

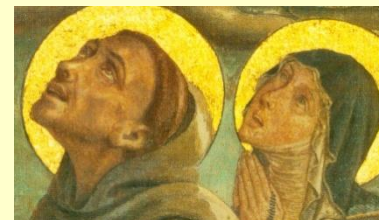
January, 2026

Volume 7, Issue 1

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



Something to Consider

Not so long ago, there was a Holy Name Society at every parish. This organization was composed of men from every calling and every age – single men, married family men, and priests. They were faithful supporters of parish life that strengthened us in our Faith, much like the Knights of Columbus. The Holy Name Society often participated in devotions such as Benediction, the Rosary, and far more. And they offered an outstanding example of how Catholic men support their parishes through their faithfulness and devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, with great joy!

In 1274 at the 2nd Council of Lyons, Pope Gregory X asked Dominican Blessed John of Vercelli, the Master General of the Dominican Order, to encourage devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, and to combat heresy. This was promoted by clergy and eventually lay Catholic men. St. Bernardine of Siena, a Franciscan preacher, zealously promoted veneration of Jesus' name across Italy. Pope Clement VII granted permission to the Franciscan Order in 1530 to celebrate the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, solidifying its place in Franciscan Spirituality. From its strong Franciscan roots the devotion eventually extended to the entire Catholic Church in 1721. St. Bernadine of Siena and St. John of Capistrano developed the Litany of the Holy Name, which may be a holy help to add to our prayer life during this month of January.

Catholics today would do well to honor the Holy Name of Jesus. Our culture carelessly uses profanity and insults those who uphold the values we hold dear in our Faith, such as respect for God, family life, decency, and the dignity of life, no matter what one's situation, born and unborn. In our society, it has become normal to disrespect the Sacrament of Marriage, and to belittle those who maintain chastity and purity in the vocations they are given by God. And, tragically, to take the name of God in vain.

By honoring the Holy Name of Jesus, we can make a profound difference in our nation and worldwide. We must never be hesitant to defend our Church, which was founded by Jesus Himself. And this includes being reverent in our speech and the way we live our lives. Like our good St. Francis, living in imitation of Jesus and His Holy Mother.

Let's make 2026 the year we all make a difference for the better, right where we are, in our families, our parishes, and wherever we find ourselves. Every good action starts with the first step forward!

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

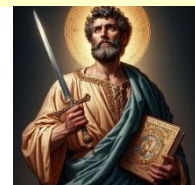
**Next Gathering– Sunday,
January 21 – 1:30 PM
St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish
1051 E. Robinson Ave.,
Barberton, OH 44203**

**We are expecting you!
Please meet at St. George Hall,
off the parking lot!!!**

Franciscan Quote of the Month

So great is the Most Holy Name of Jesus that God highly exalted Him and gave Him the Name that is above every name, so that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bend; in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**St. Paul the Apostle (5 AD-65 AD) – Feast Days Jan 25, Feb 10, Jun 29, Jun 30 & Nov 18
Convert, Preacher, Writer of Books of the New Testament, Martyr**



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, TOF
Larry McNutt, TOF
Lucy McNutt, TOF
María 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 27 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. He will never abandon us.*

January Anniversaries and Birthdays

Profession Anniversaries

Bill Marshall, TOF – 34 Years



Birthdays

Eileen Dunlap, TOF – 1/7
Chris Devore, TOF – 1/9
Kenny Green, TOF – 1/12
John Wilson, TOF – 1/13
Roberto Meza, TOF – 1/16
Pepe Ventosa, TOF – 1/20
Lucy McNutt, TOF – 1/22
María Elena Meza, TOF – 1/25

Stand for Life



There are no scheduled Stand for Life attendees until Spring because of harsh weather conditions. 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

!

The Little Portion ministry is suspended until Spring because of the harsh weather conditions. 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.**



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

Formation Class Updates by Debbie Ventosa, TOF

Tony Perez continues actively participating in Initial formation via zoom with the Isolated Tertiaries and the community gatherings as he enters the final discernment period as a Novice. Tony has been consistently attending formation with excellent participation and mastering the materials for each lesson. Continue to pray as he nears the end of his novitiate and discernment toward permanent profession.

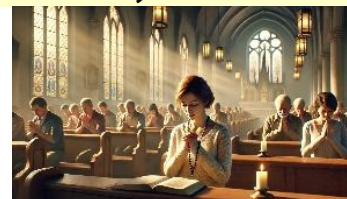
Please continue to pray for the students and the Formation Team!

These are the dates for formation for the current Inquirers:

Formation Class for Inquirers (9 Inquirers!): **January 5 January 12 January 19**

TOF Community Prayer Chain – Submitted by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

We will be joining the prayer chain requests from each fraternity and isolated members so that all Tertiaries can join in intercessory prayer with each other. This prayer chain will be referred to as the **"TOF Community Prayer Chain."** The procedure for sending a prayer request will stay the same: just send your prayer request to the fraternity chain leader (Eileen). She will be forwarding your request to the other prayer chain leaders.



This community prayer chain is only for members of the TOF community (professed members and novices.) Prayer requests for non-members (Inquirers, Novices, family members, close friends) can continue to be forwarded to the fraternity prayer chain leader as you have done in the past. Just know that these will not be forwarded to the TOF Community Prayer Chain. This is to avoid multiple emails/texts from other communities.

Each prayer request contains private and personal information, where a member requests our community to pray for them. As such, this prayer request is not to be forwarded to anyone or any other prayer chain outside of our TOF community.

Visit from Embrace



A representative from Embrace will be visiting our January Gathering on January 21, 2026. Embrace is a non-denominational, pro-life organization that assists pregnant mothers, fathers, and families with food, clothing, counseling, and other forms of support.

We will be taking a collection for their good works at the Gathering. Embrace would be very grateful to receive infant and toddler clothing, baby formula, infant supplies (diaper lotion, diapers, baby food, etc.) **Monetary donations are **always* welcome as well!***

You are invited to our annual

Annual Baby Shower For Embrace



When: January Fraternity Gathering

Embrace provides moral, spiritual, and practical support to pregnant mothers, their children, and the fathers of the children. In place of the food pantry collection, please consider bringing items or monetary donations to support Embrace. This can include baby supplies such as diapers, formula, clothing in sizes from infant to toddler, and anything else of use to a family, including a monetary donation.

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 – *(maybe even concentrate on one different intention daily!)*:

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. Chris Gaffrey, 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, and Fr. John Rickert, FSSP, TOF of Illinois, who is an Isolated Tertiary.**
7. **Fr. Gastor Temu Bahati, Fr. Matthew Munishi, Fr. Augustine N'Depatanisho 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 worldwide, particularly in Nigeria, Peru, Nicaragua, Guatemala, 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 hard to keep the Faith among university students nationwide.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18
Rejoice always,
PRAY
WITHOUT
CEASING,
 in everything
 give thanks;
 for this is the
 will of God
 in Christ Jesus
 for you.

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.

WE WILL BE MEETING AT ST. GEORGE HALL, OFF THE PARKING LOT, FOR THE JANUARY GATHERING!!!

Did You Know?

Our Holy Mother, the Church, provides many opportunities to acquire Indulgences. According to the Chapter 4 of the Statutes:

- 4.9 The 1972 Grant of Indulgences for the Third Order Secular of St Francis of Assisi provides that:
- a. A plenary Indulgence is granted to members of the Third Order Secular of St Francis, provided they make or renew, at least privately, their promise of Profession, having dutifully fulfilled the usual conditions: confession, communion, and prayer to the intention of the Supreme Pontiff.
 - 1) **on the day of their admission (Investiture into the Novitiate) and of their Profession, and at the conclusion of an official visitation;**
 - 2) **on the feast-days of Blessed Luchesius, the first Tertiary (April 28); Saint Margaret of Cortona (May 16); Saint Clare of Assisi (August 11); Saint Louis, King of France (August 25); Saint Francis of Assisi (October 4); Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (November 17); all the Saints of the Three Orders of Saint Francis (November 29); and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (December 8).**
 - b. Should any condition for the plenary indulgence be lacking, the indulgence will be only partial. However, the prescribed spiritual work, i.e. renewal of Profession as specified, is to be fulfilled to gain the partial indulgence. (Norm 20 § 4)
- 4.10 Although not part of the specific indulgences granted to the Third Order, per se, it is worth noting here that the so-called **“Portiuncula Indulgence” on August 2** was specifically retained for the benefit of all the faithful as part of the stipulations in Norm 15 of the apostolic constitution.

Lord, it is Good for Us to be Together!

- Our annual Christmas Party took place on Sunday, December 21 at St. Nicholas Parish in Barberton. This also functioned as our December Gathering, and it was a very joyful day, indeed, with 35 in attendance.
- After determining our table assignments, we adjourned to beautiful St. Nicholas Church for Liturgy of the Hours. Kenny Green, TOF and Denise Williams, TOF led our prayers.
- Pepe Ventosa, TOF, then led us in Lectio Divina. He proclaimed the Gospel of the day from Matthew,



which told the story of St. Joseph's dream in which he was visited by an angel who told him not to fear marrying Mary, and that she was with child by the intervention of the Holy Spirit – "God is with us".

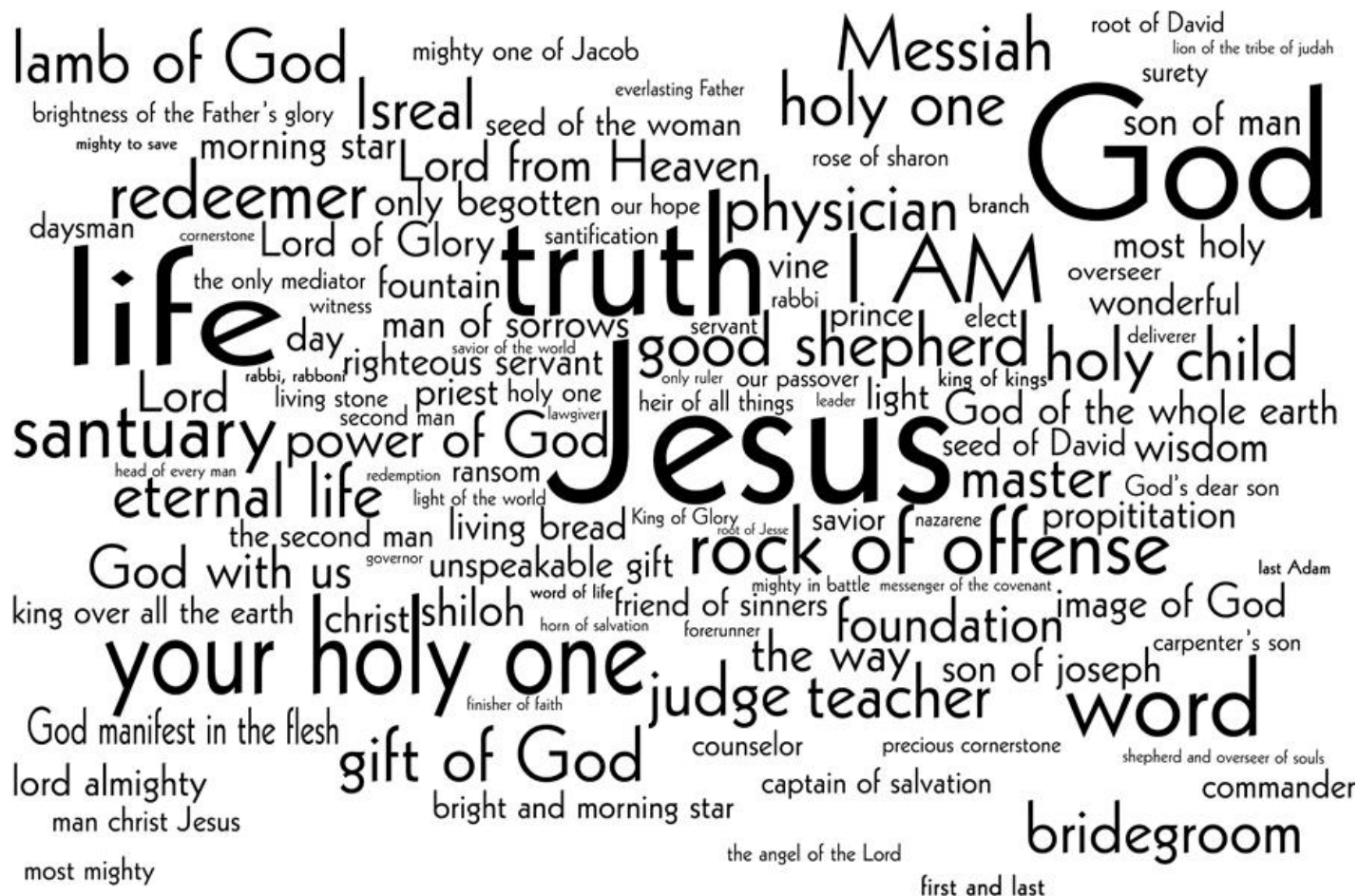
- We then returned to the social hall and discussed with our table companions what had touched us in the Gospel passage, and shared a prayer.
- Roberto led us in Grace before we enjoyed our Christmas feast – eggplant parmesan, arroz con pollo (chicken and rice), meatballs, buffalo chicken dip, cheesy potatoes, salad, broccoli and rice, fresh fruit, and *lots* of desserts! Many thanks to all who generously contributed, and to Mary Dye, TOF, who coordinated it all. We Franciscans may be humble, but we certainly enjoy the opportunity to share a meal together!
- As we ate, Roberto shared a letter from Deacon Tim DeFrange of the Diocese of Youngstown Prison Ministry office, who thanked us for the gift of Bibles donated by our fraternity. He assured us that they would be put to immediate good use, and that the prisoners specifically requested them.
- After our meal, Kenny Green, TOF gave us his annual presentation of the Birth of Jesus, including his artwork.
- Fred Kramer read the meditation of the birth of Jesus written by Blessed Catherine Anne Emerich, provided by Cindy Russo, TOF. Cindy's family has the tradition of reading this beautiful passage aloud every Christmas, and we are very grateful for this.
- Roberto then presented Profession Anniversary certificates to those present from each year honored –
 - 1 Year Anniversary (2024)
 - Marlene Walker, TOF; and Carolyn and Dennis Gacioch, TOF (*all present*)
 - 10 Year Anniversary (2015)
 - Susan Kramer, TOF (*present*); Larry and Lucy McNutt, TOF; and Rick and Eileen Dunlap, TOF
 - 25 Year Anniversary (2000)
 - Judith Hoyt, TOF (*present*)
 - 35 Year Anniversary (1990)
 - John McGough, TOF (*present*) and Elizabeth Francis, TOF
- Roberto announced the December birthdays (*Fr. Vit, Denise Williams, and Jennifer Kerns*) and we sang for them.
- We then remembered and discussed the titles of Jesus, including *Emmanuel, Son of God, King of Kings, I Am, Lord of All, Prince of Peace, Lamb of God, Comforter, Counselor, Redeemer, The Way, The Truth, and The Life, The Alpha and The Omega, the Son of Man, The Light of the World, Messiah, Savior* – and many more!
- Accompanied by Mary Dye, TOF on the keyboard, and the informal Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity Choir (Roberto Meza, TOF; Fred Kramer; Gary Greathouse; Therese Harper, TOF; Jim Miller, TOF; Carol Perrine, TOF; and Jerry Johnson, TOF) we sang a selection of Christmas carols.



- Roberto asked Christmas trivia questions submitted by the Fraternity Council between each song, so we all learned a little more about the Feast of Christmas, too!
- After the music, Roberto Meza, TOF and Jim Miller, TOF distributed copies of the Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity history to everyone present.
- We closed the day with prayers of intercession for Pope Leo, our Bishops, our parish priests, the Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province of the OFM, all seminarians, particularly those whom we have spiritually adopted (*Frater Francis Tumaini, Arthur Bodenschatz, William Martzaklis, Joe Rohan, John Paul Antalek, and Alex Krukemeyer*), our fraternity members, especially those who have been ill, for the repose of the soul of Donna Marie Kaminsky, OFS, and for all Catholics worldwide, particularly those in areas at war or persecution, and for all FOCUS missionaries, including Jakin Miller who is assigned to MIT who is sponsored by our fraternity.
- We then prayed the Gathering Closing Prayers, led by Roberto.
- ***Roberto reminded us that we will meet again on January 21, 2026 at 1:30 PM at St. Nicholas for our January Gathering. May change the location to the St. George Center!***

Save the Date (January, the Month of the Holy Name of Jesus)

January 21	January Gathering, St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish, 1:30 PM (Collection for Embrace)
May 16	Annual TOF Community Pilgrimage – Details TBA!



ST BERNARDINE'S PRAYER

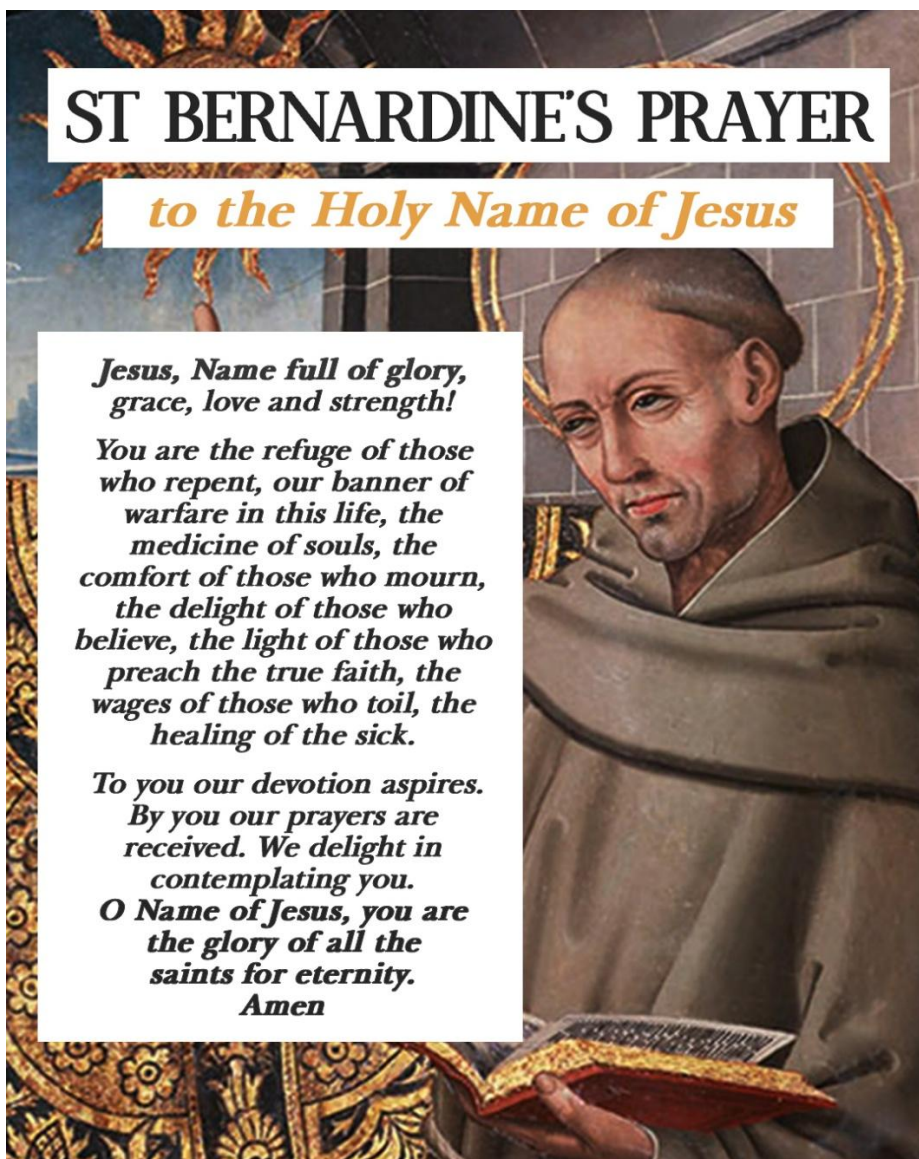
to the Holy Name of Jesus

***Jesus, Name full of glory,
grace, love and strength!***

***You are the refuge of those
who repent, our banner of
warfare in this life, the
medicine of souls, the
comfort of those who mourn,
the delight of those who
believe, the light of those who
preach the true faith, the
wages of those who toil, the
healing of the sick.***

***To you our devotion aspires.
By you our prayers are
received. We delight in
contemplating you.***

***O Name of Jesus, you are
the glory of all the
saints for eternity.
Amen***



"This devotion is as old as Christianity, but to the Franciscan order belongs the honor of having defended and propagated it most strenuously. Saint Bernadine of Siena, whom Leo the 13th called the standard -bearer of the Holy Name, preached it with all the force of his extraordinary eloquence whenever possible. He designed the now popular monogram I.H. S., wore it on his person, displayed it before his audiences, and urged his hearers to wear it and assign it to a prominent place in their homes. He also brought about the insertion of the word "Jesus "in the Hail Mary.

Saint Bonaventure writes "Wherever he (Francis) uttered or heard the Name of Jesus, the joy which filled him interiorly became manifest exteriorly. It was as if he tasted some sweet savor, or as if some melodious sound filled his ears. He even gathered up bits of paper he saw on the streets, because as he said the Holy Name might be written on them."

Franciscans enjoy the privilege of celebrating the feast of the Holy Name as early as 1530, almost 200 years before it was introduced in the whole church in 1721. The devout invocation of the name of Jesus is a powerful weapon against temptation and a source of great blessing.....(Excerpts from Third Order of St. Francis handbook, page 277, paragraph 226)