

Autumn, 2023

Volume 4, Issue 3

The Troubadour

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



Keeping the Faith



One of the virtues shared by all the great and even the more minor saints of the Catholic Church is devotion to Mary, the Mother of God.

Our own St. Francis of Assisi was a loving son of Our Lady all his life. From his childhood, his devout mother, Pica, encouraged him to be a faithful Catholic by her own good example, which included a tender devotion and daily prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

According to the Third Order Franciscan Constitution, Article 6g: "Tertiaries shall love the most Blessed Virgin Mother of Jesus with a tender and filial affection, and honor her as Queen and Patron of the Order with special devotion and reverence." This is pretty much preaching to the choir, since it should come easily to members of our Order, who are already active and practicing Catholics with a great love of Our Lady!

The Liturgy of the Hours, which we pray daily, includes the Magnificat, in which Mary joyfully surrenders her will to God. And there are so many other prayers dedicated to Mary we may use daily – the Memorare, the Hail Mary, the Regina Caeli, the Rosary, and more – which we have memorized and can pray as we drive or perform small daily tasks, that will keep us close and in touch with her.

When we pray to Mary and ask for her assistance, it is good to remember she is not unapproachable because she is "highly favored" by God. In her earthly life, she lived in great poverty and worked hard every day of her life. And she suffered in many ways, from being gossiped about before Jesus' birth, to witnessing her Son being betrayed by His closest friends, tortured mercilessly, and dying a shameful death among thieves, simply for loving others, healing them, and preaching the Word of God. There is **nothing** we can tell Mary that she cannot understand, and she will help and guide us as the most loving mother would.

Spiritual Director

Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM
Shrine of
Our Lady Comforter
of the Afflicted
Youngstown



Editor

Susan Kramer, TOF

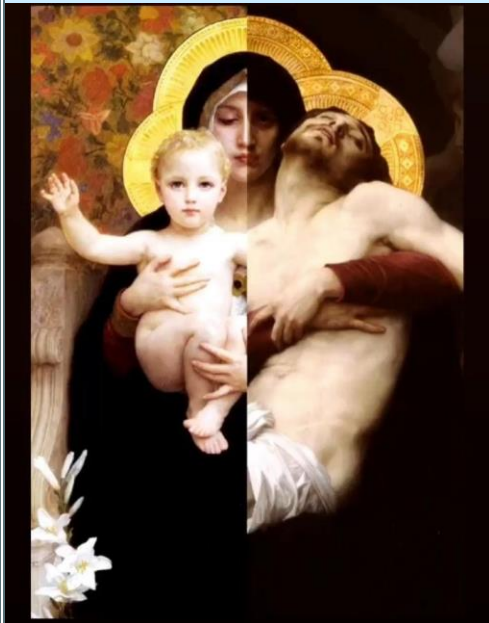
Catholic Quote for Autumn, 2023

"Mary's greatness consists in the fact that she wants to magnify God, not herself."



**Pope Benedict XVI (1927-1922) Priest, Professor, Cardinal, Pope,
Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,
Friend and Advisor to St. Pope John Paul II, Musician, and Author**

The Mother Who Leads Us to Life, Not Death – Fr. Paul Scalia



Any serious musician would treasure an ear with perfect pitch – that is, the ability to discern perfectly the accuracy of a musical note. Such a gift would enable him both to perform better and to enjoy music more deeply.... At the same time, however, this gift would also be somewhat of a burden. Because, although the ear with perfect pitch better appreciates good music, it also more deeply suffers bad music. While most of us miss the occasional discordant note and go on happily enjoying a concert, the ear with perfect pitch winces and cringes at each error. These same truths apply to our “spiritual hearing” and in turn help us understand Our Lady.

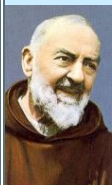
Our soul is created to hear the voice of God – that is, to respond properly to His initiatives and truths, to rejoice as we should and to weep as we should. But our spiritual hearing is flawed to one degree or another, by both original sin and our own particular sins.... Our Lady’s hearing, however, has no such defect. She has the ear with perfect pitch. This comes by way of her Immaculate Conception: no sin ever touched her soul to warp her hearing. As a result, she enjoys the beauty of Jesus’ voice, words, and message more deeply and profoundly than anyone else. No selfishness or pride has ever distorted her hearing.... But at the same time – and for the same reason – she also suffers more profoundly than anyone else.

We see the latter truth most clearly during Our Lord’s Passion as Mary stands at the foot of the cross. Because of her sinlessness, she suffers more than the others gathered there. Her perfect capacity to receive Our Lord’s words and to interiorize His message makes her all the more vulnerable to the cruelty she witnesses and hears against her Son.... For the same reason Our Lady also has a unique and unsurpassed joy in the Resurrection of her Son. No one else has ever heard the news of Our Lord’s Resurrection as clearly and deeply as Our Lady. The words of the Risen One resound in her heart and soul without any resistance, with perfect clarity. Although the Gospels do not record it, the Church has traditionally believed that Jesus appeared first to His Mother. But this appearance was private, for Mary alone. Imagine how her heart must have moved with joy when she heard that voice that she knew so well. Never have ears so gladly welcomed a voice. Never has a soul so perfectly embraced the good news of the Resurrection. This is why we place ourselves in Our Lady’s care – so that we who do not hear so well can be guided by her ear with perfect pitch.



Father Scalia is a priest of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia. He is the son of Justice Antonin Scalia, who died in 2016, and who served on the United States Supreme Court for 30 years. This article is reprinted from the August, 2023 issue of Magnificat magazine.

St. Padre Pio Fraternity News – by Pat Cuttica, TOF



No news this quarter!
Peace and Good to all from St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Youngstown

Our Lady of America Fraternity News – by Paul Fedele, TOF

No news this quarter!
God bless and protect us all from Our Lady of America Fraternity, Ashtabula



SS. Francis & Clare Fraternity News – by Roberto Meza, TOF

We had a beautiful day for our picnic on August 20 at Queen of Heaven Parish in Green! Thirty members, friends, and family gathered together to share good food and even better company.



We thank Fr. David Durkee and Queen of Heaven Parish for their generous hospitality. We have been their guests for several years for our picnic. It is especially nice at the parish since they offer a covered pavilion, an outside grotto for prayer, Stations of the Cross, and several shrines of various saints, including our own St. Francis of Assisi, where we prayed the Franciscan Crown Rosary together. We look forward to gathering again next year and enjoying a joyful summer day together!

Several of our members staffed the Right to Life booth at the Stark County Fair in Canton on Labor Day. Bob Burtscher, TOF and Carol Perrine, TOF worked the booth from 10 AM to 2 PM, and Fred and Susan Kramer, TOF worked from 2 PM to 6 PM. Roberto and Maria Elena Meza, TOF were scheduled to work from 6 PM to 10 PM, but Stark County Right to Life shut down the booth early. Several of the other booths in that building shut down late that afternoon due to the heat and humidity, and there were few visitors at that point. We were all very happy to publicly witness to the Church's teaching on life and to assist Stark County Right to Life.

The Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity continues to pray daily before the Blessed Sacrament for our Bishops (Bishop Fernandes of Columbus, Bishop Bonnar of Youngstown, Bishop Malesic of Cleveland, and the newly consecrated Bishop Pipta of the Eparchy of Parma), the OFM Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province, our beloved parish priests, and the seminarians of Borromeo Seminary, St. Mary Seminary, and the seminary of the Diocese of Moshi, Tanzania.

Day of Recollection News – by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Our annual Day of Recollection will take place on Saturday, November 4, 2023. As usual, we will meet at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown for Mass at 9 AM and continue with a full schedule of teaching by Fr. Vit, Confessions, and more. Our day together will end at 3:30 PM.

This year we will have again the opportunity to have Fr. Vit answer our questions on the spiritual life. We are collecting questions to present to Fr. Vit. If you have any questions for him, please send these to Pepe. The questions for Fr. Vit will be selected from those received. The questions/answers sessions will be recorded and posted on our YouTube channel.

Franciscan Tertiaries' Tridua 2024 – by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

We are planning to have our first Tridua in 2024. Don't know what a "Tridua" is? Watch for more information coming in the next edition of The Troubadour!

“New” Election Guidelines – by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

The fraternity ministers voted to follow the guidelines for elections recommended by the Constitutions for the Rule of 1883. These guidelines differ from the way elections were conducted following the Rule of 1978. The guidelines are found in Articles 122-139 of the Constitutions. The main changes we will see are:

1. The Master of Formation is a member of the Council (Art. 136), and as such, has voting rights in council matters;
2. At the time of elections, the fraternity votes only for the office of Minister (Art. 125) and a predetermined number of councilors (the number according to the need of the local fraternity);
3. At the first council meeting after the elections, the principal offices of the council (Vice-Minister, Secretary, Treasurer and Master of Formation) are appointed by the council from the pool of councilors voted by the fraternity (Art. 136-138).

This "new but actually old" way of doing elections will be initiated at the next election cycle of each fraternity. Those fraternity members professed prior to the Rule of 1978 will probably be familiar with these election guidelines.

Days of Fast – Don't Forget!

In accord with Third Order Franciscan Rule, Chapter II, #4, Third Order Franciscans are required to fast on the day of the Transitus (October 3) and the day before the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 7).

The Transitus is the commemoration of the holy death of our good St. Francis, whose feast day is October 4.

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is not only the feast celebrating the patron saint of the United States, but also the patron saint of our beloved OFM priests, who are members of the Immaculate Conception Province of the OFM, which extends from New England to New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

Fasting involves committing to eating two small meals and one regular meal during the day of fast, as we do on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Isolated Tertiaries Update – by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Since our last edition of The Troubadour, the community of Isolated Tertiaries has welcomed seven new members, coming from North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, Minnesota, Missouri, and Pennsylvania. Along with these new members, two novices celebrated their Holy Profession: Gordon and Frank, both from Australia.

Currently there are three novices in Initial Formation and a new group of ten Inquirers is to start Initial Formation now in September.

This past July, the Isolated community welcomed their first Honorary Member, Tien Peter Tran, TOF, from Pennsylvania (see article in this edition).

The Isolated Tertiaries continue to have monthly virtual gatherings on the 1st Thursday each month. These gatherings include prayer, Lectio Divina, and Ongoing Formation. For Formation they continue to study the TOF Constitutions and, on the spiritual level, continue to benefit from Fr. Vit's spiritual direction.

Clusters are being formed within the Isolated Tertiary community. Clusters are small groups of Isolated Tertiaries (3-5) who, besides participating in the monthly gatherings, meet once a month for prayer and ongoing formation in the Franciscan way of life.

God bless all these new members of our Third Order Franciscan family! Please keep them in your prayers!

HOLY PROFESSION PHOTOS



(Above, Frank from Australia, Gordon from Australia, and Brian from Minnesota)

INVESTITURE PHOTO

Peter from Washington →



NOVITIATE PHOTOS



(Above, Bob from North Carolina, Stephany from Missouri, and James from Virginia)

Meet Honorary Member, Tien Peter Tran, TOF – by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

On July 15, 2023, Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, established our first Isolated Tertiary Honorary Member, Tien Peter Tran, TOF.

Tien is 27 years old and lives with his parents and younger brother in Pennsylvania. Daily prayer devotions such as the Rosary, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, The Angelus, Latin prayers and reading the Bible have helped Tien to grow in learning to know, love and serve Our Lord. He enjoys visiting shrines, golfing, swimming, listening to Christian music, reading Bible audio books and going to amusement parks. Tien learns best by visual means and his mother made for him a Rosary Garden (with the four Mysteries) and a Chaplet of Divine Mercy Garden, where he goes for his daily prayers. *Tien praying the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary →*



As an Honorary Member, Tien will keep the friars of the OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception, our Community of Tertiaries, and any individual prayers from its members in his prayers. If you have any prayer intentions for Tien please contact Pepe and he will forward these to him.

Tien and his family are planning to visit the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in the near future to celebrate his Ceremony of Investiture and receive the Tertiary habit. We are blessed to have Tien as a member of our community of Franciscan Tertiaries!

Tien praying the Divine Office before a statue of St. Francis →



Save the Dates!

10/3	Transitus – Day of Fast
10/4	Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
10/11 – 10/15	Confraternity of Penitents Retreat (St. Felix Retreat Ctr., Huntington, Indiana)
11/1	Feast of All Saints Holy Day of Obligation
11/4	Day of Recollection (Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted, Youngstown)
11/17	Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary
11/29	Feast of All Saints of the Seraphic Order
12/8	Feast of the Immaculate Conception (4 th Anniversary of the Establishment of our Third Order Franciscan Community) Holy Day of Obligation
12/10	Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patron Saint of The Americas
12/25	Christmas Day Holy Day of Obligation
1/1	Feast of Mary, Mother of God Holy Day of Obligation
May, 2024	Annual Third Order Franciscan Pilgrimage (Details TBA)

*Hail, holy Lady, most holy Queen,
Mary, Mother of God, ever Virgin.
You were chosen by the Most High Father
in heaven,
consecrated by Him, with His most
Holy Beloved Son
and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.
On you descended and still remains all the
fullness of grace and every good.*



Hail, His Palace.

Hail His Tabernacle.

Hail His Robe.

Hail His Handmaid.

Hail, His Mother.

*and Hail, all holy Virtues, who, by grace and inspiration of the Holy Spirit,
are poured into the hearts of the faithful
so that from their faithless state,
they may be made faithful servants of God through you.*

by St. Francis of Assisi