



Soldiers of Christ

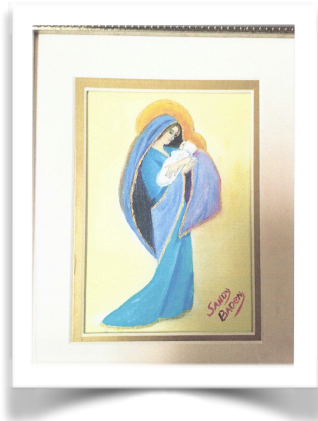
Newsletter of the
Isolated Franciscan Tertiaries
of the OFM Province of the
Immaculate Conception

February 2024

Sandy Baden, TOF, Editor

Vol. 4, Issue 2

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD Feast day February 2



When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,” and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. (Luke 2:22-24)

A quote from [St. Pope John Paul II](#): “God enters the temple not as a powerful ruler but as a little child in his mother’s arms. The King of Glory comes not with a show of human force and power, not with a great fanfare and noise, not causing a fright and destruction. He comes into the temple as he came into the world, as an infant in silence, in poverty, and in the company of the poor and the wise.”

Mary brings our Lord, with St. Joseph, and they present our Lord in the Temple fulfilling the Old Covenant Law. Always obedient to our Lord and in all humility. When this mystery is prayed in the holy Rosary we are reminded, as we reflect on the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, of God’s love for us. Simeon and the prophetess, Anna, recognize who was being offered in the Temple and to be consecrated to the Lord.

We are also reminded of consecrated life. In a quote from [Pope Francis](#), “Consecrated life is born and reborn of an encounter with Jesus as He is: poor, chaste and obedient....And while worldly life soon leaves our hands and hearts empty, life in Jesus fills us with peace to the very end, as in the Gospel, where Simeon and Anna come happily to the sunset of their lives with the Lord in their arms and joy in their hearts.”



God spoke to Joseph and Mary through Simeon revealing the future of things to come. Mary’s joy as she presented baby Jesus in the Temple should also bring us joy for God gave His son for us. Joy for Mary’s “yes” at the incarnation and Joseph’s “yes” to take Mary as his wife. In their obedience to the Presentation of the Lord, Joseph and Mary fulfilled the will of God.

The Presentation was instituted as an annual celebration in 1997 by [St. Pope John Paul II](#). Let us, as Tertiaries, bring our prayer into thankfulness for the joy of Jesus and be mindful of our lives and the grace given to to us in our obedience to our vocation. Sandy Baden, TOF

[CANTICLE OF SIMEON](#)

[Lord, now you let your servant go in peace:](#)
[your word has been fulfilled:](#)
[my own eyes have seen the salvation which](#)
[you have prepared in the sight of every](#)
[people,](#)
[a light to reveal you to the nations and the](#)
[glory of your people Israel. \(Luke 2:29-32\)](#)

SAINT JANE OF VALOIS, TOF
(SANTE JEANNE DE VALOIS)
Feast Day – February 5



St. Jane of Valois was born April 23, 1464 and was the daughter of Louis XI, King of France. Her father had treated her harshly because Jane found peace in meditation and prayer, and not with the life of a royal princess.

It was believed that the Blessed Virgin Mary had appeared to her in her sufferings and said to her: “Be consoled, my daughter! A time will still come when you will belong to me entirely. A large group of young women consecrated to God will join you in serving me and proclaiming my praise everywhere.” This was of great consolation to Jane and helped her persevere in her wish to serve God.

Her spiritual director was Father Gilbert Nicolas, a Franciscan, and through him she received the habit of the Franciscan Third Order. What Jane of Valois really wanted was to enter a convent, but her father said she was to marry Louis, Duke of Orleans. In obedience she married Louis in 1486. It was a difficult marriage because the Duke was also forced to marry and he gave her a life of misery. Later, in 1498, the Duke of Orleans ascended to the throne of France and through the request of Louis, the King of France, the Pope declared their marriage null and void. This left Jean with her freedom which she said, “God has now detached me from the world and has made it possible for me to serve Him better than heretofore.”

Jane De Valois moved on and united a group of women to form a religious community with a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Fr. Gilbert, her confessor, drew up the statutes with Pope Alexander VI’s approval in 1500. Pope Alexander VI placed them under the obedience of the minister general of the Franciscans, and Jane was given the name Gabriel Mary by Fr. Gilbert. On Pentecost she pronounced her solemn vows in 1503.

On February 4, 1505 Saint Jane of Valois had passed away. Her body was entombed in the church of the Annunciation in the city of Bourges, which many miracles were known to happen at her tomb.



In 1562, the Huguenots stormed the city of Bourges, and the convent and church of the Annunciades was destroyed. They also destroyed the incorrupt body of Jane of Valois. As they were in the process of destroying the body, blood had flowed from the wounds.

St. Joan of Valois was Canonized in 1950 and is the patron of those in difficult circumstances.

Sandy Baden, TOF

Statue of Saint Jane of Valois



Portrait de Sainte Jeanne de Bourges

“I am ugly in body but I want a beautiful soul.” St. Joan of Valois

PRAYER AND FASTING DURING LENT

(Taken from the Handbook of the Third Order Secular Franciscans, by Gummermann)

Submitted by Debbie Ventosa, TOF

“Fasting holds a high place among the good works. The saints extol fasting as a powerful weapon against sin and the devil, of nourishment a virtue, refreshment of the soul, and mother of chastity. In the Lenten preface the Church sings to God: Who by bodily fast extinguishes our vices, elevates our understanding, bestows on us virtue and its reward.”

Men and women who seriously strive after perfection do more than the virtue of temperance requires. Our Seraphic Father, Francis, kept seven long fasts every year. The tertiary Queen Elizabeth of Portugal fasted forty days with bread and water in honor of the holy angels.

When serious temptations assail us or when we wish to obtain special favors from God, we should remember that prayer with fasting is good.

(Taken from the Council of Abstinence and Fasting)

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ASH WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 2024

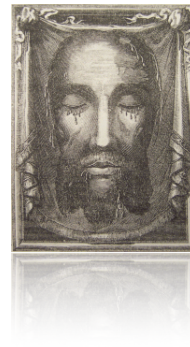
“A flood was rising from the earth and watering all the surface of the soil. Yahweh, God, fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.”

(Genesis 2:7)

“With sweat on your brow shall you eat your bread, until you return to the soil, as you were taken from it. For dust you are and to dust you shall return. (Genesis: 3:19)

Words spoken from God to Adam after eating from the forbidden tree, and both Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden. From Genesis: 3:19 we have come to know why we receive the Ashes on Ash Wednesday each year and is the beginning of **Lent** which is forty-six days before Easter Sunday. The ashes on the forehead are a sign of repentance, fasting and prayer. Catholics and some Protestant churches celebrate each year with a penitential service. The words, while the sign of the cross with ashes are placed on our foreheads, are repeated with, "From dust you came and from dust you will return."

Holy Face of Jesus Devotion: **February 13:**



Ash Wednesday: The beginning of **Lent: February 14** Fast and Abstinence

Palm Sunday: Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem: **March 24**

Holy Week: Leading week up to Easter: **March 24-30**
Passion of the Lord

Maunday Thursday: Foot washing and Last Supper: **March 28**

Good Friday: Crucifixion of Jesus and death: **March 29**
Fast and Abstinence

Easter Sunday: The resurrection of Jesus and Victory: **March 31**

PRAYER CHAIN

(BY: Frank, TOF Coordinator)

I am delighted to inform you that we will be formalizing an initiative, which we have already (informally) adopted, where we ask other TOF Isolated Tertiaries (IT's) to pray for someone in need, e.g., for medical emergencies. The initiative will be known as '**Prayer Chain.**' Rather than one person administering this initiative, all IT's will be empowered to initiate prayer requests in accordance with the following protocols:

1. If you are aware of a fellow IT or family member who requires prayers (e.g., someone in your Cluster is involved in a serious accident or is suffering from a serious health issue), then you may send an email to all IT's (per the latest roster) with sufficient information regarding your prayer request;
2. Provide updates to the group as significant developments unfold, e.g., the individual has been released from the hospital and is making a good recovery at home;
3. Respond to emails from any IT's seeking updates;
4. Refrain from providing detailed personal information, merely, only what is absolutely necessary for the IT to include the individual in their prayer intentions, e.g., name and nature of issue, etc;
5. This is only for members of our IT Community (professed members and novices.) Inquirers are not included in this email list as they are not yet members of the Community. They are in the process of discerning to become members and will be so when they enter the novitiate. We can certainly pray for any of their needs, but are not included in the **Prayer Chain** initiative;
6. Send emails as Bcc (to protect the email addresses in case they are accidentally sent to non intended recipients);
7. This email list is private and is not to be shared with anyone outside the TOF Community.

The above will take immediate effect. Please let me know if any of the 7

above is unclear. The latest roster was sent in an email on January 7th. It includes a consolidated list of all email addresses (excluding inquirers).

We hope **Prayer Chain** will provide mutual support and assistance to ease the weight of any crosses which may come our way in the future.

Yours in Christ,

Frank, TOF

Isolated Tertiaries News



Fr. Delfin Condor, Eric Witover, TOF and Ericka Witover, TOF

On January 17, 2024, Eric Howard Witover was Professed into the Third Order of St. Francis, OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception, as an Isolated Tertiary, Honorary Member.

FORMATION NEWS

We currently have several IT's in Formation discerning entrance into the Noviate phase of Formation. Kindly keep the following group in prayer.

Fr. John
Joe K
Frank
Kennedy
Sharif
Nasseem
Mary

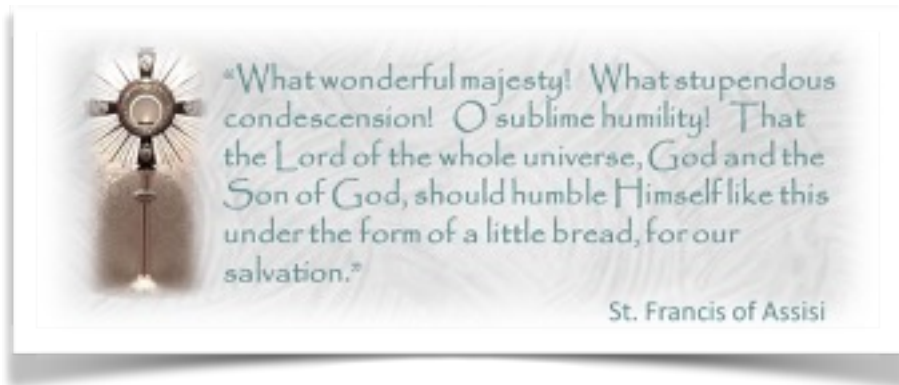
Katrina
Sandy
Ann
John
Chi
Joe Z

A few of the above individuals will be traveling to Our Lady of The Afflicted Shrine in Youngstown, Ohio for the Ceremony of Reception on Saturday, February 24th, 2024. All who are able are welcome to join them in person for prayer support and community building.

ONGOING FORMATION ZOOM GATHERING MONTHLY SCHEDULE

Our discussion for February will be Article 70. Comments from each person should be short, no more than three minutes so everyone will have a chance to share.

ARTICLE 70: Similarly, they shall venerate with particular devotion and imitate Saint Joseph, the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin, also our holy Father Francis, holy Mother Clare, and the patrons of the Third Order, namely, Saint Louis the King and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. They shall celebrate their feasts with solemn ceremonies.



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION ISOLATED TERTIARIES SCHEDULE

MONDAY

Judith Inglesby, TOF

TUESDAY

Linda Menser, TOF

WEDNESDAY

**Luis Guzman, TOF
Judith Inglesby, TOF
Paul & Mary Tab, 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. 10

ADMONITION XXVII—PART 2 VIRTUE AND VICE

Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor annoyance.

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



Lothar Hardick, OFM tells us in Part 2 of Admonition 27, to explain what anger and annoyance are as a Vice. He illustrates, in the same token, anger may not always be considered as a Vice and could be “righteous or justifiable anger.” The question to ask; is this a divine attribute and not something that is given to man? God’s anger, the wrath of God, is when God is confronted with evil, and it is “Man’s will when it is opposed to His own good will,” therefore it is the “righteousness of God.”

Our anger, therefore, goes against God and is considered as evil because it is directed towards God and is not justified. Lothar Hardick, OFM indicates this anger has a second wrong attitude of which is annoyance and causes confusion. Annoyance, then, brings one into confusion and into a deeper anger which is sinful. We cannot look at the object of our anger and be charitable or have mercy in our hearts. If it is replaced by “patience and humility, there is neither anger or annoyance.”

We must learn to control our anger and annoyance in order to obtain patience and humility in tough situations. Sometimes silence can help in directing our anger towards patience and we can see things a little more clearly. In anger we cannot. Have you noticed when in anger things are said that really are not meant to be heard. Just saying a “Hail Mary” can help to calm the situation and bring us into humility at the same time.

Certain things may set us off into anger quite suddenly, but if we have patience within us this may not happen so easily. Practice silence when you feel anger building up inside and listen to what may have been said.

In silence, a calm attitude may be obtained and may help whatever is causing the possible hostility. Patience and humility can play a large part in controlling our anger or illuminating it all together. One example would be Our Blessed Mother Mary as she exemplified her patience and was filled with humility as a loving servant of our Lord. Mary kept all these things in her heart, in silence.

We are again speaking of patience in terms of the “Will of God,” in our lives, as we examine our intentions towards perfection as a Tertiary. We need to place in our souls the inner peace Lothar Hardick, OFM speaks of in this Admonition to obtain the virtues of patience and humility and see the vice of anger and annoyance then disappear.

“Moreover, with the help of grace try to avoid bursts of anger and gain the mastery of yourself so that you dominate anger and are not dominated by it. Indeed, I hope you are never angry but just appear to be, as did St. Philip Neri. If gentleness instigates insolence, it is because of their temperament.”

St. Padre Pio, OFM

“The virtue of patience is the one that assures us of perfection more than any of the other virtues. Although you need to practice it with others, you also need to practice it with yourself.”

St. Padre Pio, OFM

“You must always humble yourself lovingly before God and before men, because God speaks only to those who are truly humble and He enriches them with His gifts. Humility and purity are the wings which carry us to God and make us almost divine.”

St. Padre Pio, OFM

Save the Date

FEBRUARY 1: 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 70

FEBRUARY 2: The Presentation of the Lord

FEBRUARY 4: St. Jane of Valois, TOF

FEBRUARY 8: 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.

FEBRUARY 13: Holy Face of Jesus Devotion

FEBRUARY 14: ASH WEDNESDAY: Fast and Absence (Valentine's Day)

FEBRUARY 15: INQUIRY FORMATION GROUP 3: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, You can sign in 15 minutes earlier before the meeting begins.

FEBRUARY 18: St. Bernadette of Lourdes, Cordbearer

(Cordbearers are not part of the Third Order, but the Cord is the Franciscan Cord. "The wearing of the cord is a necessary condition for gaining the Indulgences and sharing the spiritual benefits.")

