

September, 2025

Volume 6, Issue 9

# Il Poverello

The newsletter of the SS Francis and Clare Fraternity  
of the Third Order of St. Francis

*O holy Father, protect those in Your name (John 17:11) whom You have given to me in the world; they were Yours and You have given them to me. (John 17:6)  
And the words which You gave to me I have given to them... - St. Francis of Assisi*  
[www.thirdorderfranciscans.com](http://www.thirdorderfranciscans.com)



## Something to Consider

Our good St. Francis had a great devotion and love for Mary, the Mother of God. Mary, literally, was united in suffering with Jesus. **September is the month dedicated to the Seven Sorrows of Mary. What are those sorrows?**

1. **The Prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:34-35)** At the Presentation of Jesus shortly after His birth, Simeon foretold that He would be the rise and fall of many in Israel, and that Mary's heart would be pierced by a sword.
2. **The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-18)** Shortly after Jesus' birth, an angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him to take Jesus and Mary into Egypt immediately. Herod was about to begin the massacre of the Holy Innocents – the cruel mass murder in Bethlehem of all male boys under the age of two, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more."
3. **The Loss of Jesus for Three Days (Luke 2:41-50)** While on a Passover pilgrimage in Jerusalem when Jesus was 12, He became separated from Mary and Joseph among the crowd. When Mary and Joseph discovered He was gone, they searched for Him and discovered Him teaching in the Temple. In their great worry and relief, Mary gently rebuked Him. Jesus replied, "Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?"
4. **The Carrying of the Cross (John 19:17)** "So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by Himself, He went to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them."
5. **The Crucifixion of Jesus (John 19:18-30)** Jesus was crucified without mercy, with the greatest disrespect and in disgrace. His clothes were removed and the soldiers drew lots for them, and when He asked for water, he was given vinegar on a sponge. Mary never left His side, and suffered along with Him – as Simeon predicted.
6. **Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross (John 19:39-40)** "Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews."
7. **Jesus is Laid in the Tomb (John 19:39-42)** Joseph of Arimathea made arrangements with the Romans to remove Jesus's body and he placed it in a newly-carved stone tomb which was his own.

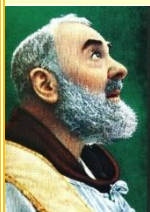
## Fraternity Council

Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM  
– Spiritual Director  
Roberto Meza, TOF  
– Minister  
James Miller, TOF –  
Vice-Minister  
Debbie Ventosa, TOF –  
Master of Formation  
Mary Dye, TOF – Secretary  
Therese Harper, TOF –  
Treasurer  
Virgil Daniel, TOF –  
Councilor  
Rick Dunlap, TOF –  
Councilor  
Pepe Ventosa, TOF –  
Councilor  
Susan Kramer, TOF  
– Newsletter

**Next Gathering – Sunday,  
September 21 – 1:30 PM  
St. Nicholas Byzantine Church  
1051 E. Robinson Ave.,  
Barberton, OH 44203**

**We are expecting you!**

## Franciscan Quote of the Month



*"Lean on the Cross of Jesus as the Virgin did and you will not be deprived of comfort.  
Mary was as if paralyzed before her crucified Son, but one cannot say that she was abandoned by Him.  
Rather, how much more did she love Him when she suffered and could not even weep?"*

St. Pio of Pietrelcina, OFM (1887-1968) – Feast Day September 23  
Franciscan Friar, Mystic, Stigmatist, Bilocationist, Fostered Devotion to Confession, the Mass, and the Rosary

## Eucharistic Adoration



### Sunday

Betty DeMarco, TOF  
Marlene Walker, TOF

### Monday

Rose Akins, TOF  
Louise Daniel, TOF  
Virgil Daniel, TOF  
Chris Devore, TOF  
LeeAnn Devore, TOF  
Judith Hoyt, TOF

### Tuesday

Michael Butts, TOF  
Eileen Dunlap, TOF  
Rick Dunlap, TOF  
Therese Harper, TOF  
Jerry Johnson  
Larry McNutt, TOF  
Lucy McNutt, TOF  
Maria Elena Meza, TOF

Roberto Meza, TOF  
Carol Perrine, TOF  
Cindy Russo, TOF

### Wednesday

Mary Dye, TOF  
Bill Marshall, TOF  
Jim Miller, TOF

### Thursday

Joanne Angeletti, TOF  
Denise Williams, TOF

### Friday

Robert Burtscher, TOF  
Pepe Ventosa, TOF

### Saturday

Susan Kramer, TOF

*The apostolate of daily Eucharistic Adoration is **VITAL** to our Fraternity. It does not depend only on the 26 brothers and sisters listed above and is not only limited to one day. If you wish to take a place on the Adoration list, please contact Susan Kramer. When you find yourself at church, say a prayer of adoration to our good Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.*

## September Anniversaries and Birthdays

### Profession Anniversaries

None this month!



### Birthdays

Rose Zaratsian, TOF – 9/10

Larry McNutt, TOF – 9/17

Virgil Daniel, TOF – 9/22

## Stand for Life



Rick Dunlap, TOF; and Bob Burtscher, TOF will be praying in front of the abortion clinic in Cuyahoga Falls in September. If you choose to witness to the Church's teaching on life by praying at the abortion clinic, don't forget our rules for your own safety.

**Remember to use the residential parking around the corner. Do not use business parking or Acme's parking – you will be towed. It may be easier to pray without distractions across the street, rather than in front of the clinic. Be sure to always remain on the sidewalk. If you cannot fulfill your commitment, find a substitute. **\*NEVER\* go alone to the clinic – pray from home if your partner will be absent and you cannot find a substitute.****

## Hospitality and Little Portion

Our September Gathering hospitality will be hosted by Therese Harper, TOF and Mary Dye, TOF. If you would like to assist, please contact Therese and Mary to see how you can help!



*As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.*

Rose Akins, TOF will prepare the Little Portion, and Bob Burtscher, TOF will deliver it. The Little Portion Apostolate ministers to the homeless and street people of Canton and Akron by providing a simple meal of sandwiches, fruit, and anything individually wrapped for our brothers and sisters in Christ – usually at least 2 meals. You may also add small sized toiletries such as Purell, soap, religious articles, disposable razors, etc. Tube socks are always very useful. Or you may want to deliver the offering. **If you are interested in helping, please contact Mary Dye, TOF.**

## The Stigmata of St. Francis – by Fr. Leonard Foley, OFM

The Chapel of the Stigmata is perched on the edge of the same sheer precipice where St. Francis stood two years before his death and was swept up into the mystery of God's overwhelming love for him and for humanity. St. Bonaventure, in his *Life of St. Francis*, describes Francis as being more inflamed than usual with the love of God as he began a special time of prayer at La Verna in September of 1224.

"His unquenchable fire of love for the good Jesus," Bonaventure writes, "was fanned into such a blaze of flames that so many waters; could not quench so powerful a love" (see Song of Songs 8:6-7).

Bonaventure goes on: "While Francis was praying on the mountainside, he saw a Seraph with six fiery and shining wings descend from the height of heaven. And when in swift flight the Seraph had reached a spot in the air near the man of God, there appeared between the wings the figure of a man crucified, with his hands and feet extended in the form of a cross and fastened to a cross. Two of the wings were lifted above his head, two were extended for flight and two covered his whole body.



"When Francis saw this, he was overwhelmed and his heart was flooded with a mixture of joy and sorrow. He rejoiced because of the gracious way Christ looked upon him under the form of a Seraph, but the fact that he was fastened to a cross *pierced his soul with a sword of compassionate sorrow.*"

When the vision disappeared, writes Bonaventure, Francis was left with a "marvelous ardor" in his heart. At the same time, there "was imprinted on his body markings that were no less marvelous."

These markings were the stigmata, the wounds of Christ crucified.

There are two things to dwell on here. First is the Seraph. Seraphs are angels closest to God, burning with love as they bow before God, shouting, "Holy, holy, holy!" Their fiery wings suggest the flaming intensity of God's love that Christ communicated to Francis, which, in turn, set Francis' heart afire. The word *seraphic* is often used to describe Francis' passionate style of relating to God and is often applied to the Franciscan Order, which is sometimes called the Seraphic Order.

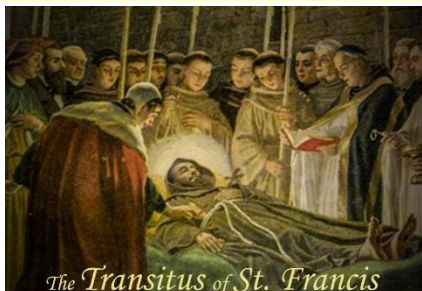
Second, we focus on "the gracious way that Christ looked upon him." This is something of a repeat of the vision Francis had in the beginning of his spiritual life in which "Jesus appeared to him fastened on a cross. Francis' soul melted at the sight, and the memory of Christ's passion was so impressed on the innermost recesses of his heart that from that hour whenever Christ's crucifixion came to mind, Francis could scarcely contain his sighs . . ." (Bonaventure's *Life of St. Francis*).

In themselves, sickness and suffering are tragic and senseless. But Christ has sanctified even the wounds of human nature. This terrible scourge can be changed into a blessing by being united to the sufferings of Christ. Many people feel that this sublime privilege does not count for them. They are not good enough. Their sickness is not that important. They believe it is a punishment. But Christ wants to take your individual suffering and unite it to his.

Of all the statements about our continuing Christ's life, none is more astounding than this: "I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church" (Col 1:24).

Francis received the highest proof of Christ's love and need of him when his body was literally put on a cross with Christ by the reality of the five wounds of the stigmata.

## Transitus Information



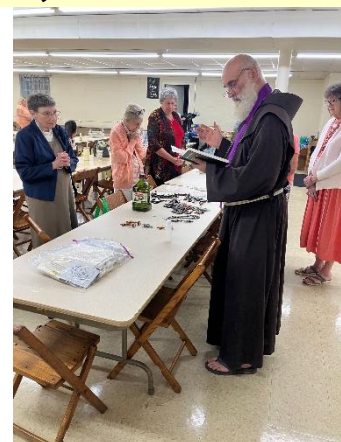
The Transitus will once again take place at St. Nicholas Church at 7 PM on Friday, October 3. Vice-Minister Jim Miller will lead us in prayer and reflection. Please take the time to participate in this Franciscan devotion of the death of our good St. Francis!

## 2025 Tridua Report – Submitted by Debbie Ventosa, TOF

The 2025 Tridua, which took place in August, was very well-attended, with 40 who joined in a joyful weekend of prayer and reflection. Elizabeth Lemire celebrated her Investiture in the Third Order as an Isolated Tertiary. Frank Bihlman was Professed into the Third Order as an Isolated Tertiary.

The second annual Tridua was held in Youngstown at Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted Shrine August 22-24 2025. We enjoyed sharing our faith, formation, and fellowship with over 40 other Franciscans from local fraternities as well as isolated Tertiaries from Indiana, Australia and Alaska. From Indiana, Elizabeth Lemere enjoyed her Investiture as a TOF following the noon Mass on Sunday. Frank Bihlman was permanently professed as an Isolated Tertiary TOF after the noon Mass. Welcome to the community Elizabeth and Frank! Many enjoyed meeting Gordon Smith TOF from Australia and he was gracious enough to share his faith journey after one of the shared meals. Gordon will continue his Franciscan vocation with formation to become an OFM in the Holy Land. A collection was taken up for Gordon to assist him in this endeavor. Our prayers of Thanksgiving for these new members and Gordon!

The Theme for the Tridua was the Threefold Way, A Hierarchical Order of Spiritual Progress, by St. Bonaventure. Father Vit gave several teachings covering the Purgative, Illumination, and Perfection was toward union with God. There was time for Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Confession, Adoration, and quiet prayer. Gina Love sang and accompanied the group with her guitar music at the Saturday evening Bonfire. Sunday following the profession and Investiture a reception with hot dogs grilled and a congratulatory cake was served with the many side dishes. After lunch, Fr. Vit blessed religious articles. So much gratitude for those who planned, contributed with food, kitchen help, setup and take down. It could not have been done without all helping out!



## Formation Class Updates by Debbie Ventosa, TOF

After the Come and See in August, we had 15 individuals express interest in attending Inquiry Classes! Our first meeting will be September 15 from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at St. George Hall at St. Nicholas Parish. Their Formators will be Rose Akins, TOF, Denise Williams, TOF, Marlene Walker, TOF, Virgil Daniel, TOF, and Dennis Gacioch, TOF. Professed members are most welcome to attend!

Our Novices continue to be under the direction of Virgil Daniel, TOF, Carol Perrine, TOF, Rose Akins, TOF, and Denise Williams, TOF. Our beloved Novices are hard at work in their studies as they progress toward Profession Day, as is the trusty Formation Team! Please continue to pray for the students and the Formation Team!

These are the dates for formation for the current novices:

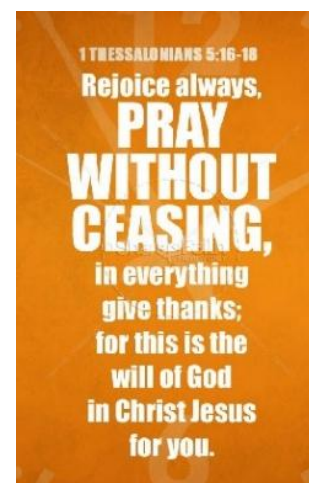
**September 22    October 6 and 20    November – Practice and Holy Permanent Profession**

## Eucharistic Adoration and Daily Prayer

Council asks those of us who participate in Eucharistic Adoration – and the rest of our fraternity – to remember the following intentions every day when you pray:

1. **The spiritual protection of our fraternity and of all our members.**
2. **Those in our fraternity who are sick, and their families.**
3. **For the spiritual and physical health and protection of Pope Leo XIV.**
4. Our bishops and their intentions: **Bishop David Bonnar, Bishop Robert Pipta, Bishop Earl Fernandes, and Bishop Edward Malesic, JCL.**
5. The Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province of the OFM, particularly **Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, Fr. Dennis Arambasick, OFM, and Fr. Patrick Boyle, OFM**, who is the Provincial Minister.
6. **Our beloved, hard-working pastors and parish priests, and our parishes**, including **Fr. Miron Kerul'-Kmec, Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF, Fr. Ryan Furlong, TOF, Fr. John Rickert, FSSP, TOF** of Illinois, who is an Isolated Tertiary.
7. **Fr. Gastor Temu Bahati and Frater Francis Tumaini** of the Diocese of Moshi.
8. **All the seminarians of St. Mary Seminary and Borromeo Seminary in Cleveland**, which serves the Youngstown and Cleveland Dioceses, as well as **the seminarians of SS. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Seminary**, which serves the Eparchy of Parma. Our fraternity has spiritually adopted **Arthur Bodenschatz**, (St. Paul, North Canton) and **William Martzaklis** (St. Paul, North Canton) from the Diocese of Youngstown, **Joseph Rohan**, (St. Joseph Parish, Cuyahoga Falls), **Alex Krukemeyer**, (Our Lady of Victory Parish, Tallmadge), and **John Paul Antalek** (St. Mary Parish, Akron), all from the Diocese of Cleveland. These men and all seminarians are the future leaders and servants of our Church.
9. Please add prayers **for the safety and protection of our Ukrainian brothers and sisters, and for the conversion of Russia.** Also, **for the protection of Catholic priests, religious, and lay people everywhere, particularly in Nigeria, Peru, Nicaragua, the Middle East, the Far East, and other countries where our Faith is attacked.**
10. For the **protection of all life**, born and unborn, womb to tomb.
11. For the blessing of **an increase in priestly and religious vocations – including the Third Order Franciscans – and for an increase of faithful Catholic marriages and families.**
12. For the spiritual and physical health and protection of **Jakin Miller and all FOCUS missionaries**, who are working to keep the Faith among university students nationwide.

It is part of our holy Franciscan vocation to prayerfully support our fellow Franciscans, the Pope, our bishops, our priests, and seminarians and anyone in distress and danger. **We have no Order without prayerful Franciscans, no priests without our seminarians, no Eucharist without our priests, and no Church without the Eucharist.** We all work together doing the mission God has given us, for His glory. All these individuals on the list sacrifice daily for us, and it is our privilege to pray for them!





## FRANCISCAN REMINDER

We begin our monthly gatherings with prayer inside the Church. As we pray Lectio Divina, we continue meditating on the Word of God as we return to our table. Please remember to keep **Holy Silence** during this transition until after sharing the word at your table.

**BTW – Does This Belong To You?  
It was left at the picnic.**

***Please contact Mary Dye to claim it!***



## FOCUS Missionary Update!

Jakin Miller, the grandson of Jim and Nettie, whom we have adopted in his missionary work with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), had the great blessing to go on pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi, and other holy sites with a FOCUS group that included several seminarians. It is good to remember that a pilgrimage is not the same thing as a vacation. It is not a luxury trip, but is instead an opportunity to deepen our connections with our Faith at holy sites.

Jakin has returned to his assignment at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston, where he continues his work in spiritually supporting and keeping the University students close and active in their Catholic Faith. Missionaries like Jakin do exemplary work among the students nationwide, including schools here in Ohio. They not only serve the students, but also the parishes and pastors who welcome them and the students. They make a difference for the good!

Here is a reflection from one of the seminarians on the trip: <https://quinnccunningham.substack.com/p/joining-something-great>

## Lord, it is Good for Us to be Together!

We celebrated our annual fraternity picnic at the grounds of Queen of Heaven Parish in Green on Sunday, August 18. We were blessed with beautiful, warm, sunny weather, plenty of good food, and the companionship of our Franciscan family.

After praying Grace together, we feasted on a variety of fresh salads, fresh fruit, fried chicken (generously provided by our brother, Bill Marshall, TOF), and lots of delicious desserts. It was good to share our picnic feast and talk together.

Following our yummy picnic meal, we thanked God together by praying the Franciscan Crown Rosary, led by Bob Burtscher, TOF.

It was a lovely day to spend with one another, rejoicing on the many gifts and graces God has bestowed on us throughout the year!

***Our September Gathering will be Sunday, September 21 at 1:30 PM at St. Nicholas Parish!***

### ***Save the Date (September, the Month of the Seven Sorrows of Mary)***

September 7	Canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati
September 8	Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
September 14	Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – and Pope Leo XIV's 70 <sup>th</sup> Birthday
September 15	Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows
September 17	Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis
September 21	September Gathering – 1:30 PM at St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish
September 23	Feast of St. Pio of Pietrelcina
September 25	Feast of St. Louis IX of France – Patron of the Third Order Franciscans
October 3	Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi – 7 PM, St. Nicholas Byzantine Church
October 4	Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
November 8	Day of Recollection – Shrine of Our Lady, Comforter of the Afflicted - Youngstown



"Let us bind  
ourselves tightly to  
the **Sorrowful Heart**  
**of our Heavenly**  
**Mother** and reflect  
on its boundless  
grief and how  
precious is our soul."

*Saint Padre Pio*

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