



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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SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD



We celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God, on the first day of the year, New Years Day. This is the octave day of Christmas honoring The Holy Mother of God after the birth of Christ. Mary, who was announced by the angel St. Gabriel, Hail full of grace, (Lk 1:28). Through Mary's voluntary consent said, "Let it be done to me as you say," (Lk 1:38).

Proclaiming Mary as the "Mother of God" makes perfect sense. Our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was conceived without sin, The Immaculate Conception, and gave her consent to be the "Mother of God." The Holy Trinity consists of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the God the Holy Spirit. This we know, and as we contemplate the three persons of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we realize they are one in the Holy Trinity of God. Jesus was sent in the flesh because God chose Him to come to earth in His human nature and divine nature. How do we see God in Our Lord Jesus Christ? We see God as Jesus the Son of God, with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. They are one in the Holy Trinity, which cannot be separated from each other. Would this mean the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God?

We honor Mary as the Holy Mother of God on January 1st each year. We honor her as the Mother of God and as our mother. When we think of Mary, what is it that we think of first? It is always Jesus, her Son.

In the Solemnity to Mary's motherhood, we think of Mary not only her life on earth but also of her appearances after her death. Fatima, Lourdes, Guadalupe, and many more. Everything of Mary always points to her Son. The wedding at Cana Mary speaks the most important statement, "Do whatever He tells you," (John 2:5) and at the visitation to Elizabeth, Mary recites the Magnificat, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for He has looked with favor on His lowly servant..." (Luke 1:46-55). The Blessed Virgin Mary also states: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done until me according to your word," (Luke 1:38).

These statements by Mary show her humility, obedience, and openness to the Holy Spirit. Mary said more than this in the Scriptures, not only in words, but by her action, at the Presentation of the Lord, the Visitation to Elizabeth, finding Jesus in the Temple, and the wedding at Cana. In all of these we see Jesus through Mary.

Mary's participation in our salvation comes to us always as Jesus through Mary. Mary's life is always Jesus through Mary. Through Mary we have the birth of Jesus, through Mary, Jesus is presented to God at the Temple, through Mary at the Visitation, John the Baptist is sanctified in the womb of Elizabeth, through Mary, at the wedding in Cana, Jesus performs His first public miracle of turning water into wine, and through Mary we have the Holy Eucharist.

Through all of this we proclaim Mary as the "Mother of God."

Sandy Baden, TOF

**Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women, and blessed is
the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother
of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour
of our death. Amen.**

BLESSED DELPINE OF GLANDEVES, TOF
1284 - 1358



St. Elzear of Sabran and Blessed Dalphine of Glandeves
Church of the Friars Minor

Delphine of Glandeves was born in 1284 in Provence, which is now part of France. She was a Third Order Franciscan.

Delphine was born to the Count of Puy-Michel. She became an orphan at seven years old, and was placed under the guardianship of her uncles. They, however, allowed her to be brought up in the convent school, which was under the direction of her aunt, the Abbess of the Convent of St. Catherine of Sorps, at Baudeun. As a young girl, she pledged to God a vow of virginity which she kept until her death despite eventually getting married.

When she turned twelve she was espoused to the ten year old Elzear, who was the Count of Sabran. (Also to become a future Saint.) They were married three years later at the castle of Puy-Michel. Since, however, they grew up together, they regarded each other as brother and sister rather than husband and wife. Inspired by her example, Elzear also took a vow of virginity in their married life. Then both received the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis. At their castle in Ansouis they practiced prayer,

penance and charity towards the poor. Sadly, Elzear died in 1323 from an illness. When Delphine heard the news she wept bitterly yet declared “My God, may Thy most holy will be done!”

After his death, Delphine sold all her possessions for the benefit of the poor and retired first to Naples and then to Carriers, because the castle was located where her husband had been born. She finally returned to Apt where her husband had been buried. Upon her death on November 26, 1358, she was buried with him in the Church of the Friars Minor wearing the habit of the Third Order.

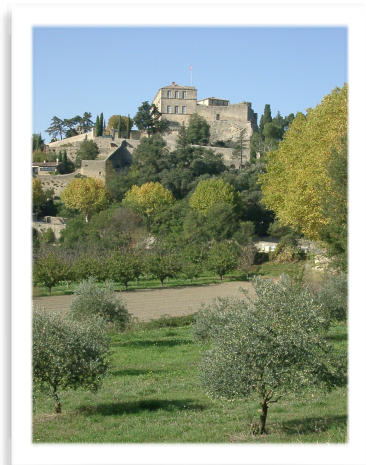
Veneration soon began to be given to Delphine after several miracles from her intercession, which was confirmed by Pope Urban V, who was also the godson of Elzear. He also canonized her husband at that time. Her feast day was previously celebrated by the Franciscan Third Order on the anniversary of her death, December 9th. Then upon the Reform of the Calendar of Saints in 1969, her feast day was moved to September 26th, to share that of her husband.

She is invoked for married couples and charity.

Blessed Delphine, pray for us!

Ericka Witover, TOF

View of Ansouis



Castel Nuovo, Naples



LORD GOD, FATHER OF ALL

I pray to you, as you look into the
Book of your people, that you
Will view my name, striving to be
Christ-like daily. May my eyes rest
Upon all that is good.

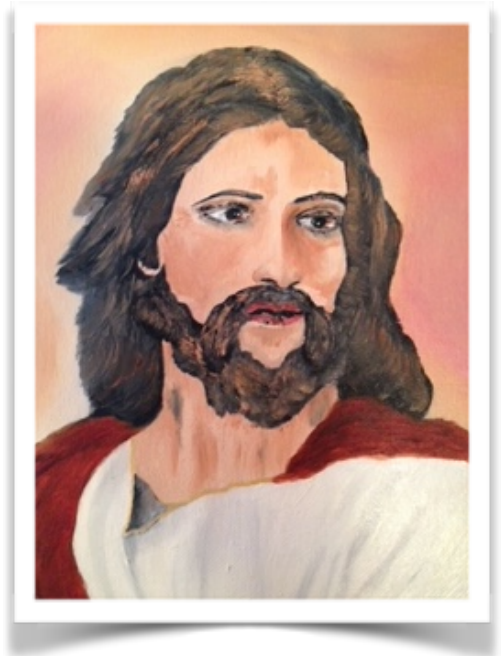
In the world and in my neighbors, may
My ears hear Christ's word with
Understanding. May my lips always
Practice contemplative speech and
Confess my sins.

May my arms reach out like Jesus to
All who are in need. My feet will
Always take the path to you. My
Heart will always overflow with love
for you.

And when I die, I pray you will think me
Worthy to be in Heaven, because
After much deliberation, I do strive to be
A Saint. Always guide me through Jesus
Our Lord, in union with the Holy Spirit.

AMEN!

Sandy DeWaal
Inquiry



**“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed,”
John 20: 29**

THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
JANUARY 8, 2024

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” (Luke 3:21-22)



What are we to make of this Gospel as we contemplate John the Baptist and his preaching in the desert? John the Baptist has stated to the people who questioned him, “I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (Luke 3:16) In the Gospel (John 1:29-31), the next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me. I myself did not know him;

but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” John the Baptist recognized him as his cousin, but what he may have not known was Jesus was the Messiah, which was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God.’

John the Baptist, who was sanctified in his mother’s womb, born before the birth of Christ, comes to ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ (John 1:23). This was necessary for Christ to be baptized and as the Catechism of the Catholic Church imparts to us, ‘The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation (1257).’ Christ begins His public life after His baptism by St. John the Baptist and after His resurrection Jesus says to His apostles: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

In contemplating the Baptism of our Lord, and the beauty at the Jordon river, as people were gathered to be baptized with water by John the Baptist, below is a poem which was submitted in 2022, but not all have read it, so I submit it again.

Sandy Baden, TOF

God Bless,

THE GLORY OF BAPTISM

As John the Baptist looks up from the Jordon river, only to see our Lord as He approaches, what did he really see? A man looking to John to reveal the Glory of God!

John welcomes Him from the river, while knowing the blessing from Jesus is greater than he. Our Lord gave us Baptism to forgive us our sins, and bring us closer to Him.

Remember John the Baptist, in the Jordon river, and how he must have felt when he knew who was before him. His heart must have 'Leaped for Joy,' as he had in his mother's womb.

John baptizes with water, while hearing the voice of the Father and dunking Jesus, the Son, in the river, then appearing in the sky a dove, representing the Holy Spirit.

Thank you Lord for giving us Baptism and revealing it through John the Baptist. How could anyone deny the 'Glory of Baptism,' which was given by the Holy Spirit, and thus, making known 'The Holy Trinity.'

Sandy Baden, TOF

ONGOING FORMATION ZOOM GATHERINGS MONTHLY SCHEDULE

Our discussion for January will be Article 69: The most Blessed Virgin Mother of Jesus. Comments from each person should be short, no more than three minutes so everyone will have a chance to share their thoughts.

ARTICLE 69: 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.

FROM THE CALL TO COMMITMENT BOOK

All prayers of St. Francis to and about Mary are prayers of praise.

Here is how the Office of the Passion begins: Holy Virgin Mary, among all the women of the world there is none like you; you are the daughter and handmade of the most high King and Father of heaven; you are the mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ; you are the spouse of the Holy Spirit. Pray for us with Saint Michael the Archangel and all the powers of heaven and all the saints, to your most holy and beloved Son, our Lord and Master.

CLUSTER REMINDER

This is a reminder of the concept of Clusters for Isolated Tertiaries, TOF. Since we as Isolated Tertiaries do not have individual local fraternities, a Cluster affords us additional spiritual brotherhood opportunities. As Isolated Tertiaries it is recommended that all Isolated Tertiaries, unless prevented by a reasonable reason, be part of a Cluster.

So far, we have four Clusters with fourteen TOF members. If you need a copy of the guidelines on Clusters which was submitted in the Soldiers of Christ Newsletter in June and September 2023, please contact Pepe Ventosa, TOF. Also the Soldiers of Christ Newsletters are on line in our Website.

thirdorderfranciscans.com

FRANCISCAN TERTIARIES' TRIDUA 2024—by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted, Youngstown, OH



Our Blessed Mother Statue

Franciscans Tertiaries—Province of the Immaculate Conception

On August 23 - 25, 2024 we will be having our first “Tridua.” A Tridua, also known as a Tertiary retreat, is designed especially for Tertiaries who, due to their own personal commitments, can’t get away for several days from home or work for a long retreat. The retreat has a simple schedule, with daily Mass, quiet time for prayer, meditation, personal devotions, and a few presentations. Tertiaries can stay at their homes and attend the different activities as able, or they can stay at the retreat place, or close by if so desired.

The Tridua will take place at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted. There are a few rooms available at the Shrine on a reservation basis. Fr. Vit is preparing an area on the grounds for those who would like to set up a tent or hammock and enjoy God’s outdoor creation. There are some hotels close by if so preferred.

Stay tuned for more information to follow!



“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	Luis Guzman, TOF Judith Inglesby, TOF Paul & Mary Tag, TOF
THURSDAY	Sandy Baden, TOF Bob Zupanek
FRIDAY	Linda Menser, TOF Pepe Ventosa, TOF
SATURDAY	Ericka Witover, TOF Peter Emau, 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 the increase in religious vocations in their community and for all the intentions of the members of the Isolated Tertiaries Community.

ADMONITION XXVII VIRTUE AND VICE

(Study on Admonitions of St. Francis of Assisi, Lothar Hardick, OFM,
by: Sandy Baden, OFM)



**Where there is love and wisdom
there is neither fear or ignorance.
Where there is patience and humility,
there is neither anger nor annoyance.
Where there is poverty and joy,
there is neither cupidity nor avarice.
Where there is peace and contemplation,
there is neither care nor restlessness.
Where there is the fear of God to guard
the dwelling (see Lk 11:21) there no
enemy can enter.
Where there is mercy and prudence,
there is neither excess nor harshness.**

Part I

“Where there is love and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance”

This is where we begin, love and wisdom and fear nor ignorance. As you can see there are six parts to Admonition XXVII, Virtue and Vice. In reading Part I, it became perfectly clear that a person can absorb all that is said by Fr. Lothar Hardick, OFM and each person would come up with a different explanation of a virtue or a vice. Love and wisdom or fear or ignorance may have an impression to one person and to another would have completely different thoughts or ideas.

As Fr. Lothar Hardick, OFM, tries to read the mind of St. Francis, he first analyzes what kind of fear are we looking at in this Admonition. As we grow in our Spiritual lives as Tertiaries fear in our lives would seem to be diminished as we become closer to our Lord. Lothar Hardick, OFM states, “where there is love. . . , there is no fear.” ‘Fear causes us to run away—far away. Love causes us to come closer and become united with God.’ Would this also mean that love also brings wisdom? This would then sum up all that needs to be said about love and wisdom, fear or ignorance.

However, in our own weaknesses we falter into our own will and not that of our Lord. It seems like an endless journey toward the will of God in all that we do. When praying the rosary, and in each decade we meditate, the distractions in our minds cause us to drift. We say, the next decade I will do better...but do we? An endless battle it seems. Lothar Hardick, OFM reiterates with this statement to give us hope, "A very large part of our love for God must, after all, be believing in His mercy and expecting Him to help us. We stand before him with empty hands. We love him most of all when we let Him fill those empty hands with His love."

Reflecting on Lothar Hardick, OFM and his analyzes of Ignorance with wisdom and calling Ignorance foolishness, which makes perfect sense, he takes from scripture, "The mind of fools is in their mouth, but the mouth of the wise in in their mind (Sir 21:26). This is a clear summarization of all the illustrations given on foolishness.

So what is wisdom? Lothar Hardick, OFM states it is a gift of God's Grace, but we have to be prepared to receive this grace. With this we must be open to God's will and 'be not afraid.' We should be open to God's will in our prayer and daily lives. Love and Wisdom would not be separated, and therefore, will take away fear or ignorance, (foolishness). As Lothar Hardick, OFM states, "where there is love and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance (=foolishness)."

Prayer in the Magnificat

May the God of infinite goodness drive far from us the darkness of vice and illumine our hearts with the light of virtue. Amen.

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Save the Date

JANUARY: 1: Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

JANUARY 4: 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

JANUARY 7: Epiphany of the Lord

JANUARY 8: Baptism of the Lord

JANUARY 11: 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.

JANUARY 18: 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.

