



## Soldiers of Christ

Newsletter of the  
Isolated Franciscan Tertiaries  
of the OFM Province of the  
Immaculate Conception

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Sandy Baden, TOF, Editor

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### THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY FEAST DAY: DECEMBER 8, 2022

The mother of God, Mary Immaculate, was conceived without original sin from the moment of her conception. It is in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception that the Church's infallibly teaches of Mary's unique sanctification. Also verified in the New Testament as the Angel Gabriel announces to Mary, Hail Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee, (Lk, 1:28).

An infallible pronouncement of Pope Pius IX in 1854 declared in a Papal Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, "...We declare, pronounce, and define the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful..." How can anyone doubt this if our Lord Jesus Christ was to be the son of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Jesus could not remain in a tabernacle of our Blessed Mother's womb without His mother being free from sin. An impossible reality!

In the November issue of "**Mat Posts**" there was included an article of "Our Blessed Mother Mary." This article articulated the story of St. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Mother, bringing the child Mary into the service at the Temple at the age of three years old to the high Priest Zachariah. The entrance of the "Theotokos" into the Temple. The article also mentions the Protevangelium, or 'An Historical Account of the Birth of Christ, and the Perpetual Virgin Mary, by

James, Cousin and Brother of the Lord Jesus, Chief Apostle and First Bishop of the Christians in Jerusalem,' and gives the names of the parents of the Virgin Mary as Joachim and Anna, which we do not find in the gospels of the Bible.

One might ask the question: Where then, do we find these stories that are not in the gospels of the Bible? One source may be a book on my shelf called the "Lost Books of the Bible and the forgotten books of Eden." As far as the Church is concerned some books or historical documents may be useful, but not divinely inspired and this book may be one of them. In the Preface of this book it mentions, 'whether (these books) are canonical or not, at least these writings are of very great antiquity.'

Before each Chapter there is a short synopsis of each event pertaining to the Chapter. The first book of the "Lost Books of the Bible" is, "The Gospel of the Birth of Mary," and gives an account of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**Chapter I: "The parentage of Mary, Joachim her father, and Anna her mother, go to Jerusalem to the feast of the dedication. Issachar the high priest, reproaches Joachim for being childless."**

**Chapter II: "The angel appears to Joachim, and informs him that Anna shall conceive and bring forth a daughter, who shall be called Mary, be brought up in the temple, and while yet a virgin, in a way unparalleled, bring forth the Son of God; gives him a sign and departs."**

**Chapter III: "The angel appears to Anna; tells her a daughter shall be born unto her, devoted to the service of the Lord in the temple, who, being a virgin and not knowing man, shall bring forth the Lord, and gives her a sign there. Joachim and Anna meet and rejoice, and praise the Lord. Anna conceives and brings forth a daughter called Mary."**

These writings are interesting and gives us an account of the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Also take note, that on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception the Franciscan Tertiaries of the OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception was established in 2019 by Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, and he is our Spiritual Director. Another reason for us to celebrate this Feast Day of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, a Holy day of Obligation.

Sandy Baden, TOF

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

O Most Holy Virgin, immaculate in body and spirit, look kindly on me as I implore your powerful intercession.

O most Holy Mother, receive my prayers as I present them to God.

(state your intentions here)

O Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother you intercede for us with your Son.

O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

(Association of the Miraculous Medal)

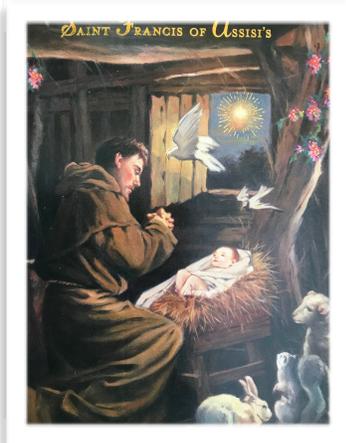
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DID YOU KNOW?

In the Rule of Pope Lio XIII of 1883 it states in “The Law of the Sodality of the Franciscan Third Order, Chapter II, #IV:

“Having each observed the fast for the Feast of the Immaculate Virgin Mary (as) likewise for (their) Father Francis, on the day before (each) solemnity; they are completely worthy of praise, besides either the fast on Fridays, or abstinence from meat on Wednesday, which are ferial days, they observe the ancient disciplines of the Tertiaries.”

## HOW ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI BROUGHT LIFE TO CHRISTMAS IN GRECIO, ITALY



Remembering through the years all the times we have celebrated Christmas Eve with a beautiful Creche in Church, watching the children who played a part in bringing baby Jesus, with Mary and Joseph, to place our Lord on a manger adorned with hay, and show us the birth of Christ as the wise men had witnessed. Did this not bring joy in our hearts to imagine being there and witness the same praise and adoration as the Angels in heaven. It would seem Christmas would not be complete today without a Creche in our Churches and in our homes.

Our own Seraphic Father, St. Francis of Assisi, who loved to preach, and sometimes without words, felt compelled before a Christmas Mass that something more was needed to adore our Lord with a love of His holy birth. Christ, born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, comes into this world as our Savior with His human nature and divine nature because God the Father loves us so much to save our souls. Born in a cave as there was no room in the inn to show us his poverty and to teach us detachment of earthly things.

St. Bonaventure had written in 1274 in "The life of St. Francis of Assisi," a beautiful account of Christmas in Greccio, Italy in 1223, which certain facts have been obtained. Three years before the death of St. Francis, as he was a deacon, he was going to help celebrate Christmas Mass, but wanted more for the celebration. After seeking approval from the Supreme Pontiff, St. Francis sent his good friend John of Velita to set up a nativity scene inside a cave just outside of Greccio, Italy.

The people were gathered to see the manger with the Child of Bethlehem, as St Francis called our Lord. A wax figure of baby Jesus with live ox and ass had been placed in the cave. An alter was placed over the manger as Solemn Mass was to be celebrated. St. Francis preached with love and joy, and chanted the Holy Gospel. As John of Velita was looking at the figure of baby Jesus he declared he was looking at a live sleeping baby. As St. Francis gathered our Lord in his arms the baby awoke from sleep. Can you imagine being there and seeing the reaction of everyone who witnessed what had happened? Christmas really came alive in 1223, Greccio, Italy for all to see.

Not only had baby Jesus come alive for all to see, but it had been confirmed of proven miracles that had happened. The hay from the manger which some of the people had taken and brought to their homes miraculously healed sick animals and other plagues.

The Creche, as the manger scene is called in Italian, is truly a Franciscan tradition, but today is celebrated by all Christians.

Sandy Baden, TOF



A CHRISTMAS PRAYER  
Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities

Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth...may we begin to see the world in the light of the understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving. AMEN.



“What wonderful majesty! What stupendous  
condescension! O sublime humility! That  
the Lord of the whole universe, God and the  
Son of God, should humble Himself like this  
under the form of a little bread, for our  
salvation.”

St. Francis of Assisi

## EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION ISOLATED TERTIARIES SCHEDULE

MONDAY	Judith Inglesby, TOF
TUESDAY	Linda Menser, TOF
WEDNESDAY	Luise Guzman, TOF Judith Inglesby, TOF Paul and Mary TAG, TOF
THURSDAY	Sandy Baden, TOF Judith Inglesby, TOF
FRIDAY	Linda Menser, TOF
SATURDAY	Ericka Witover, TOF
SUNDAY	Linda Menser, TOF

Please include prayers for the intentions of our Pope, bishops and priests. Also pray for the Community of friars of the Immaculate Conception Province for an increase in religious vocations in their Community and for the intentions of the members of the Isolated Tertiaries Community.

(Contact Pepe Ventosa, if you would like to participate in Eucharistic Adoration.)

## St. PADRE PIO BRINGS LIFE TO CHRISTMAS

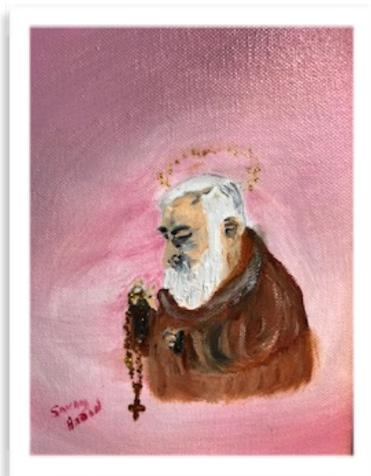
An account of Renzo Allegi as he tells the story, as a witness, to the love St. Padre Pio had for Baby Jesus at Christmas.

“We were reciting the rosary while waiting for the Mass. Padre Pio was praying with us. All of a sudden, in an aura of light, I saw the Baby Jesus appear in his arms. Padre Pio was transfigured, his eyes gazing upon the glowing child in his arms, his face transformed by an astonished smile. When the vision disappeared, Padre Pio realized from the way I was looking at him I had seen everything. But he drew close to me and told me not to mention it to anyone.”

A similar story is told by Fr. Raffaele de Sant’Elia, a Friar who lived next to Padre Pio for many years.

“I had got up to go to the church for the Midnight Mass of 1924. The corridor was huge and dark, and the only illumination was the flame of a small oil lamp. Through the shadows I could see that Padre Pio, too, was making his way to the church. He had left his room and was making his way slowly along the corridor. I realized he was swathed in a bank of light. I took a better look and saw that he had the Baby Jesus in his arms. I just stood there, transfixed, in the doorway of my room, and fell to my knees. Padre Pio passed by all aglow. He didn’t even notice I was there.”

### QUOTES FROM ST. PADRE PIO



“I am aflame although there is no fire.”

“A thousand flames consume me.”

“I will never tire of praying to Jesus.”

“My sufferings gives glory to God, saves my brothers in exile, frees the souls from Purgatory.”

“My past, O Lord, to your mercy; my present, to your love, my future, to your providence!”

“If God would take back what he gave us, we would be left with our rags.”

## ADMONITION XV THE PEACEMAKERS



**“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Mt. 5:9). They are truly peacemakers who are able to preserve their peace of mind and heart for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, despite all that they suffer in this world.”**

After reading Admonition XV, it is very clear that we should become peacemakers in our hearts and minds in order to inherit the Kingdom of God. We are truly blessed as we “already share in that salvation,” as Lothar Hardick, OFM states in the first paragraph of the explanation, as he reads the mind and heart of St. Francis of Assisi.

Lothar Hardick, OFM talks about the word peace and compares the meaning of peacemakers towards our neighbors, but first we must look into our minds and hearts to live the peace of God within us before we can be peacemakers. Sometimes this is not an easy task as we look at the chaos around us today. But we must be obedient in our prayer and trust in our Lord that our prayers are heard and know God will respond one way or another.

The peace of God will always begin in our hearts, and in our prayers with the knowledge of God’s love and will for us. Trusting in our Lord is the key to our obedience in prayer. As we find peace within us we can then bring that peace to others around us as peacemakers.

The prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi that originally had been known as, "Make me an Instrument of Your Peace," first appeared in 1912 in a spiritual magazine called La Clochette and was attributed to the magazine's editor, Fr. Esther Bouquerel. In the year 1967 the song and music was accredited to Sebastian Temple (1928-1997) as we know it today. Sebastian Temple also was a Third Order Franciscan. There is no evidence the "Prayer of St. Francis" came from any documentation in our Seraphic Father's writings that he wrote this prayer.

This beautiful hymn and prayer, we all love so much, actually says it all in regards to how we should live peace in our hearts and spread the Gospel as did St. Francis of Assisi, and nothing more would need to be said:

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love,  
Where there is injury your pardon Lord,  
And where there's doubt true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace,  
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope,  
Where there is darkness, only light,  
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

O Master grant that I may never seek,  
So much to be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
In giving of ourselves that we receive.  
And in dying that we are born to eternal life.

**(Artist: Sebastian Temple)**

**ONGOING FORMATION ZOOM GATHERING MONTHLY SCHEDULE**

<b>MONTH 2023</b>	<b>PRESENTATION BY:</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
<b>JANUARY:</b>	<b>Mary Tag TOF</b>		<b>Article 48</b>
<b>FEBRUARY:</b>	<b>Sandy Baden, TOF</b>		<b>Articles 49-51</b>
<b>MARCH:</b>			
<b>APRIL:</b>			
<b>MAY:</b>			
<b>JUNE:</b>			
<b>JULY:</b>			
<b>AUGUST:</b>			
<b>SEPTEMBER:</b>			
<b>OCTOBER:</b>			
<b>NOVEMBER:</b>			
<b>DECEMBER:</b>			

*Save the Date*

DECEMBER 1: IT Zoom Gathering 6:45 PM Eastern Time, 4:45 PM Pacific Time. Presentation "The Incarnation."

(Remember, each presentation should be 10-15 minutes, and then questions to promote discussion. Discussion from each person should be short, around three minutes, so everyone will have a chance to speak.)

DECEMBER 8: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
(A Holy Day of Obligation)

DECEMBER 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe

DECEMBER 25: The Nativity of The Lord (Christmas)

DECEMBER 28: The Holy Innocents

DECEMBER 30: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

**(MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL)**

