

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

P. O. Box 440, Whitehouse, Texas 75791

[www.wellspringcommunity.net](http://www.wellspringcommunity.net)

[frgus@suddenlink.net](mailto:frgus@suddenlink.net)

January 17, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During our weekday masses, we began to read from the Gospel of Mark a week ago on the first Monday in Ordinary Time of the year and will continue to read from Mark till Ash Wednesday. Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome before A.D.70 for Christians of a Gentile (non-Jewish) background. Mark's profile of Jesus was influenced by the fact that he wrote mainly for Christians in Rome who were suffering persecution under the Roman Emperor, Nero. Thus Mark stresses the suffering of Jesus. And if Jesus suffered, his disciples must not be surprised if they are called upon to suffer (Mk. 8:34-35).

Mark's gospel is a record of the preaching material of Peter, the greatest of the apostles. Certainly Mark stood so close to Peter, and so near to his heart, that Peter could call him "Mark, my son." (1 Peter 5:13.) We may then take it that in his gospel we have what Mark remembered of the preaching material of Peter himself.

Gospel of Mark is a book of supreme importance because first, it is the earliest of all the gospels, written just shortly after Peter died around A.D. 65 and second, it carries the record of what Peter preached and taught about Jesus. We may conclude that Mark is the nearest approach we will ever possess to an eyewitness account of the life of Jesus.

To Mark, Jesus was not simply a man among men. Jesus was God among men, ever moving them to a wondering amazement with his words and deeds. Mark has no doubts about the divinity of Jesus. At the same time, no gospel gives such a human picture of Jesus. Sometimes its picture is so human that the later writers alter it a little because they are almost afraid to say what Mark said. To Mark Jesus is simply "the carpenter" and simply "God among men."

So far, we have read chapter one and the first half of chapter two. In Chapter 1, we read about Jesus being baptized by John; Jesus calling Simon, Andrew, James and John to follow him; preaching and casting out demons and healing a leper. In chapter 2, we read about many gathering at the house; Jesus forgiving a paralytic his sins and healing him and being questioned about fasting and keeping the Sabbath. I encourage you to continue reading the rest of the Gospel, may be a chapter a day, or a chapter a week, or, at least, read the whole chapter referenced at the daily mass rather than just the excerpt of the day. You will come to know Jesus better and more meaningfully through the Gospel of Mark before we begin the season of Lent.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

# Second Week in Ordinary Time

January 17-22, 2022

## January 17 – Monday, Second Week in Ordinary Time

**God's mercy can make even the driest land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14). Let us be renewed by God's mercy, let us be loved by Jesus, let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives too; and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation, and make justice and peace flourish.**  
(Pope Francis)

### 1 Samuel 15:16-23

Samuel said to Saul, “obedience is better than sacrifice”. Sacrifice without obedience, without self-surrender has no value. Samuel challenged Saul to remain faithful to God and God’s ways rather than rely on holocausts and sacrifices.

### Psalm 50 - Not for your sacrifice do I rebuke you.....

### Mark 2:18-22

Jesus and his disciples deviated from traditional practices. They neither fasted nor prayed like the Pharisees and the disciples of John. So, they questioned Jesus about why he and his disciples do not follow the traditional spiritual practices.

**Jesus came proclaiming the “reign of God” and God’s reign is a joyful celebration of life. The message of Jesus is a message of Hope and of joy. The characteristic Christian attitude toward life is “JOY”. Share your joy with someone today.**

Jesus knew that he was coming with a radically different message and that his way of life was different from that of the orthodox rabbinic teacher. He also knew how difficult it was for people to accept new truth and change their attitudes. So, he called his listeners to a flexible and open mind.

### **Be open! Be flexible! Be docile! Be permeable!**

No one sews a patch of un-shrunk cloth on an old cloak. No man pours new wine into old wineskins. New wine is poured into new skins.

**The day of “patching” is over, re-creation must begin! There are times when break with the past and new beginnings become necessary.**

## **Saint of the Day, January 17 - St. Anthony, Abbot and 10 other saints are remembered this day.**

Saint Anthony the Abbot, also known as Anthony the Great, Anthony of Egypt, Anthony of the Fire, Anthony of the Desert, Anthony the Anchorite was born at Qumans, a village on the left bank of the Nile, around 251 C.E. He was born into a wealthy family. When his parents died, he distributed all his wealth to the poor. He chose to live as a hermit and retired into solitude, to work and pray, at first near his hometown and later in the desert. He spent many years living in an ancient rock-hewn tomb in prayer and contemplation.

His reputation as a hermit soon spread among the faithful. Anthony, who wanted to live totally detached from the rest of the world, was forced to change his place of "residence" to escape the crowds of people who flocked to him from all over to get his advice. Around 311 he went to Alexandria to give aid and comfort to the Christians persecuted by Emperor Maximian, and then retired to the Qolzoum mountain along the Red Sea. He had to return to Alexandria shortly after to fight the Arian heresy. Anthony lived a very long life. He died at the age of 105, on January 17, 355 (or 356), in his hermitage on Mount Qolzoum.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **January 18 – Tuesday, Second Week in Ordinary Time**

**The Apostle Thomas does not believe it when the other Apostles tell him, "We have seen the Lord." And how does Jesus react? With patience: Jesus does not abandon Thomas in his stubborn unbelief ... He does not close the door, He waits. And Thomas acknowledges his own poverty, his little faith. "My Lord and my God!" With this simple yet faith-filled invocation, he responds to Jesus' patience. He lets himself be enveloped by Divine Mercy; he sees it before his eyes, in the wounds of Christ's hands and feet and in His open side, and he discovers trust.**  
(Pope Francis)

### **1 Samuel 16:1-13**

Samuel went through a very difficult process of choosing someone to succeed Saul as king. He went through a series of prayerful discernment with great fear and doubt. Finally, in Bethlehem, he found David as the man whom God had chosen to be king over his people and anointed him. Both David and his birthplace Bethlehem occupy a special place in the history of salvation. God chose Bethlehem, a place of no significance and David, a man of no significance to fulfill his purpose. **Be open and surrender to God's choice. Prayerfully discern God's plan for you.**

**Psalm 89 - He shall say of me, "You are my father....."**

## **Mark 2:23-28**

This excerpt carries the story of the disciples of Jesus plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath. The scribes and the Pharisees became more suspicious of a teacher who allowed his disciples to violate the Sabbath law. This kind of thing could not be allowed to spread unchecked. Jesus used this occasion to teach: Man is not at the service of the law. The law is at the service of man.

In this incident Jesus lays it down that the claim of human need must take precedence over all other claims. The claims of worship, the claims of ritual, and the claims of liturgy are important, but prior to any of them is the claim of human need.

**Jesus insisted that the greatest ritual service is the service that meets urgent human need.**

Jesus called his disciples to go beyond rituals service, church service, synagogue service, to the service of human need. In fact, the Gospels tell of only one synagogue service that Jesus conducted. But we have an abundance of incidence of Jesus at the service of human need.

**Christian service is involvement in the demands and problems and tragedies of the human situation.**

**Saint of the Day, January 18 - St. Charles of Sezze and 17 other saints are remembered this day.**

Saint Charles of Sezze was born Giancarlo Marchioni on October 19, 1613 in Sezze, Italy, to poor farmers. He grew up with a devotion to St. Francis through the encouragement of his mother. He worked on the farm as a shepherd to help his parents to plough the fields. He made a private vow to remain chaste in 1630 and in 1633 fell ill to the point of near death. He pledged to join the Order of Friars Minor if he were to be healed of his ailment. His parents encouraged his vocation to become a priest but he was a poor student. He could not read or write much. So, there was little hope of succeeding in advanced studies.

He became a religious in the Order of Friars Minor despite the opposition of his parents who wanted him to become a priest and he led an austere life. He lived the life of a religious and never requested ordination to the priesthood despite the protests of his parents to do so. He worked in various friaries as a cook, served as a porter, worked as a sacristan and gardener. He also went out into the streets as a beggar. Though he kept himself under the guidance of a spiritual director, he himself - though not a priest - was often sought for spiritual advice and even Pope Innocent X and Alexander VII sought him out for advice. Pope Clement IX summoned him to his deathbed for comfort and a blessing not long before the two men died. He died on January 6, 1670 in the convent attached to San Francesco a Ripa in Rome. Pope John XXIII canonized him on April 12, 1959.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **January 19 – Wednesday, Second Week in Ordinary Time**

**Let us remember Peter: three times he denied Jesus, precisely when he should have been closest to him; and when he hits bottom, he meets the gaze of Jesus who patiently, wordlessly, says to him: "Peter, don't be afraid of your weakness, trust in Me."**

**Peter understands, he feels the loving gaze of Jesus and he weeps.**

**How beautiful is this gaze of Jesus — how much tenderness is there!**

**Brothers and sisters, let us never lose trust in the patience and mercy of God!**

**(Pope Francis)**

### **1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51**

This excerpt describes David's character as a man of deep personal faith in God. "The Lord, who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the bear, will also keep me safe from the clutches of this philistine. Saul blessed him and sent him to fight the philistines. David struck Goliath down with his sling and the philistines took this as sign of God's protection of Israel.

**Trust in the Lord's abiding, protecting and guiding presence in your life. May the Lord keep you safe in the circle of his love!**

### **Psalm 144 - Blessed be the Lord my rock.....**

### **Mark 3:1-6**

Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on a Sabbath while the Pharisees kept a careful watch over Jesus to trap him with anything that could be used against him.

**Jesus gave the man with the withered hand his health, his dignity, his self-respect, and work for his living. Sabbath was not a barrier for Jesus to restore someone's dignity and worth, to heal and bring wholeness.**

To the Pharisee, religion was ritual; it meant obeying certain rules and regulations. One could be very religious without being sensitive to human needs, blind to the tears of the world around.

**To Jesus, religion had to find its way into service, into the care of human beings. Religion was love of God and of people in life, in practice.**

To Jesus, the most important thing was not correct performance of rituals, but spontaneous response to human needs. Ritual was irrelevant compared with love in action.

**There is no time so sacred that it cannot be used for helping people in need.**

## **Saint of the Day, January 19 - St. Fabian and 26 other saints are remembered this day**

We do not have much information about the early days of St. Fabian. What we know is that Fabian was a noble Roman by birth, and his father's name was Fabius. A legend, preserved by the fourth-century writer Eusebius of Caesarea, tells us of the circumstances of his election as Pope. Fabian had come into the city from his farm one day as clergy and people were preparing to elect a new pope. While the names of several illustrious and noble churchmen were being considered over the course of thirteen days, a dove suddenly descended upon the head of Fabian. This sign united the votes of clergy and laity, and Fabian was chosen unanimously to be the bishop of Rome, the Pope.

According to sixth-century historians, Fabian sent seven bishops from Rome to Gaul to preach the Gospel. He divided the Christian communities of Rome into seven districts, each supervised by a deacon. He appointed seven sub-deacons to help collect the acts of the martyrs—the reports of the court proceedings on the occasion of their trials.

There is also a tradition that he instituted the four minor clerical orders: porter, lector, exorcist, and acolyte. However, most scholars believe these offices evolved gradually and were formally instituted at a later date. He led the Church for 14 years and died a martyr's death during the persecution of Decius in 250 C.E.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **January 20 – Thursday, Second Week in Ordinary Time**

**I am always struck when I reread the parable of the merciful Father.**

**The Father, with patience, love, hope and mercy, had never for a second stopped thinking about his wayward son, and as soon as he sees him still far off, he runs out to meet him and embraces him with tenderness, the tenderness of God, without a word of reproach. God is always waiting for us, He never grows tired. Jesus shows us this merciful patience of God so that we can regain confidence and hope — always!**

**(Pope Francis)**

### **1 Samuel 18:6-9; 19:1-7**

When David returned after slaying the philistine, women danced and sang joyful songs in his honor. Saul became jealous and tried to persuade Jonathan, his son to kill David. Jonathan spoke favorably of David and persuaded his father to give up his plan. Saul had a change of heart and he reinstated David into his service.

**This excerpt teaches us that radical conversion is possible.... change of attitude is possible, broken relationships can be healed.... we can challenge and support one another in an ongoing process of conversion.**

## **Psalm 56 - Now I know that God is with me.....**

### **Mark 3:7-12**

Mark gives us the details of towns and cities from which people came. Sick people didn't wait for him to touch them, they rushed to touch him. Mark tells us that evil spirits called him "Son of God". And Jesus demanded silence from them. In few verses Mark tells us much about the movement of Jesus and how people recognized in Jesus' "Sonship", an identity with the Father, an intimacy, a union, a communion with the Father. No other word than the word "Son" could describe this relationship. Reflect on "sonship", on identity, intimacy, communion with God!

Mark also tells us that Jesus didn't want publicity – called for silence. People expected a political messiah. Jesus thought of Messiahship in terms of sacrificial Love; the people thought of it in terms of Jewish nationalism. Jesus had to educate them into the true idea of the Messiah. Jesus had to wait patiently to educate his followers. Reflect on your own vision of Jesus. Reflect over the possibility of deepening your knowledge and experience of Jesus!

### **Saint of the Day, January 20 - St. Sebastian and 9 other saints are remembered this day.**

We know very little about St. Sebastian with historical accuracy. We know that he was a Roman martyr, venerated in Milan at the time of Saint Ambrose and buried, probably near the present Basilica of St. Sebastian. Tradition tells us that during the persecution of Diocletian, he was tied to a post or tree and shot with arrows. He was rescued and healed by Saint Irene of Rome, which became a popular subject in 17th-century painting. In all versions of the story, shortly after his recovery he went to Diocletian to warn him about his sins, and as a result was clubbed to death. He lived and died probably between 256 – 288 C.E. He is regarded, in some parts of the world, as a saint with a special ability to intercede for protection from plague, and devotion to him increased greatly when plague was active.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **January 21 - Friday, Second Week in Ordinary Time**

**God's patience has to call forth in us the courage to return to Him, however many mistakes and sins there may be in our life. It is there, in the wounds of Jesus, that we are truly secure; there we encounter the boundless love of His heart. Thomas understood this. Saint Bernard goes on to ask: But what can I count on? My own merits? No, "My merit is God's mercy. I am by no means lacking merits as long as He is rich in mercy. If the mercies of the Lord are manifold, I too will abound in merits." This is important: the courage to trust in Jesus' mercy, to trust in His patience, to seek refuge always in the wounds of His love.**

**(Pope Francis)**

## **1 Samuel 24:3-21**

This excerpt tells how Saul had retired into the cave and unwittingly put himself within David's reach. David's men encouraged him to take this opportunity to get rid of Saul. But David refused to do any injury to his king and honored him as the Lord's anointed. Saul was moved by the attitudes and action of David, praised his generosity and acknowledged that he, Saul was wrong and had made unjust judgments of David. Saul blessed David for his generosity.

**Be gracious and be generous in your relationships! Be a forgiving and reconciling person!  
Be noble in your ways!**

**Psalm 57 - Have pity on me O God, have pity on me.....**

## **Mark 3:13-19**

Jesus withdrew to the mountain and chose twelve of his companions and sent them with good news. Jesus came to an important point in his life. He proclaimed a message, he chose his method and he went throughout Galilee preaching and healing. He made an impact. He had to find a way to make his message permanent, stabilize the movement he started and disseminate his message in an age where modern media was not available.

**Jesus chose men on whose hearts he could write his good news. He began with a small group – the message was proclaimed and lived out in fellowship. The way of the Pharisees was separation..... the way of Jesus was fellowship.**

Jesus began with a mixed group. Men, who, ordinarily, couldn't be found together, came together around Jesus. The presence of Jesus among them enabled them to be together.

**The presence of Jesus in our life enables us to be deeply respectful of each other, to rise above our differences and form community with others.**

**Saint of the Day, January 21 - St. Agnes and 14 other saints are remembered this day.**

We have very little knowledge of Agnes with historical accuracy. Much of what we know is tradition as well as legend. According to tradition, Agnes was a member of the Roman nobility, born around 291 and raised in an early Christian family. She suffered martyrdom at the age of twelve or thirteen during the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, on January 21, 304.

She was a beautiful young girl from a wealthy family. She had many suitors of high rank, and the young men, slighted by her resolute devotion to religious purity, submitted her name to the authorities as a follower of Christianity. The Prefect condemned Agnes to be dragged naked through the streets to a brothel. Legend tells us that all men who attempted to rape her were immediately struck blind. The son of the prefect was struck dead but revived after she prayed for

him, causing her release. She was later sentenced to death, led out and bound to a stake, but the bundle of wood would not burn, or the flames parted away from her. The officer in charge of the troops drew his sword and beheaded her.

Saint Agnes is also known as Agnes of Rome, Ines, Ines del Campo, and Ynez. The name “Agnes” is similar to the Latin word agnus, which means “lamb”. For this reason depictions of Saint Agnes often include a lamb. The name actually comes from a Greek word which means “chaste, pure, sacred”.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **January 22 – Saturday, Second Week in Ordinary Time**

**Together let us pray to the Virgin Mary that she helps us ... to walk in faith and charity, ever trusting in the Lord's mercy; He always awaits us, loves us, has pardoned us with His Blood and pardons us every time we go to Him to ask His forgiveness.**

**Let us trust in His mercy!**

**(Pope Francis)**

### **2 Samuel 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-27**

David and his men mourned the death of Saul, Jonathan, and their soldiers. David chanted an elegy, a song of sorrow for Saul and his son Jonathan. This excerpt gives us this elegy in which David praised Saul and Jonathan, honored them, and expressed his grief.

**Jesus says, “Blessed are those who mourn” - to mourn is to care intensely enough to participate in the pain of another.....**

### **Psalm 80 - O shepherd of Israel, hearken.....**

### **Mark 3:20-21**

The family of Jesus came to take him home. They came to the conclusion that he was out of his mind. Jesus had left his home and his father’s carpenter business in Nazareth and began preaching in the streets. He had come into conflict with orthodox leaders of the community. He had broken a few laws of the community which the orthodox Jew considered sacred. He gathered a strange group of men around him...seemed like bad company. Only a man who is out of his mind would do what he had done. Hence the family came to take him home. Two major thoughts emerge from this episode:

(1) We, often, draw conclusions, judgments, and the like without knowing and understanding the truth. We are invited to remain open to searching and knowing and understanding the truth and be free from our prejudices.

(2) Perhaps, the family of Jesus did not fully understand. But they were there to help, to protect and safeguard. How wonderful it is to have families that would support and safeguard the interest of its members even in the midst of lack of knowledge, differences of opinions, misunderstanding and the like. We are invited to reflect on deepening family connections.

### **Saint of the Day, January 22 - St Vincent of Zaragoza and 19 others are remembered this day.**

Vincent was born at Huesca, near Saragossa, Spain during the latter part of the 3rd century, the actual date is not known. He spent most of his life in the city of Saragossa, where he was educated and ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Valerius of Saragossa, who commissioned Vincent to preach throughout the diocese. Because Valerius suffered from a speech impediment, Vincent acted as his spokesman.

When the Roman Emperor Diocletian began persecuting Christians in Spain, both were brought before the Roman governor, Dacian in Valencia. Vincent and his bishop Valerius were confined to the prison of Valencia. Though he was finally offered release if he would consign Scripture to the fire, Vincent refused. Speaking on behalf of his bishop, he informed the judge that they were ready to suffer everything for their faith, and that they could pay no heed either to threats or promises.

His outspoken manner so angered the governor that Vincent was inflicted every sort of torture on him. He was stretched on the rack and his flesh torn with iron hooks. Then his wounds were rubbed with salt and he was burned alive upon a red-hot gridiron. Finally, he was cast into prison and laid on a floor scattered with broken pottery, where he died. During his martyrdom he preserved such peace and tranquility that it astonished his jailer, who repented from his sins and was converted. Vincent's dead body was thrown into the sea in a sack, but was later recovered by the Christians and his veneration immediately spread throughout the Church. The aged bishop Valerius was exiled.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

*In family life, love is the oil that eases friction, the cement that binds closer together, and the music that brings harmony.*  
(Friedrich Nietzsche)