good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over." We are called to give abundantly from the abundance of our hearts. Abundance and lack exist simultaneously in our lives. When we choose not to focus on what is missing, but on the abundance that is present - love, health, family, friends, work - we experience daily joy... we become grateful and we become generous as our God is to us. Generosity will become fruitful in abundance. God will provide!

Let us choose to be grateful and joyful and generous with the abundance that is available to us and not be discontent and keep looking for more and better. Let us be mindful of those who are less privileged than we are, rethink our needs, downsize our appetites, share with the hungry and the needy and share from the abundance we have received, food for the body as well as food for the spirit. Be gracious and joyful in giving! Let your giving be a sign of gratitude! Give from the heart of abundance! Have a big heart!

God bless you and your family and keep you safe in His Love.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Thirty-first Week in Ordinary Time

November 4-9, 2024

**“Put on Christ!” in your life, and you will find a friend in whom you can always trust;
“put on Christ” and you will see the wings of hope spreading
and letting you journey with joy towards the future;
“put on Christ” and your life will be full of his love; it will be a fruitful life.
(Pope Francis)**

November 4 – Monday, Thirty-First Week in Ordinary Time

**Loving Father, teach me to be gentle and patient with myself
and with those around me.**

Philippians 2:1-4

In this early Christian hymn, the love of Christ, which Christians are called to share and emulate, is described as “self-emptying” love. Christ emptied himself in total giving by dying on the cross. Christians are called to empty themselves in compassion and love.

Give yourself to each other in love and service!

Psalm 131

**O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor are my eyes haughty;
I busy not myself with great things, nor with things too sublime for me.
Rather, I have stilled and quieted, my soul like a weaned child.
Like a weaned child on his mother’s lap, so is my soul within me.
O, Israel, hope in the Lord, both now and forever.**

Luke 14:12-14

Jesus taught his listeners to be generous and gracious in giving and in showing hospitality. He challenged them to give generously to those who are unable to return the favor, the cripples, the lame, the beggars and the poor.

You must give because it is your nature to give and not because there is a rewards waiting for you. Giving is the quality of your person...you must learn to give because that is the kind of person you are...you must give even when there is no personal gain.

Jesus called forth a new way of giving which made no claims, no conditions and no expectation of return.

Be gracious! Be generous! Give without counting the cost!

Saint of the day, November 4 – Saint Charles Borromeo and 13 other saints are remembered this day.

Saint Charles Borromeo was born on October 2, 1538 at the castle of Arona near Milan. His father was the Count of Arona and his mother a member of the House of Medici. At the age of 12, the young Count Charles Borromeo dedicated himself to a life of service to the Church. His uncle gave to him the family income from the Benedictine abbey of Saints Gratian and Felinus. Even as a youth, his integrity was obvious. He was explicit in telling his father that he could only keep the money required for his education and to prepare him for service to the Church. All other funds belonged to the poor of the Church and were to be passed along to them.

Charles suffered from a speech impediment that made him appear slow to those who did not know him. Despite this challenge, he performed well and impressed his teachers. He attended the University of Pavia and learned Latin. He was praised because he was hardworking and thorough. In 1554 his father passed away and although Charles was a teenager, responsibility for his household fell to him. Charles continued in his studies and earned a doctorate in canon and civil law.

His uncle, Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Medici became Pope Pius IV on December 25, 1559. The new pope asked his nephew to come to Rome and appointed him as a cardinal-deacon. With the rank came the job of assisting and advising his uncle full-time. A month later, Pope Pius IV made his nephew a cardinal. With the new rank came even more duties including the government of the Papal States, the supervision of the Knights of Malta, the Franciscans, and the Carmelites. He was only 23 years old.

Borromeo was appointed administrator of the Archdiocese of Milan in 1560. Since he would become the ecclesiastical administrator of Milan, he decided that the Lord was calling him to the priesthood. In 1562 his brother died and his family urged him to leave the service of the church to preserve the family name, but he refused. He became more insistent upon becoming a good bishop and in compelling others to lead exemplary lives of clerical service.

Borromeo was ordained first to the order of deacon. Then, he was ordained to the holy priesthood on September 4, 1563. Then, he was ordained as a bishop on December 7, 1563. He became Archbishop of Milan on May 12, 1564. The Protestant Reformation was spreading throughout northern Europe and constantly threatened to move south. The greatest defense against Protestant doctrinal errors and claims against the hierarchy of the Catholic Church was

reform and the restoration of integrity to the Catholic Church. Archbishop Borromeo saw this clearly and he made this his mission.

His strategy was to provide education to many clergy he saw as ignorant. He founded schools and seminaries and colleges for clergy. He also ended the selling of indulgences, a form of simony and ordered monasteries to reform themselves. His work of cleaning up the Church also made him enemies. On one occasion a member of a small, decrepit order known as the "Humiliati" attempted to assassinate him with a pistol but missed.

In 1576 a famine struck Milan followed by the plague, and many of the wealthy and powerful fled the city. Archbishop Borromeo remained. He used his own fortune to feed the starving people. When that money was spent, he took loans and went deep into debt. He may have fed 70,000 people per day. Eventually, the Archbishop convinced the local governor to return to his post and care for the people. In 1583, Archbishop Borromeo traveled to Switzerland and began the work of suppressing heresy there. Protestant heresies, along with witchcraft and sorcery had been widely reported. He founded the Collegium Helveticum to serve and educate Swiss Catholics.

Eventually, the Archbishop's life of work and toil began to take its toll. In 1584, he became ill with a fever. He returned to Milan where his condition worsened. When it became obvious that he would die, he was given his last Sacraments. He died on November 3, at the age of 46. He was canonized by Pope Paul V on November 1, 1610.

November 5 - Tuesday, Thirty First Week in Ordinary Time

**In these troublesome times,
our world needs our forbearance, forgiveness and mercy.**

Philippians 2:5-11

We continued to read and reflect on the ancient Christian hymn which calls all Christians to empty themselves in compassion and love. Paul invited the Philippians, and he invites us today to be imitators of Christ, to nurture the mentality of Christ, to make the mind and heart of Christ our own.

The mentality of Christ, the spirit with which he lived was one of total giving, emptying himself for all in total surrender to the will of his father. Ordinarily, everything in us, human beings, tend to move toward accomplishments, achievements and fulfillment and the way of the world

is toward self-fulfillment. The disciples of Jesus are called to empty themselves for others in love and service.

Give yourself to each other in love and service!

Psalm 22

I will fulfill my vows before those who fear him.

The lowly shall eat their fill;

They who seek the Lord shall praise him:

May your heart be ever merry!

Luke 14:15-24

Jesus had just taught his listeners to be generous and gracious in giving and in showing hospitality. He challenged them to give generously to those who are unable to return the favor, the cripples, the lame, the beggars and the poor. Jesus told them a parable about a man who invited many to a large dinner party. Those who were invited refused to attend at the last minute because they had business interests, care of property and affairs of marriage getting in the way of participating in the banquet. Finally, only the poor and the marginalized got to participate and enjoy the dinner.

Learn to free yourself from those things that get in the way of your participation in feast of God's kingdom! Reflect on some of the modern-day (present-day) excuses people make for not participating at the Lord's "Table"? What are your personal excuses?

Saint of the Day, November 5 - St. Elizabeth and 15 other saints are remembered this day.

What we know of St. Elizabeth comes from the Gospel of Luke. Elizabeth, a daughter of the line of Aaron, and the wife of Zacharias, was "righteous before God" and was "blameless" but childless. Elizabeth is also a cousin to the Virgin Mary. Zachariah, desiring a child, went to pray in the temple and was told by the angel Gabriel not to be afraid because the Lord has heard his prayer. The Angel assured him that Elizabeth would bear a son to be named John (Luke 1:13-15). Zachariah was skeptical because both himself and his wife were elderly. For his skepticism, Zachariah was rendered mute until the prophecy had been fulfilled.

Elizabeth became pregnant shortly thereafter and she rejoiced. Gabriel then visited the Virgin Mary at Nazareth, telling her that she would conceive of the Holy Spirit and become the mother of Jesus. Mary then visited Elizabeth, and her baby leapt in her womb for joy (Luke 1:41-45). Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and returned home. Elizabeth gave birth to a son and named him John.

Although Elizabeth's neighbors assumed the child would be named Zachariah, her husband insisted that his name should be John. At the moment Zachariah insisted that his son should be named John, his speech returned. After this, there is no more mention in the Bible about Elizabeth.

November 6 – Wednesday, Thirty First Week in Ordinary Time

**Strive to be gentle and patient so as to ease the burdens
and pressures of others.**

Philippians 2:12-18

Paul encouraged the Philippians to be faithful even in his absence. He taught them to be “innocent, straightforward, children of God beyond reproach...holding fast to the word of life”. He encouraged them to rejoice in their calling.

Psalm 27

**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?
One thing I ask of the Lord, this I seek:
to dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life.**

Luke 14:25-33

Jesus spoke to his followers about the cost of discipleship with startling honesty. Being a disciple could mean division, separation even from loved ones because loyalty to Christ has to take precedence over the dearest loyalties of this world. To choose Christ could mean denial of other things and other loyalties! The disciple must be ready to take up the cross, to be regarded as a criminal and to die without glory or fame or name or wealth.

Be prepared to welcome and accept the pain and the loss that come with being faithful to your call. Invest yourself into loving God and God's people!

Saint of the Day, November 6 - St. Nicholas Tavelic and Companions and 19 other saints are remembered this day

St. Nicholas Tavelic and his three companions were martyred in the Holy Land in 1391. Nicholas and his three companions are among the 158 Franciscans who have been martyred in the Holy Land since the friars became custodians of the shrines in 1335. Nicholas was born in 1340 to a wealthy and noble family in Croatia. He joined the Franciscans and was sent with Deodat of Rodez to preach in Bosnia. In 1384, they volunteered for the Holy Land missions and were sent there. They looked after the holy places, cared for the Christian pilgrims, and studied Arabic.

In 1391, Nicholas, Deodat, Peter of Narbonne, and Stephen of Cuneo decided to take a direct approach to converting the Muslims. On November 11, they went to the huge Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem and asked to see the Qadix - Muslim official. Reading from a prepared statement, they said that all people must accept the gospel of Jesus. When they were ordered to retract their statement, they refused. After beatings and imprisonment, they were beheaded before a large crowd. While their method of evangelization is different from what we would use today, their zeal and courage are evident in their actions. Nicholas and his companions were canonized in 1970. They are the only Franciscans martyred in the Holy Land to be canonized.

November 7 – Thursday, Thirty First Week in Ordinary Time

Forbearance enable us to bear with our own imperfections, failures and shortfalls as well as those of others around us.

Philippians 3:3-8

Paul insisted that the real circumcision was not a mark in the flesh; it is true worship, true confidence in the Grace of God in Jesus. So it is Christians and not Jews who are truly circumcised. He claimed that he was circumcised in the flesh, was a true Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, born of Hebrew parents and now a Christian and so he is truly circumcised in all the sense of the term. However, Paul claimed that the only gain for him was his knowledge of Jesus Christ and everything else a loss in light of Christ.

Psalm 105

Sing to him, sing his praise,
Proclaim all his wondrous deeds.
Glossy in his holy name;
Rejoice, O hearts that seek the Lord!

Luke 15:1-10

Jesus was accused of being in the company of sinners. He told them the parable of the lost sheep. Even one single sheep is precious. The loss of that single sheep is great. The joy of discovering the lost is even greater!

Jesus told them another parable about a woman who diligently searched for a lost coin. The loss of a single coin calls for diligent search because it is precious (not just any coin)! Re-discovery of the lost precious coin calls for great rejoicing! **So will it be with the re-discovery of every person.....the heavens rejoice!**

You are not just “another” in tens or hundreds or thousands or millions - you just are! And as you are, you are precious in the eyes of God!

Great is the loss if you are lost because you are not just one in a million! You just are one unique, precious person! Greater is the joy of your re-discovery! Even the angels rejoice!

Saint of the Day, November 7 - Saint Didacus & 18 other saints are remembered this day.

Didacus of Alcalá, also known as Diego de San Nicolás, was a Spanish Franciscan lay brother who was among the first group of missionaries to the newly conquered Canary Islands. Didacus was born c. 1400 into a poor but pious family in the small village of San Nicolás del Puerto in the Kingdom of Seville. Near that town a holy priest led a hermit's life. Didacus obtained his consent to live with him and, though very young, imitated the austerities and devotions of his master. They cultivated together a little garden, and also employed themselves in making wooden spoons, trenchers and similar utensils. After having lived a hermit's life for some time, he returned to his home, but he, soon after, went to a convent of the Observant Friar Minors at Arrizafa, and there took the habit among the lay brothers.

After his profession he was sent to the mission of his Order in the Canary Islands, where he did a great work in instructing and converting the people. He served as chief guardian of the community of Friars, care of the sick Friars, etc. In 1463 he was taken ill died at Alcalá de Henares on 12 November 1463 and was canonized in 1588. San Diego, California, is named after this Franciscan

November 8 – Friday, Thirty First Week in Ordinary Time

**Strive to let forbearance become the quality of your presence
that you may not become a burden to others.**

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!

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 gate, O Jerusalem.**

Luke 16:1-8

Jesus told them the parable of an enterprising manager who was about to be dismissed. The manager used his “practical (economic) wisdom” to deal with the crisis of being fired from his job. His employer praised him for being enterprising and Jesus held him out as an example to his disciples - not because he abused his employer’s wealth, but because he used his wisdom to gain friends for himself for a future time of need.

Then Jesus called his disciples to higher values. He called them to use material possessions to build relationships, friendships, fellowship, and communion with others. He called them to be honest and trustworthy in all relationships, even in dealing with material things. He called them to be honest in using material things, which are God’s gifts. All possessions are God’s gifts for the good of the community.

You cannot serve both God and possessions. We are at the service of God and possessions are at our service.

Saint of the Day, November 8 - Bl. John Duns Scotus and 18 saints are remembered this day.

Little is known of the early life Duns Scotus. His date and place of birth are disputed. His date of birth is thought to have been between 23 December 1265 and 17 March 1266 and place of

birth near the North Lodge of Duns Castle in Scotland. Duns Scotus received the religious habit of the Friars Minor at Dumfries, where his uncle, Elias Duns, was guardian. His age is based on the first certain date for his life, that of his ordination to the priesthood in England on March 17, 1291. The minimum canonical age for receiving holy orders is 25 and it is generally assumed that he would have been ordained as soon as it was permitted.

John received the habit of the Friars Minor at Dumfries, where his uncle Elias Duns was superior. After novitiate, John studied at Oxford and Paris and was ordained in 1291. More studies in Paris followed until 1297, when he returned to lecture at Oxford and Cambridge. Four years later, he returned to Paris to teach and complete the requirements for the doctorate.

In Scotus's time, some philosophers held that people are basically determined by forces outside themselves. Free will is an illusion, they argued. Scotus defended the concept of free will with practical examples and illustrations from daily life. He was great defender of the Immaculate Conception of Mary that the university officially adopted his position. That same year the minister general assigned him to the Franciscan school in Cologne where John died in 1308. Drawing on the work of John Duns Scotus, Pope Pius IX solemnly defined the Immaculate Conception of Mary in 1854. John Duns Scotus was beatified in 1993.

November 9 – The dedication of the Lateran Basilica

Dear Lord, bless me with forbearance when those around me are irritable and stressed, tired and weary.

Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12

The Babylonians had desecrated, looted, and destroyed the temple and exiled its personnel. Ezekiel now had a vision of the restored temple which would become once again the center and source of life for his people. He compared the temple to an Eden-like place and a source of life-giving water for his people. The river of fresh water flowing from the temple transforms the salty sea into fresh water which becomes home to all sorts of marine life and all kinds of living things grow along the banks of the river. This transformation from seeming death into abundant life testifies to the life-giving power and presence of God.

We are invited to reflect on whether similar life-giving power flows from our Churches into the world today.

Psalm 46

**God is our refuge and our strength,
and ever-present help in distress.
Therefore we fear not, though the earth be shaken
And mountains plunge into the depths of the sea.**

1 Corinthians 3:9-11

Paul reminds the Corinthian community that they have become God's temple, "building". The temple of God is the community of believers, the Church. Ezekiel saw the temple in Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God.... Paul saw the believing community as the dwelling place of God. Paul affirms that the Spirit of God dwells within the Christian Community and so it has become the holy place. The Spirit of God is no longer seen as localized in a building...the Spirit is to be found in the living assembly of God' people.

The presence of God experienced in the temple in Jerusalem must now be experienced in the living and believing community. And the spirit has to be encountered today in our praying and worshiping community.

John 2:13-22

This excerpt tells us about Jesus cleansing the temple and claiming the temple to be his Father's house. This claim of Jesus angered those who witnessed his action. Then he claimed that it was zeal for his Father's house that moved him to throw out those who desecrated the sacred space. He made claims, even bolder, that he would raise up the temple in three days if they were to destroy it. John tells us, in this excerpt, that Jesus was referring to the temple of his body when he made this claim.

Jesus became the real temple for us. All who desire to encounter and commune with God are invited to Jesus, the temple in whom God is really present to the world. The Church, the believing assembly, the body of Christ gathered in the name of Jesus become the holy place and the holy people in whom the world must experience the presence of God today.

The presence of God experienced in the temple in Jerusalem and the real presence of God experienced in Jesus must now be experienced in the living, believing, praying, and worshiping community. Gathered in the name of Jesus, we, the Church, are called to be the holy people in whom the world must experience the presence of God today.

Saint of the day, November 9 - Dedication of the Lateran Basilica and 10 other saints are remembered this day.

Today the Church celebrates the feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome, the oldest and highest ranking of the four major basilicas in Rome. The Basilica of St. John Lateran is the cathedral of the diocese of Rome, the official ecclesiastical seat of the Holy Father, the Bishop of Rome, not St. Peter's Basilica as so many mistakenly believe. The Basilica is also called the Church of Holy Savior or the Church of St. John Baptist. In ancient Rome this was the church where everyone was baptized. It the oldest church in the West, built in the time of Constantine and was consecrated by Pope Sylvester in 324.

This basilica was the first to be built after Emperor Constantine's edict, in 313, granted Christians freedom to practice their religion. The emperor himself gave Pope Miltiades the ancient palace of the Laterani family, and the basilica, the baptistery, and the patriarchate, that is, the Bishop of Rome's residence - where the Popes lived. The basilica's dedication was celebrated by Pope Sylvester around 324 and was named Most Holy Savior; only after the 6th century were the names of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist added.

Today, as we remember the dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome, the Cathedral of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, let us remember our communion with the Universal Church and pray for harmony and unity in all churches and religions of the world.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**The road may be rough, the journey may be tough,
and the experience may be bitter,
but they are steppingstones to becoming who you are meant to be.**

