



Soldiers of Christ

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

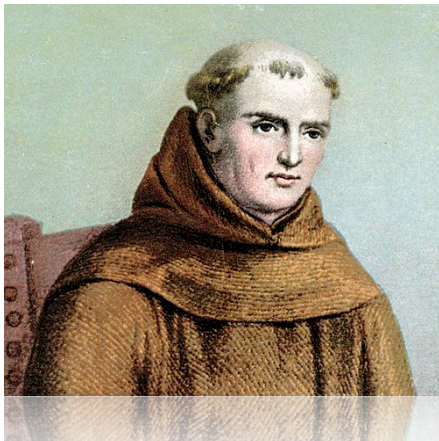
July 2025

Sandy Baden, TOF, Editor

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SAINT JUNIPERO SERRA FERRER, O.F.M., 1713-1784

Feast Day: July 1



Saint Junipero Serra Ferrer, OFM, commonly known as **Junipero Serra**, a Catholic priest, and was a missionary of the Franciscan Order. He founded a mission in Baja California and established eight of the twenty-one Spanish missions in California from San Diego to San Francisco.

Miquel Josep Serra i Ferrer, was born in a village of Petra on the island of Majorca off the coast of Spain, November 24, 1713. When Miquel was seven years old, he was working with his parents in the fields cultivating wheat and beans, and tending cattle. Near

his house he was often seen visiting the local Franciscan friary at the church of San Bernardino. He attended the friars' primary school and learned reading, writing, mathematics, latin, and religion. Miquel was gifted with a good voice, joined the choir, and sang at the the church of San Bernardino.

Miquel's parents enrolled him in a Franciscan school and he became a novice in the Franciscan order. On September 14, 1730 Serra entered the Franciscan Order at Palma. He took the name of Junipero in honor of Brother Juniper, who was one of the first Franciscans of St. Francis of Assisi. Junipero became a priest in 1738 and began to teach philosophy at the Convent de San Francisco after he earned an ecclesiastical license to teach.

One of the well known missions in California founded by Fr. Junipero Serra Ferrer, OFM was Carmel-by-the-Sea in Carmel, California, built in 1797, and is now a National Historic Landmark. It was the second mission built by



Franciscan missions. This mission was Junipero Serra's favorite, (Mission Carmel). He died on August 28, 1784 and is interred beneath the chapel floor.

Junipero Serra founded more than eight missions in California between 1769 and 1782: San Diego, July 16, 1769; San Carlos, (Carmel) June 3, 1770; San Antonio, July 14, 1771; San Gabriel, September 8, 1771; San Luis Obispo, September 1, 1772, San Francisco, October 9 1776, Santa Clara, January 17, 1777; and San Buenaventura, March 31, 1782. He was present at the founding of Presidio Santa Barbara, April 17, 1782.



Fr. Antonio Peyri

In finding these missions throughout California, Junipero Serra's goal was to convert the Indians and teach the gospel of our Lord. One of the missions founded after the death of Junipero Serra was Mission San Luis Rey in 1798. Fr. Antonio Peyri was put in charge of the construction and the Mission itself. Fr. Antonio Peyri also is currently the name of the Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Assembly in Vista. This mission is in Oceanside and is the largest of the 21 missions in California.

San Luis Rey Mission



Above is a picture of the Peruvian Peppertree, which the seeds were planted in 1830, and today its heavy branches are currently being held up by wood posts. Picture was taken in December 2019.

Through all that Junipero Serra suffered physically with a disabled leg and chest he managed to visit the missions from San Diego to San Francisco that he founded with more than 600 miles of travel. He died at the mission of Carmel-by-the-Sea of tuberculosis at the age of 70. The leadership of the Franciscan missionary effort was continued by Fr. Fermin Lasuen, OFM who had founded San Luis Rey Mission in Oceanside, California. He was the founder of nine of the twenty-one Spanish missions.

Fr. Junipero Serra Ferrer, OFM was beatified by Pope John Paul II on September 25, 1988 and Pope Francis canonized him in Washington, DC on September 23, 2015.

Sandy Baden, TOF

THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION
Submitted by: Bob Zupanek, TOF



*The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion and the surrounding area is simply spiritually amazing; there is a peace there that just cannot be described. For those who have not had the opportunity to visit this shrine we would encourage you to prayerfully consider visiting the site, as our Blessed Mother said, "Go and fear nothing, I will help you." **LEARN THE STORY OF THE FIRST AND ONLY APPROVED MARIAN APPARITION SITE IN THE U.S.*** (See next Article)

Shrine of Our Lady of Champion



While you are there, you will want to visit the Museum in Peshigo, Wisconsin, the site of the great fire of 1871, and the site of the miracle. We had a chance to visit the site again on this visit, and this gave us the opportunity to participate in their annual "Pilgrimage." Needless to say, we jumped on the opportunity.

*As it says "The Walk to Mary" winds approximately 22 miles from De Pere, WI, along the banks of the Fox River and the Niagara Escarpment to the town of Champion, WI. This one-of-a-kind Pilgrimage proves to be a physical and spiritual test in perseverance for nearly everyone." **BUT**, you only need to walk to your own limitation. There were some who chose not to walk at all and stayed at the Shrine devoting their time to prayer and meditation. "You only need to do what you are comfortable in doing, to suite your comfort and ability. You can easily join-in at any point along the way."*

The pilgrimage is a scheduled annual event on “The first Saturday in May every year,” with literally thousands of pilgrims attending, but nothing keeps you from visiting the site and heading out on your own whenever you are there. On the day of the pilgrimage this year, the attendance reached over 7,000 people! Yes, 7,000!

Keep in mind, the distance between The Shrine of our Lady of Champion and our Franciscan home of The Shrine of Our Lady, Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown, Ohio, is approximately 450 miles. You need not visit both locations going to these approximately 450 miles. You need not visit both locations, going to these sites is your personal choice.

On this visit, we decided and were blessed to stay at what had been the convent for St. Katherine Drexel-Mary Kaukauna, WI. This facility is covered under the Elizabeth Ministry International, we chose the Clergy Suite for our accommodations and were so pleased with our decision. It allowed us the opportunity to tour so many religious sites including the Basilica of St. Josaphate. The day we arrived there, they had just announced the election of Pope Leo XIV, an American from Chicago!

We could go on and on, but you may find what best fits your needs and desires. Let us offer other suggested sites while on your pilgrimage.

walktomary.com

championshrine.org

Museum in Peshitio, WI. (The deadliest fire in US history—that resulted in the miracle).

holyhill.com

Rudolph Grotto, Rudolph, WI

This is just a small part of a long stream of sites we were able to visit. We wish we could talk to you all there.

We encourage all of you to consider coming with us next May, or on your own. So next year you can join us as we “Walk to Mary.”



OUR LADY OF CHAMPION, BY: Sandy Baden, TOF Feast Day, October 9th



October 9th is considered to be a Solemnity of Our Lady of Champion which is celebrated annually.

The story begins with Adele Brice, who was born on January 30, 1831 in Belgium. Due to an accident when Adele was very young she became blind in her right eye, but that did not stop her from being cheerful, and fervent in piety. Her one desire was to devote her life to be a religious teaching sister in Belgium.

Her parents decided to move to America, but she kept her desire even if it was in America. The family joined the largest Belgian settlement in Champion, Wisconsin. Adele eventually became a TOF and formed a community under the lay Franciscan Third Order rule.

Adele took a walk in the woods and saw standing between two trees a woman who did not speak. The same incident occurred on a Sunday, October 9, 1859 as she walked the same road on her way to Mass. After speaking to the parish priest, which he advised Adele, "If it happens again, ask in Gods name who are you and what do you want of me."

On her way home she saw the Lady again and asked her question. The lady replied, **"I am the Queen of Heaven who prays for the conversion of sinners, and I wish you to do the same. You received Holy Communion this morning and that is well. But you must do more. Make a general confession and offer Communion for the conversion of sinners. If they do not convert and do penance, my Son will be obliged to punish them."**

Adele's friends who were with her could not see the Lady, but asked why. "Kneel," said Adele, "The Lady says she is the Queen of Heaven." The Lady said, **"Blessed are they that believe without seeing."** Then the 5

Queen of Heaven asked, ***“What are you doing here in idleness while your companions are working in the vineyard of my Son?”***

Adele inquired, “What more can I do, dear Lady?” as she was weeping. ***“Gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation.”*** “But how shall I teach them who know so little myself?” Adele said.

“Teach them their catechism, how to sign themselves with the sign of the Cross, and how to approach the sacraments; that is what I wish you to do. Go and fear nothing, I will help you.” She then vanished. Adele’s mission was to become a teacher for the Lord and the Blessed Lady.

In October of 1871, a drought caused a fire in a nearby town of Peshitigo. It raged through the entire area. In fear of their lives the families Adele had been educating rushed to the shrine grounds. They processed around the shrine grounds praying the Rosary asking the Blessed Mother for help. As they prayed through the night the rains returned and put out the fire.



The Shrine Chapel



Sr. Adele Joseph Brice, TOF

In December of 2010, Bishop Ricken of Green Bay determined the apparitions of Our Lady were “worthy of belief.” August of 2016 the USCCB declared the Shrine of Champion a ‘National Shrine’ by formal decree. On April 20, 2023, the Name of the shrine was changed to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, and remains the only Catholic shrine in America with a Church-approved Marian Apparition Site.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR FAMILY, Elizabeth Lemire, TOF
Submitted by: Debbie Ventosa, TOF



We welcome our new IT, Elizabeth Lemire, TOF who transferred from the Confraternity of Penitents to the Third Order. Elizabeth has had a journey that many will be able to relate to and appreciate the blessings that arise from the trials in life. Elizabeth was the first of five children of Catholic parents who lived in Auburn, Maine. Her mom was a nurse and her dad started his own business. The family spent much of their time in the winter on the ski slopes in the Maine mountains. Throughout her life, Elizabeth never stopped seeking God, even as a small child she recalls feeling close to God. Her call to a nurturing profession developed as the oldest child caring for the younger children, most especially her youngest brother, who she and her younger sister taught to ski!

After graduating from high school, she attended the University of Michigan School of Nursing and obtained her BSN and went on to pass the state board exams. During her Senior year she married a Catholic and the marriage proved very challenging. She had two children, a boy and a girl. Working part time and raising the children and attending to a house, Elizabeth and her husband drifted from the church. She sought help with the marriage through various means available at the time to no avail. After 25 years of trying to salvage the marriage, she sought a divorce and annulment, which was granted. Much healing was needed which was done over 7-8 years with the help of priests and Spiritual Directors. During this time, she answered the call to care for her aging parents, which she dutifully managed until just before they had to enter a care facility and another family member took over. During this transition, Elizabeth went to Quebec to pray for the family at the Basilica of St. Anne de Beaupre in front of the relic of St. Anne. She continued to pray for healing of her first family until unity and reconciliation was granted, about six years.

Her Franciscan journey started in 2000 when she started formation at St. Anthony's Monastery in Kennebunkport, Maine with the OFS. She professed in 2003 and in 2005 moved to Washington State to be with her daughter. There she transferred to Poverello Fraternity and became treasurer of the group. In 2015 she began with the Confraternity of Penitents, following the original 1221 rule and professed in 2020. Due to an urgent need in the main apostolate of the CFP in 2021, she offered her services as the House Administrator of the Woman's House in Fort Wayne, IN. where she created a model of community living and prayer, based upon a lecture given by Bishop of the Fort Wayne

South Bend Diocese. It was approved by the Diocesan Chancellor. She attended a Day of Recollection and the Tridua in 2024 and prayerfully discerned that the Rule of 1883 was much better suited for her spiritual needs during this phase of her life. The IT gatherings have given Elizabeth the balance of a monthly community gathering where she learns and is directed, then reflects on what God wants her to do. There is a depth of knowledge and a quiet inner joy that Elizabeth humbly radiates to all she meets. I would encourage you to get to know her and you will be blessed. Elizabeth, Welcome to the TOF.

The Saint Anne de Beupre Shrine in Quebec



FROM TERTIARY TO OFM **Submitted by Pepe Ventosa, TOF**



It is a great joy that Gordon Smith, TOF, Isolated Tertiary, has discerned to enter the First Order of Friars Minor (OFM). He will begin his formation on September 15, 2025 under the Province of the Custody of the Holy Land. “Custodia Terrae Sancte,” located at Saint Saviour’s Monastery in the Christian quarters in Jerusalem.

Gordon was born in the Fiji Islands. He received his nursing degree in Australia in 2018 and during the Covid-19 epidemic worked in the Covid ward at a nursing home providing care to the elderly. It was during this time he discerned a call to the Third Order of St. Francis. He attended the 1st group of Initial Formation with the Isolated Tertiaries and was professed into the Third Order of St. Francis on June 18, 2023.

As He prepares for his time of formation with the OFM, he will be leaving Australia at the end of June to spend some time with his family in Fiji. In August he will be flying to California to visit family and friends and will then travel across the country to New York for his flight to Tel Aviv in September. On his way to New York he will make a stop in Ohio to attend our Tridua Retreat and meet those Tertiaries attending the retreat.

Gordon has been a blessing to our community and will bring many spiritual gifts with him to minister in the Holy Land. He asks for our prayers during this time of study and discernment. If a pilgrimage to the Holy Land is in your future, know that you have Gordon to welcome you and your fellow pilgrims.



***“May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
May He look on you with kindness and grant you His peace.”***



ISOLATED TERTIARY PROFESSION CEREMONY

“CONGRATULATIONS,” Sharif for his Profession Ceremony on June 7, 2025. The Ceremony was held at Holy Family Parish, Little Falls, New York. The Celebrant was Fr. Brian Slezak.

Sharif has stated, “My heart is finding relief and peace in discovering the Franciscan Way and I pray that with God’s help, and continual practice, it will only deepen and grow.”



VIRTUAL MONTHLY GATHERING



On our monthly zoom gathering, July 3, 2025, **Kennedy Pugh, TOF**, will present Admonition 2: **The Evil of Self-Will, Exhortation of St. Francis.** “We are brothers to him when we fulfill the will of the Father who is in heaven.”

Kennedy was professed on March 19, 2025. St. Padre Pio is the Franciscan saint that inspired Kennedy as he when he was a child, along with St. Francis of Assisi. He has stated, “God has done a work in my life and is still calling me to ‘Go Deeper!’



Please remember the TRIDUA, The Franciscan Tertiaries OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception, August 22-24, 2025. **(For further information, please see the additional attachment in email.)**



"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
Nancy Caraballo***

TUESDAY

Linda Menser, TOF

WEDNESDAY

***Luis Guzman, TOF
Judith Inglesby, TOF
Paul & Mary Tag, TOF
Nancy Caraballo***

THURSDAY

Bob Zupanek, TOF

FRIDAY

***Linda Menser, TOF
Pepe Ventosa, TOF
Sandy DeWaal, TOF***

SATURDAY

***Ericka Witover, TOF
Peter Emau, TOF
Miguel Mahan, TOF***

SUNDAY

Linda Menser, TOF

Please pray 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 the intentions of the members of the Isolated Tertiaries Community.

ADMONITION XI

Scandal at Another's Fall

**Study of the Admonitions of St. Francis of Assisi, Lothar Hardick, OFM
by: Sandy Baden, TOF**



Nothing should upset a religious (=a servant of God) except sin. And even then, no matter what kind of sin has been committed, if he is upset or angry for any other reason except charity, he is only drawing blame upon himself (See Rom. 2:5). A religious (= a servant) lives a good life and avoids sin when he is never angry or disturbed at anything. Blessed the man who keeps nothing for himself, but renders Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's (see Mt. 22:21).

We are still talking about Charity as we were in the two previous Admonitions IX and X. Here we are looking at the evil consequences of sin for ourselves with "Scandal at Another's Fall." Lothar Hardick, OFM, as he says, "again and again" to make a point of importance, as he mentions at least several times in this Admonition, "Nothing should upset a religious (= Servant of God) except sin." How do we accomplish this or overcome the temptations to look at another's fault in a manner that does not place us to sin?

We can easily blame our accuser or our enemy with all kinds of excuses or defensive reactions to help us feel better or be justified in thinking we are right and the other person is wrong. What good does it do in the situation? Another thought comes to mind, if we look at our accuser or our enemy with love, rather than thoughts that we should not act upon, we remain at peace and can rationalize the situation calmly and patiently for a resolution. Our thoughts, therefore, should remain within prayer for ourselves and our accuser. Our Lord Jesus Christ will lead us as we do God's will.

A Priest recently said in his homily, "we should pray everyday to do the will of God." What a beautiful practice in our prayer. Another Priest advised if your thoughts are a problem say a prayer even if you have to 12

say that prayer a hundred times a day, just do it!" This is another way to avoid the temptation if we lack the love of our neighbor, but can we remember to pray? Habits and obedience are important.

"Let us not become blind, as Lothar Hardick points out, that everything belongs to God and it is good. We should love the sinner and resolve to cling to God's will and we should have the forces that impel us to win within our power." And again we reiterate, "No one should be upset by another's evil action." Also, "Nothing should upset a religious (= a servant of God) except sin."

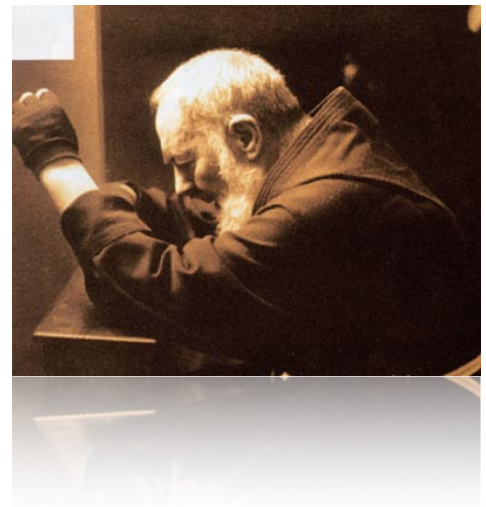
WHAT DID ST. PADRE PIO SAY ABOUT SCANDAL AT ANOTHER'S FALL?



"St. Padre Pio cautioned against getting entangled in scandal and intrigues, emphasizing that these are trivial compared to the ultimate goal of heaven. He believed that gossiping about others meant removing them from one's heart, and by doing so, also removing Jesus from one's heart. Padre Pio also advised that adversity and suffering are tests that purify the soul and bring one closer to God."

"Do not fear adversity; because by it, your soul is placed at the foot of the cross which takes you to the doors of Heaven. There you will find Him, Who triumphed over death, Who will introduce you to eternal happiness."

"Padre Pio, who experienced significant trials and unjust accusations, demonstrated that even when facing difficult situations, one can offer their pain for others and remain united with God."



Save the Date

JULY 1: SAINT JUNIPERO SERRA FERRER, OFM

JULY 3: IT ZOOM GATHERING: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time. Discussion Topic: Kennedy Pugh, TOF will present Admonition #2: The Evil of Self-Will.

JULY 10: IT NOVITIATE FORMATION GROUP 4: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time.

JULY 17: INITIAL FORMATION PROGRAM GROUP 5: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time.

AUGUST: Franciscan Tertiaries Province of the Immaculate Conception Tridua, **AUGUST 22-24, 2025. (Please see additional attachment)**

