



Soldiers of Christ

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

March 2024

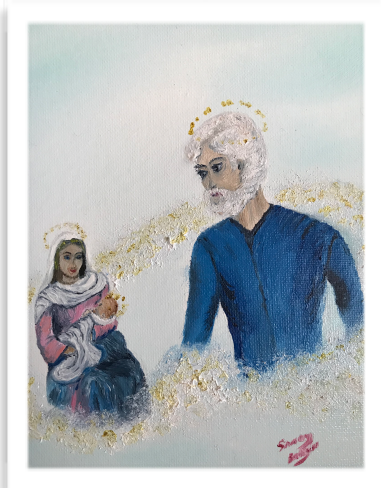
Sandy Baden, TOF, Editor

Vol. 4, Issue 3

ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Feast Day, March 19, 2024

Submitted by Sandy Baden, TOF



In March, 2023, we wrote of St. Joseph and how he did not speak a word in Scripture and his obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ. This year we will take a look at why we should honor St. Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Pope John, XXIII on November 13, 1962 announced that St. Joseph's name would be included in the body of the Roman Canon. "In union with the whole Church we honor Mary, the ever-virgin Mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God. We honor Joseph, her husband, the apostles and martyrs Peter and Paul, Andrew.."

An extraordinary development at the time, in 1962, that Joseph's name would be included in the Roman Canon as it had not been changed since **Gregory the Great**, who died in 604.

How many of us have a devotion to St. Joseph? St. Joseph is, "patron of the Universal Church, Model of Workers, Guardian of Virgins, Consolation of the Afflicted, Help of Families, and Patron of the the Dying." 1

Pope Leo XIII stated in his 1889 encyclical on devotion to St. Joseph: “There are special reasons why St. Joseph should be explicitly named the patron of the Church and why the Church in turn should expect much from his patronage and guardianship. Namely, that St. Joseph was the husband of Mary and the father, as was supposed, of Jesus Christ. From this arise all his dignity, grace, holiness, and glory.”

The first promoters appear by the Franciscans through liturgical offices in honor of St. Joseph. A Franciscan, Pope Sixtus IV, introduced St. Joseph into the breviary and set St. Joseph’s liturgical feast in the Church by the Act of November 19, 1480. The first chapel in St. Joseph’s honor was built by the Franciscans in Toulouse, in 1222. St. Francis of Assisi takes Joseph’s role at the nativity during the night at Greccio on Christmas in 1223 as he held baby Jesus and He came to life.

It has been said that St. Joseph was silent in the Scriptures, but he did so much for the Blessed Virgin Mary and our Lord Jesus Christ without words. Imagine what it would be like to hear the conversations in the home of our Lord. To be there and hear our Lord speak to St. Joseph and enlighten him in his spiritual growth, and the Blessed Mother keeping these things in her heart.

On October 13, 1917, at Fatima, Our Blessed Lady declared, “I am the Lady of the Rosary,” while St. Joseph was seen holding baby Jesus as he blessed the world with the sign of the cross, and the crowd watched the Miracle of the Sun. What a significant role St. Joseph had as the earthly father of our Lord Jesus Christ above all other saints. St. Joseph, Head of the Holy Family and now Protector of the Universal church.

It has been said also that a prayer to St. Joseph is always answered. As St. Joseph knew our Blessed Mother best, let us turn our prayers and petitions to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to her spouse, St. Joseph.

St. Joseph, I thank God for your privilege of having been chosen by God to be the foster-father of His divine Son. As a token of your own gratitude to God for this your greatest privilege, obtain for me the grace of a very devoted love for Jesus Christ, my God and my Savior. 2

ST. CATHERINE OF BOLOGNA

Feast Day March 9th

Submitted by Sandy Baden, TOF

On the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Catherine of Bologna, was born on September 8, 1413. Daughter of a diplomat, John of Vigri, she was raised and educated at the court of the Duke of Ferrara.



Catherine left the court for her calling to a religious life. In 1426, at the age of thirteen she entered the convent of Corpus Domini in Ferrara, Italy, and became a Franciscan Tertiary. The convent later followed the rule of St. Clare. In 1432, Catherine left the convent with several women and founded a monastery of Poor Clares and was a laundress, baker, caretaker for animals, and then novice mistress.

St. Catherine loved to paint and was self taught. One of her paintings was of St. Ursula, which is on display in a gallery in Venice. She was also known for her spiritual writings and poetry. St. Catherine wrote a treatise, which is a systematic exposition or argument in writing, *The Seven Spiritual Weapons*, and gives the mystical side of her spiritual life. St. Catherine also wrote several other works of devotions, sermons, and verses.

Twenty-four years later Catherine was sent back to Bologna with fifteen other sisters to establish a convent where she was abbess until she passed away on March 9, 1463. St. Catherine was buried without a casket for eighteen days when her body was exhumed due to a sweet fragrance that emanated from her grave and the cures which occurred at the grave site. No sign of decay was found after examination and her body was determined to be incorrupt, which still is today.

At the end of 1500, St. Catherine appeared to one of the nuns, Leonora Poggi in a vision, and indicated she wanted her body to be placed in a chapel in a sitting position, which it remains today. Her face has been 3

blackened due to oil lamps and soot from many years of exposure. The body is now surrounded by a glass urn since 1953.

Pope Benedict described St Catherine: “From the distance of so many centuries she is still very modern and speaks to our lives. She, like us, suffered temptations, she suffered the temptations of disbelief, of sensuality, of a difficult spiritual struggle. She felt forsaken by God, she found herself in the darkness of faith. Yet in all these situations she was always holding the Lord’s hand, she did not leave him, she did not abandon him. And walking hand in hand with the Lord, she walked on the right path and found the way of light.”

St. Catherine was canonized by Pope Clement XI on May 22, 1712, and was designated the Patroness of Artists. Patron: Artists, liberal arts, against temptations and Bologna.



St. Catherine of Bologna

St. Catherine of Bologna Prayer

Dear Lord, we Thank You for giving us St. Catherine of Bologna as an example of holiness. Help us to imitate the love of You she showed in her tireless quest for holiness throughout her life.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR NOVICES
Chi Kim Vu
Submitted by Debbie Ventosa, TOF

Chi Vu was born into a Catholic family in Vietnam. She has two brothers and four sisters. Chi Vu and her husband have two sons, thirteen and seven years old, and one ten month old daughter. She received a Business Administration Degree from Dalat University in Vietnam. Her sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation were received at Sacred Heart of Jesus in Vietnam. Her wedding was at St. Francis parish in Vietnam in 2008.



Chi Vu was involved with teaching catechism to prepare first communicants and worked with the St. Vincent de Paul nuns in caring for the sick. Chi Vu is currently enrolled in the Passionates Spiritual Direction Program.

On September 15, 2013, she had a chance to visit The Capuchin Museum in Rome. There are stacks of bones and skulls of Capuchin's Friars on the bare walls of the museum. A quote on the wall read: "Today is mine, tomorrow will be yours." Chi has kept this quote in her heart and pondered it. During Covid she had more time to meditate on death, the meaning of life, and purpose of her life. She also read about St. Francis of Assisi and his spirituality. After years of praying and earnestly seeking God's will she decided that the Third Order Franciscans was her calling, especially to serve God and love neighbor as St. Francis and the Capuchins did.



Chi entered the Novitiate on February 7, 2024. We welcome her into the Third Order Novitiate and ask for your continued prayer and support for Chi.

"Deus Meus et Omnia - My God and My All"
St. Francis of Assisi

GETTING TO KNOW OUR NOVICES

Katrina Holt

Submitted by Debbie Ventosa, TOF



Each of us has a unique faith journey and Katrina Holt's journey is no exception. As a cradle Catholic in a military family, Katrina moved to different locations across the US and maintained her Catholic faith.

During her college years she strayed, however, she returned to her faith following those years. Nursing is one of her vocations as she has been over twenty years serving the needs of those in hospice. She is currently on a leave following a wrist injury. She is a mother of two grown adults and wife to her husband, Tony, of twenty-one

years. Her husband is a mechanical engineer, who is answering the call to the priesthood in the traditional Ukrainian Catholic Church. About twelve years ago the rich liturgy of the Ukrainian Catholics touched the hearts of Katrina and her husband, Deacon Tony Holt, as they embraced this path to holiness. Katrina and Tony, will be spending the next three months in Ukraine for his studies to the priesthood. Orthodox Churches traditionally permit married men to be ordained, but they do not permit clergy to marry after ordination, and they cannot become Bishops unless they are widowers. Please keep them in your prayers.

Katrina's Franciscan journey was sparked by a visit with Julie Elkington, TOF, which led Katrina to reach out to the community for further information into the Third Order of St. Francis. She eventually discerned to begin Initial Formation as an Inquirer. During her initial formation she has been filled with joy as she embraces God's call. Detachment, poverty, obedience to the bishop, and submission to the will of God are just a few virtues she has been exercising. The history of St. Francis as well as his prayer life and approach to praying to Jesus has deepened her bond with our Lord. St. Francis' teaching to "forgive everyone, even those who hate you" has spurred her to contemplate and act. Katrina was blessed with a wonderful counselor named Clare which kindled an interest in learning more about the saint.

On February 12, 2024, Katrina was received as a novice at St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church, in Belfield, ND. The ceremony was celebrated by Fr. Nagy and her husband, Deacon Tony Holt. We welcome Katrina into the community and support her with our prayers and sacrifices.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR NOVICES

Naseem Najarro

Submitted by Debbie Ventosa, TOF



Naseem Najarro will boldly proclaim, “Never underestimate the power of a prayerful, peaceful, and faithful grandmother!” His journey began as a cradle catholic, raised primarily by his mother and maternal grandparents. His grandmother was a devoted catholic and a rock in the faith. At age eleven he received all three sacraments, baptism, confirmation and holy Communion, which caused a heartfelt outpouring of faith. He began playing pretend Mass and wanted to become a priest.

As Naseem advanced into High School, the flame of the faith extinguished and was replaced by revolutionary left wing ideas by Malcom X. He seriously contemplated the Muslim tradition. Then Covid hit and the parties, friends, and fun was replaced by isolation. It was in this period of time, Naseem questioned his mortality as well as his purpose in life. His disdain for the Catholic Church grew. He believed in many of the straw man arguments put forth by those opposed to the Church. Covid was going to actually be a great thing for Naseem.

While Naseem remained at home he couldn't help but notice his grandmother praying more intently and watching Mass daily. She was a contradiction to those around her. Her peace and joy was something Naseem had been searching for all his life. He started digging into church history and concluded Catholic theology was more robust and truthful than the best philosophers he had once idolized. But like so many of us he asked for a sign that his Catholic way was the true Church.

On a Thursday at adoration, he asked the Lord to show him if this was real. The following Monday, during a morning Mass, when he was to receive the holy Eucharist, the Host levitated from his hands and rotated vertically. Everything around him became a blur and he was in such a state of awe that he consumed the host and rushed back to his pew. From that moment on he believed.

After Naseem's pivotal moment, he then explored a vocation to become a priest with the Jesuits. However, our Lord made it apparent that his vocation was marriage to his wonderful wife, Yasmine, and raising their two blessings, Zeena and Zayn.

He felt his spiritual life needed nurturing and once again he began to explore further into his quest to deepen his faith. Naseem became attracted to the Franciscans for two reasons. First, because he had a Franciscan priest for a spiritual director, and second the heart of the Franciscan spirituality is love. He immediately felt at home with Franciscan charisms.

The Franciscan patron saint for his investiture is St. Maximilian Kolbe. Not only for his martyrdom but his core Franciscan values. He believes that Blessed John Duns Scotus, whom he admires greatly and prays for his path to sainthood, has dedicated much of his theological works to our Blessed Mother. His consecration and writings have impacted Naseem deeply. Naseem has drawn closer to the Immaculata so he hopes to evangelize and dedicate his own works to Our Lady.

The prayers, disposition, and consistent witness of his grandmother was the light that illuminated the journey back home to the Catholic Church. On February 10, 2024, Naseem was invested as a Novitiate, on the Feast of St. Jose Luis Sanchez del Rio martyred at age fourteen, a Cristero with the nickname, Tarcisius, after the early Christian saint martyred for protecting the Eucharist. Naseem, may you continue to lift the way for future generations.

QUOTES FROM ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE



“For Jesus Christ I am prepared to suffer still more.”

“A single Act of love makes the soul return to life.”

“If angles could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion.”

“The Cross is the school of love.

PRAYER TO MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

Grant, O Lord Jesus, that we, too, may give ourselves entirely without reserve to the love and service of our Heavenly Queen in order to better love and serve our fellowman in imitation of your servant, St. Maximilian Kolbe. Amen. Three Hail Mary's and a Glory Be.

ONGOING FORMATION ZOOM GATHERING MONTHLY SCHEDULE

Our discussion for February will be Article 71. Comments from each person should be short, no more than three minutes so everyone will have a chance to share.

ARTICLE 71:

The Franciscan spirit is particularly suited to the good ordering and safeguarding of family and social life. Tertiaries, in the first place, shall promote with loving care the Christian family; for upon it, in great measure, depends the welfare of the Church and of human society. So, in imitation of the Holy Family of Nazareth, they shall strive to uphold the particular aim and the sanctity of marriage and of the Christian family, to practice the home virtues, to accept out of love for God the burden even of a large family, and to excel all others in uprightness of life and in the spirit of sacrifice.

FROM ERIC WITOVER, TOF, AND ERICKA WITOVER, TOF

Eric and I would like to thank all our Franciscan family for the love you showed us. We received your generous donation to cover the cost of getting his lift chair repaired and then some! To Eric, as a newly professed member, it really showed him what we are about. We are deeply touched and will be offering prayers for all of you. Thank you from our hearts a million times over! We Love you! Pax et bonum! Ericka Witover, TOF

WAKE SERVICE FOR THE ISOLATED TERTIARY COMMUNITY Submitted by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

A wake service has currently been developed for the Isolated Tertiary Community. Mary Tag, TOF, and Novice Sandy DeWaal, have been working together in developing a virtual prayer service for those Isolated Tertiaries that are called by Sister Death. This will assist the community in living Rule Chapter 2, #14. We thank them for their “yes” in taking up this essential ministry for the community.

Rule Chapter 2, #14:

Let the members (who are) fellow city-dwellers, guests or hosts convene at the funeral of a deceased member, and together recite the Marian prayers instituted by Father Dominic, that is the Rosary, a third part for the heavenly solace of the deceased. Likewise let the priests during the divine service, (and) the laity, if they can having received the Eucharist, pray piously (and) willingly for the sempiternal peace of (their) departed brother.

BONNIE GILOVICH, TOF

LIVING TWICE



My brothers, my sisters, I leave you this day,
For the Lord our God has taken me away.

My trip was quick, short, and sweet,
For now, I lay my head at our Master's feet.

Gone for me are the pains of life,
No more will I feel ill or experience strife.

Those who had already passed all awaited me,
Joyously sailing across the heavenly sea.

But for now, I will say goodbye my friends,
In your prayers we will be together again.

One last thing I wish to say to all of you,
That St. Francis was waiting to greet me too.

Eric Witover, TOF

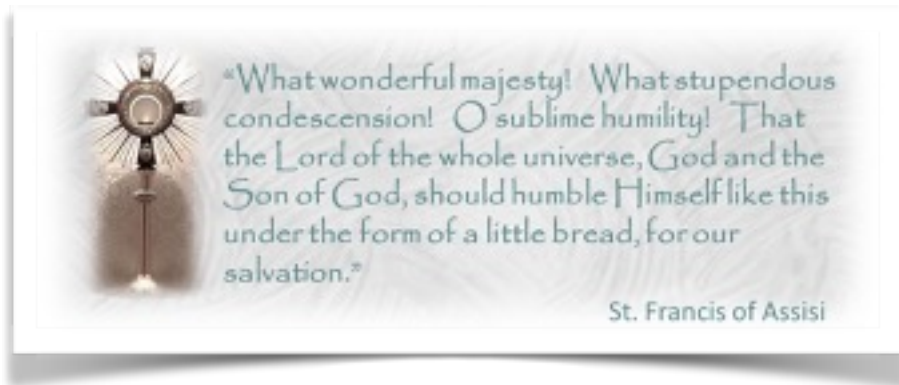
Dear brothers and sisters of the TOF community.

Blessings to you and yours.

Our dear sister, Bonnie Gilovich, TOF, met Sister Death on February 26, 2024. Bonnie, from Aberdeen, WA, was professed into the Secular Franciscan Order on November 1991. She transferred to our TOF Isolated Tertiary community on May 28, 2023.

We will be having a Franciscan Wake Service via Zoom on Tuesday, March 5th at 7:00 PM Eastern Time. Mary Tag, TOF, and Sandy DeWaal, TOF Novice, have kindly prepared a beautiful wake service for Bonnie. Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF, will be joining us live from his parish, St. George Byzantine Catholic Church in Olympia, WA. You will be receiving a zoom invite for the service on Monday the 4th. If you are able to attend please do. If unable to attend, please pray for the eternal repose of Bonnie's soul. If you are planning to attend, please be ready for the service downloading the "Franciscan Wake Service for Isolated Tertiaries available on our website under the "Ritual Prayers" in the menu bar.

May the Lord's mercy be upon Bonnie's soul.
Pax et bonum,
Pepe Ventosa, TOF



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION FOR 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—PART 3 VIRTUE AND VICE

Where there is poverty and joy, there is neither cupidity nor avarice.
(Study on the Admonitions of St. Francis of Assisi, Lothar Hardick, OFM, by:
Sandy Baden, TOF)



In Part III of the Admonition of Virtue and Vice Lothar Hardick, OFM explains the difference between cupidity and avarice. However, these words are basically the same as a single vice in his explanation. In looking up these words in the dictionary the word **cupidity** comes down to one word, **desire**, and the word **avarice** comes down to the word, **keep**.

This seems to make perfect sense when considering the thought of wanting something, **desire**, and already possessing it, and not wanting to let it go, **keep**. In this explanation one can understand these words are a vice, which Lothar Hardick, OFM explains. He also explains of the person who is a miser, possessed by his own possessions, which could explain a person who has a form of obsessive compulsive disorder rather than a miser. An obsessive compulsive disorder may not have been diagnosed at the time of Lothar Hardick's writing. However, one could say we all are, in some form or another, may have a desire to want or our wanting to keep.

Thinking about the word **poverty**, and in what context are we comparing poverty, and how does poverty bring us **joy**? When we think of poverty in our world today, poverty would be living in state or condition of a minimum standard and not having enough resources and essentials to sustain the basics for a standard of living. Hopefully, we are not in that condition to worry about. In the world of a Franciscan Tertiary we look at poverty in living within our means.

Poverty should bring us joy as we do not desire to have more to save up for personal gain. We are at peace for the love of God and joyful in desiring the will of God. If we desire (**cupidity**) more than what we need to sustain our way of life our joy would be lost to us. We would be filled with anxiety in our desire to obtain more (stuff) that is not necessary. Take a look in our closets. Is there something there we can drop off to cloth the poor or the homeless? Actually, we can look around our entire house and find things that could help someone with less and we would probably not even miss it.

Be content and concentrate on being joyful for the gifts given to us by God. We do not want to be the person Fr. Luther Hardick, OFM gives as an example of being possessed by our own possessions. We need to examine our lives as we live in this world that may lead us to the atrocities and chaos that surround us. Focus on our prayer and our love of our Lord Jesus Christ. And remember from St. Francis: “Where there is poverty and joy, there is neither **cupidity** nor **avarice**.”

A Quote from Pope Benedict on St. Francis of Assisi:

“St. Francis, who loved poverty as a means to follow Christ with dedication and total freedom, continues to be for us too an invitation to cultivate interior poverty in order to grow in our trust of God, also by adopting a sober lifestyle and a detachment from material goods.

Quote from Padre Pio: “Let our poverty bring us the joy of surrender to the providence of God”

Save the Date

MARCH 5: Bonnie Gilovich, TOF, Franciscan Wake Service via Zoom, 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time

MARCH 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 71

MARCH 10: REMINDER: Daylight Savings Time Begins

MARCH 14: IT NOVITIATE FORMATION GROUP 2: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time. You can sign in 15 minutes earlier for the Meeting begins.

MARCH 19: St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

MARCH 21: IT NOVITIATE FORMATION GROUP 3: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time. You can sign in 15 minutes earlier before the meeting begins.

MARCH: 24: Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.
On Monday Holy Week begins..

MARCH 31: Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord.

Let us keep in our prayers those people who are waiting for Inquiry to start as they discern their vocations into the Third Order Franciscans as Isolated Tertiaries.



