



Soldiers of Christ

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

December 2023

Sandy Baden, TOF, Editor

Vol 3, Issue 12

OUR FRANCISCAN ANNIVERSARY

Isolated Franciscan Tertiaries

On December 8, 2023 we will celebrate our four year anniversary of the Franciscan Tertiaries of the OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception. The constitution of the Third Order Secular of Saint Francis, in section five, allows for those interested in joining the order, but who, for just and reasonable cause cannot join a fraternity, the opportunity to be a member as an “Isolated Tertiary.” Following interest on the website, Formation meetings began: To promote community within the Isolated Tertiaries, virtual monthly gatherings were organized, with Linda Menser, TOF as Coordinator.

The first Soldiers of Christ Newsletter was created in August 2021. The name of our Newsletter for Isolated Tertiaries was suggested by Linda Menser, TOF. The purpose is to keep us all informed and connected to each other outside of our Zoom Gatherings with updated news, articles, and upcoming events. There are a lot of uniquely gifted individuals within our Isolated Tertiary community, so I invite you to think about writing an article, submit a poem, or assisting in some way. sandy.baden@yahoo.com

Let us celebrate on December 8th and pray for our community of Isolated Tertiaries to continue to multiply in number. Pray also for the OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception.

POPE BENEDICT XVI

April 16, 1927 - December 31, 2022

- FROM THE POPE'S BOOK, "MARIAN THOUGHTS) -



Christmas: Virgin Mother

The Christian community, which in these days has remained in prayerful adoration before the crib, looks with particular love to the Virgin Mary, identifying itself with her while contemplating the newborn Baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

Like Mary, the Church also remains in silence in order to welcome and keep the interior resonances of the Word made flesh and in order not to lose the divine-human warmth that radiates from His presence. The Church, like the Virgin, does none other than show Jesus, the Savior, to everyone, and reflects to each on the light of His face, the slender of goodness and truth.

Angelus, January 1, 2007

Christmas: Bringing forth Christ

If, according to the flesh, the Mother of Christ is one alone, according to the faith all souls bring forth Christ; each, in fact, welcomes the Word of God within. . . .Ambrose, Exposition of the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke 2”26-27. . . .Thus, interpreting Our Lady’s very words, the Holy Doctor invites us to ensure that the Lord can find a dwelling place in our own souls and lives.

Not only must we carry Him in our hearts, but we must bring Him to the world, so that we too can bring forth Christ for our epoch. Let us pray the Lord to help us praise Him with Mary’s spirit and soul, and to bring Christ back to our world.

General Audience, February 15, 2006 2

SAINT ANGELA OF FOLIGNO, TOF (1228—January 1309)



St. Angela of Foligno was born into a wealthy family in Foligno, Umbria, an ancient town in Italy. She was known as a mystic from her writings of mystical revelations.

She founded a religious community which chose not to become an enclosed religious order, and also established another community of women tertiaries who chose a common life to live in enclosure.

St. Angela was married at a young age and had children. However, after her mother had passed away, around 1291, she also lost her husband and children. On one account, St. Angela had a vision of St. Francis of Assisi, which prompted her to desire a life of higher perfection. This motivated St. Angela, with her servant woman Masazuloa as her companion, to give away her possessions and live as a penitent. She then joined the Third Order of St. Francis under the direction of a Franciscan Friar, Arnaldo, who served as her confessor.

Along with being recognized for her spiritual writings and founding of religious orders, St. Angela had recorded the history of her conversion in her book titled 'Visions and Instructions.' This was completed in 1298 and given to Cardinal James Colonna and eight Friars Minor, who gave the text their approval. Due to these writings she had become known as "Mistress of Theologians."

She died in her sleep on January 3, 1309 and her remains repose in the Church of St. Francis at Foligno. St. Angela's beatification was approved by Pope Clement XI on July 11, 1701, and Pope Francis declared her a saint by 'equipollent canonization,' on October 9, 2013. Equipollent canonization means, "she was canonized when the Pope orders the public and universal veneration of a 'Servant of God,' without having gone through the procedure normally required by formal canonization." Her feast day is January 7th.

INVESTITURE CEREMONY



Welcome Alison Vermentte Lente, TOF, who celebrated her Ceremony of Investiture on October 21, 2023 at Our Lady Star of the Sea with Fr. Derek Lappe as celebrant.

Please keep Alison in your prayers as she will be undergoing spinal surgery in the near future. She is a lovely witness to all who know her.

Congratulations Alison!

“My God and My All,” St. Francis of Assisi

PROFESSION



Wanda Ortiz, TOF, was Professed into the OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception as an Isolated Tertiary on November 29, 2023 by Fr. Delfin Condori, at St. Elizabeth Church in Bonham, Texas.

Congratulations Wanda!

Fr. Delfin Condori
& Wanda Ortiz, TOF

Picture to the right is Ericka Witover, TOF,
Fr. Delfin Condori, & Wanda Otis, TOF

“Pray, hope and don’t worry.”
St. Padre Pio



CONGRATULATIONS!



Warmest congratulations to the Naseem's family on their newest blessing, baby boy **Zayn Raphael**, born on November 30th to Naseem and his wife. Baby Zayn joins 20 month old big sister Zeena to add to their joy!

Please keep our Inquirer Naseem and his family in your prayers as they navigate this new chapter of their lives.

Quote from Pope John Paul II: "The newborn child gives itself to its parents by the very fact of its coming into existence. Its existence is already a gift, the first gift of the Creator to the creature."

ONGOING FORMATION ZOOM GATHERING MONTHLY SCHEDULE

Our discussion for December will be Article 68. Comments from each person should be short, no more than three minutes, so everyone will have a chance to share.

Articles 63-67 are all related to Fraternity Gatherings and how those meetings should be followed. We will move on to Article 68.

ARTICLE 68: Every year in the month of January or of June, each fraternity shall publicly make or renew its solemn consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in the month of May or December, its consecration to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, using the approved prayers.

MONTHLY VIRTUAL GATHERINGS UPDATE

Linda Menser, TOF is our Coordinator of our Monthly Virtual Gatherings each month. Linda coordinates and facilitates our meetings faithfully and professionally. Gordon Smith, TOF from Australia, has given his enthusiastic “yes” and willingness to help our community of Isolated Tertiaries to be of assistance to Linda. We would like to give our thanks to Linda Menser, TOF, in all her efforts and all she does for us.

Let us give a huge thank you to Gordon for his enthusiastic “YES” to assist Linda in helping her coordinate our monthly gatherings. **THANK YOU GORDON!**

A REMINDER

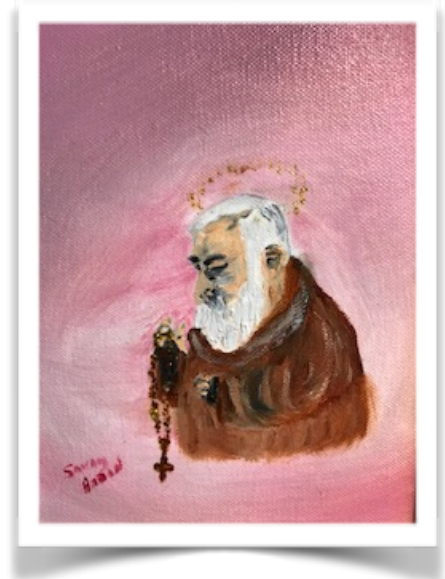
As December 3, 2023 is the First Sunday of Advent, we also are reminded on December 8, 2023 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary, Patronal Feast day of the United States of America. December 7th would be a day of fasting according to our Rule Chapter 2, #4:

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, if besides either the fast on Fridays, or the abstinence from meat on Wednesdays which are ferial days, they observe the ancient disciplines of the Tertiaries.

ST PADRE PIO

(May 25, 1887 - September 26, 1968)

St. Padre Pio was a holy Italian Priest whose name given to him at birth was “Francesco” Forgone. Born in Pietrelcina, which is fifty-eight miles from the San Giovanni Rotondo where St. Padre Pio spent his priesthood. San Giovanni Rotonda is the name of a town in southern Italy.



St. Padre Pio was born to parents who lived their lives in faith and in the love of God. Needless to say Francesco Forgone wanted to become a Priest at a very young age. When he was fifteen years old he entered the novitiate of the Capuchin Orders of the Friars Minor.

In an article written last year in the Solders of Christ Newsletter, December Issue 2022, there were two accounts illustrating how St. Padre Pio brought life to Christmas. I would like to repeat those accounts as they truly show the love St. Padre Pio had for Baby Jesus. The same could also be said of St. Francis of Assisi when Baby Jesus was brought to life in the first Creche, in Greco Italy.

An account of Renzo Allege 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 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.”

These are beautiful stories, but only a few of the many known to St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina. He suffered in his life for Christ and in his love for Our Blessed Virgin Mary. He was the first Priest in the history of the Holy Catholic Church who bore the marks of Christ for approximately fifty years. He always prayed for those in Purgatory and had stated, “We must empty Purgatory with our prayers.”

There are many of us that have devotion to St. Padre Pio, which is not surprising. St. Francis of Assisi was a Deacon and also bore the wounds of Christ and lived with the Stigmata for years. Both St. Francis and St. Padre Pio lived their lives in sacrifice and love, with total obedience to our Lord. Both always wanted to bring people to love our Lord Jesus Christ with humbleness of heart.

St. Padre Pio passed away on September 23, 1968 at the age of eighty-one. A Priest of our time. His Canonization took place on February 28, 2002 by Pope John Paul II.

Sandy Baden, TOF

The most famous quote from Padre Pio:

“Pray, hope, and don’t worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer.”

POEM

A CONVERSION

A long time ago in a not so distant place, the
The world stood upside down as people failed
in their faith. The Holy Land was a mess as
Everyone fought for their space. Everyone at
Each others throats, but expecting God' Grace.

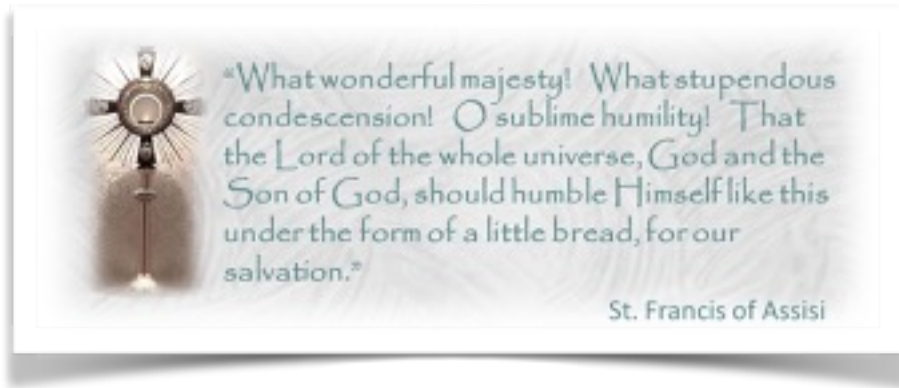
When one young man decided to do an about
Face. He started listening to his heart, which
Told him, to fix a small Church, and that was
Where He would start. But when the Church
Was Near completion he realized his mistake.

It wasn't the building he was meant to fix, but
The grace of God's Church, as he put down his
Task. He spent the rest of his life showing
People God's face, and his actions showed the
World the meaning of faith.

Today the world is in tatters, the Holy Land
Is at war, Israel and Islam with America at
The door. Should history repeat itself, then
We all should come to see. We are all human
Beings, we are all the same race.

As Jesus showed us how to walk in faith, and
St. Francis remembered our Lord Jesus and
His grace. We pray for peace and for this
War to end. Let us now walk together and
Finish God's race.





MONDAY	Judith Inglesby, TOF
TUESDAY	Linda Menser, TOF
WEDNESDAY	Judith Inglesby, TOF Luis Guzman, TOF Paul & Mary Tag, TOF
THURSDAY	Sandy Baden, TOF Bob Zupanek, TOF
FRIDAY	Linda Menser, TOF Pepe Ventosa, TOF
SATURDAY	Ericka Witover, TOF Miguel Mahan, TOF
SUNDAY	Linda Menser, TOF

Please include prayer 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 all of the members of the Isolated Tertiaries Community.

Please contact Pepe Ventosa, TOF if you would like to be added to this Eucharistic Schedule.

ADMONITION XXVI Respect for the Clergy

(Study on the Admonitions of St. Francis of Assisi by: Sandy Baden, TOF)



Blessed is that servant of God who has confidence in priests who live according to the laws of the Holy Roman Church. Woe to those who despise them. Even if they fall into sin, no one should pass judgement on them, for God has reserved judgement on them to himself. They are in a privileged position, because they have charge of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they receive and which they alone administer to others, and so anyone who sins against them commits a greater crime than if he sinned against anyone else in the whole world.

This seems to be a difficult Admonition to understand. In our culture we automatically would speak out if we see or hear something that is wrong or out of place. However, based on what this Admonition implies, we should speak to the Priest privately. If that does not help the next step would be to send a letter to the Bishop, keeping in mind the reputation of the Priest.

As this Admonition indicates we should render our opinions to ourselves and is a reminder of Admonition XVIII, Compassion for Ones Neighbor. In all cases, we should love our neighbor as ourselves and even more so Priest. If we despise Priests or pass judgement on them we are not living up to our obligation to loving our neighbor as ourselves. How could anyone despise a Priest?


Priests are just as susceptible to sin as we are. Admonition XVIII clearly indicates we should have more compassion for a Priest above all others. The life for a Priest is extremely difficult as Lothar Hardick, OFM reiterates, so this should be kept in mind with compassion.

After much prayer and contemplation of this Admonition for not passing judgement on Priests seem to come into a clear focus on why St. Francis states, “no one should pass judgement on them, for God has reserved judgement on them to himself.” Being this is the case Priests are in a privileged position. If you love the Holy Eucharist, then you can love and respect the Priest, who by his anointed hands consecrates the Host for it to become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Without this grace given to us in the Holy Eucharist, only by the Priest, how could we come closer to our Lord? How could we love our neighbor as ourselves with a deeper understanding of how God loves us? How else could our Lord Jesus Christ be given to us in the Eucharist without giving that privilege to our Priests? Without the Priest and his anointed hands, then Jesus’ death on the cross would have no meaning. Another thought, Jesus gave the authority for only Priests to absolve us from our sins. What would we do without confession?

An ardent defender of Priests are members of the Knights of Columbus. They give a sacred vow to protect and defend the Priest. What a wonderful thought if we could do the same. Let us pray for ourselves and for our Priests, let us have a better understanding, and let us learn to protect and defend our Priests.

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St Francis of Assisi
“The defender whom
God in such trouble
times reserved for the
Church”
Pope Benedict XV
Sacra Propediem

In a letter from St. Francis to his Clerics was written: “In this world there is nothing of the Most High himself that we can possess and contemplate with our eyes, except his Body and Blood.”

Save the Date

DECEMBER 3 : First Sunday of Advent

DECEMBER 7 : IT Zoom Gathering: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time. You can sign in 15 minutes earlier before the meeting begins. Discussion: Article 69

DECEMBER 8 : Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary—a holy day of Obligation

Four year anniversary of the Franciscan Tertiaries of the OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception.

DECEMBER 14: IT Novitiate Formation Group 2: 7:00 PM Eastern Time 4:00 PM Pacific Time. You can sign in 15 minutes earlier before the meeting begins.

DECEMBER 21: Inquiry Formation Group 3: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time. You can sign in 15 minutes earlier before the meeting begins.

DECEMBER 25: Nativity of the Lord—a Holy Day of Obligation

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

