

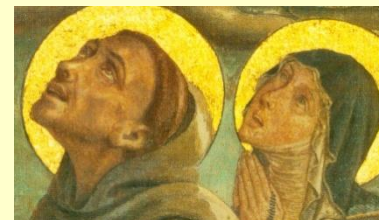
February, 2026

Volume 7, Issue 2

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

Pope Leo XIV proclaims Franciscan Jubilee Year by Almudena Martínez-Bordiú via EWTN, January 13, 2026

Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed a "Special Year of St. Francis" to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the saint's death. During this time of grace, which will extend until January 2027, the faithful are granted the opportunity to obtain a plenary indulgence.

This Franciscan Jubilee Year, considered a gift for the entire Church and an occasion for authentic spiritual renewal, was inaugurated on Jan. 10 with a decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary of the Holy See.

Until Jan. 10 of next year, the faithful can obtain this grace under the usual conditions — sacramental confession, Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the pope — by making a pilgrimage to any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis anywhere in the world.

Furthermore, the elderly, the sick, and those who, for serious reasons, cannot leave their homes can obtain the plenary indulgence by spiritually joining in the jubilee celebrations and offering their prayers, pains, or sufferings to God.

In a world where "the virtual takes over the real, disagreements and social violence are part of everyday life, and peace becomes more insecure and distant every day, this Year of St. Francis spurs all of us, each according to our possibilities, to imitate the poor man of Assisi, to form ourselves as far as possible on the model of Christ," the decree states.

For the Order of Friars Minor, this time is also an opportunity for the faithful to become "models of holiness of life and constant witnesses of peace."

On the occasion of this anniversary, Pope Leo XIV addressed a letter to the ministers general of the Franciscan Family Conference in which he emphasized that "in this era, marked by so many seemingly endless wars, by internal and social divisions that create distrust and fear, he continues to speak. Not because he offers technical solutions, but because his life points to the authentic source of peace."

In this regard, he highlighted that St. Francis reminds us that "peace with God, peace among people, and peace with creation are inseparable dimensions of a single call to universal reconciliation."

This story was first published by ACI Prensa, CNA's Spanish-language news partner. It has been translated and adapted by CNA.

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,
February 15 – 1:30 PM
St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish
1051 E. Robinson Ave.,
Barberton, OH 44203**

We are expecting you!

Catholic Quote of the Month

Husbands and wives should take up the burden appointed to them, willingly, in the strength of Faith and of that hope which "does not disappoint us," because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, Who has been given to us.

Blessed Paul VI (1897-1978) – Priest; Papal Diplomat for the Secretariat of State of the Holy See; Advisor to Venerable Pius XII; Archbishop of Milan; Cardinal; Pope



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.*

February Anniversaries and Birthdays

Profession Anniversaries

John McGough, TOF – 36 Years



Birthdays

Mike Butts, TOF – 2/1
Louise Daniel, TOF – 2/6
Julia Tarulli, TOF – 2/21
Jack Kellogg, TOF – 2/23
Carolyn Gacioch, TOF – 2/28
Mary Cate Roberts, TOF – 2/29

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

Nettie Miller, TOF; Marlene Walker, TOF; Denise Williams, TOF; and Rosie Zaratsian, TOF will prepare our Gathering Hospitality for the February Gathering.



Denise Williams, TOF will prepare and deliver the Little Portion this month. 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!

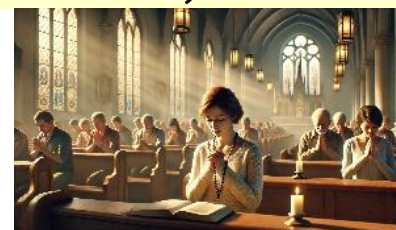
These are the dates for formation for the current Inquirers (6:30 PM to 8:30 PM):

Formation Class for Inquirers (9 Inquirers!): **February 9 & 16 March 2 & 16**

Lesson One – Postulant Phase: **April 13**

TOF Community Prayer Chain – Submitted by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

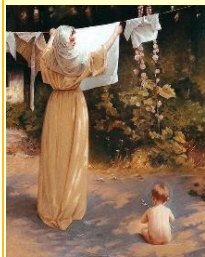
We will be joining the prayer chain requests from each fraternity and isolated members so that all Tertiaries can join in intercessory prayer with each other. This prayer chain will be referred to as the "**TOF Community Prayer Chain.**" The procedure for sending a prayer request will stay the same: 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 February Gathering on February 15, 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!**

Rescheduled!!!



Annual Baby Shower For Embrace

When: February 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.



FRANCISCAN REMINDER

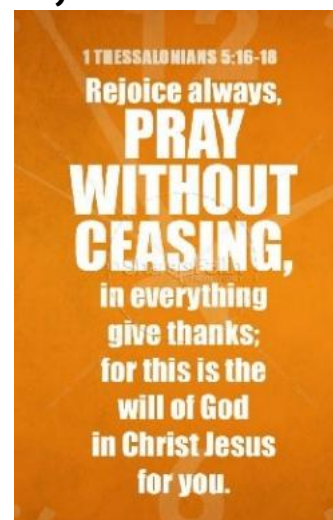
We begin our monthly gatherings with prayer inside the Church. As we pray Lectio Divina, we continue meditating on the Word of God as we return to our table. Please remember to keep **Holy Silence** during this transition until after sharing the word at your table.

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. 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 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!

Lord, it is Good for Us to be Together!

- **Since our January Gathering was canceled, here are a few notes to keep in mind!**
 - Our Fraternity Council is considering using Zoom meetings instead of cancelling Gatherings because of unforeseen circumstances.
 - These circumstances would include weather emergencies, last-minute problems with our meeting place at St. Nicholas (such as heating problems, etc.) or any other unanticipated difficulties.
 - When our usual Gathering date falls on a holiday, such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, or a National or Religious holiday such as Christmas, Council will inform the fraternity to let them know the date will be changed, usually to the Sunday prior to the holiday or the Sunday following the holiday.
 - Council welcomes your input on this decision. If you have a preference or something to say about how to handle surprise disruptions for our monthly Gatherings, please feel free to contact any Council member!
 - Deacon Ed Laubacher of the Diocese of Youngstown received 31 Bibles from our fraternity on January 17. He was very appreciative. He said there is quite a demand for the Bibles among the people who are served at the Hartville Migrant Center.
 - Our February Gathering will feature a visit from a representative of Embrace, which is a pro-life, non-denominational organization, fully in accord with Catholic teaching, which assists those in crisis pregnancies – mothers, fathers, and children – with supplies,

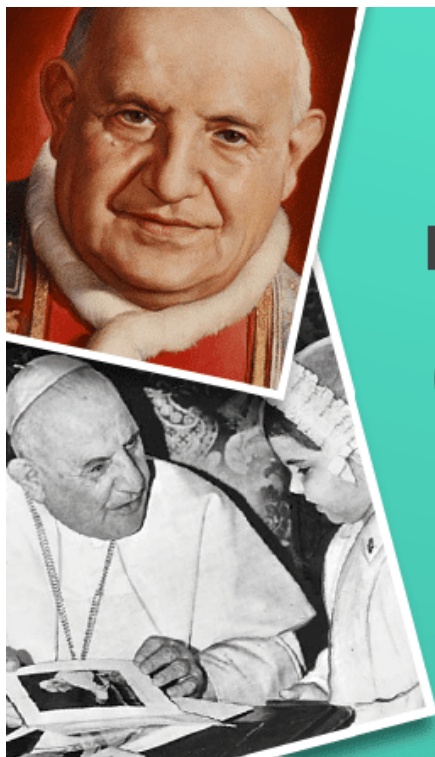
counselling, encouragement, and clothing. If you wish to contribute any supplies for the infants, toddlers, or parents, please bring your contribution to the February Gathering. Monetary donations are also **always** welcome!

- John Wilson, TOF and Pepe Ventosa, TOF plan to represent the Third Order Franciscans at the Diocese of Columbus Men's Conference on Saturday, February 28 at the Ohio Expo Center at the Ohio State Fairgrounds. The theme of this year's conference is "Called to be Saints – Take Courage!" If any of our brother Franciscans care to attend, more information can be found at [2026 REGISTRATION | CalledTobeSaints-CCMM](#). If you plan to go, talk to Pepe and John if you want to assist. They will be manning an informational table – along with our mighty fine TOF banner!
- Our February Gathering will be held Sunday, February 15 at 1:30 PM at St. Nicholas, as usual! Hope to see you there!

Stay warm, safe, and blessed!!!

Save the Date (February, the Month of the Holy Family)

February 15	February Gathering, St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish, 1:30 PM (Collection for Embrace)
February 18	Ash Wednesday - Day of Fast and Abstinence and the first day of Lent
February 20	Lenten Friday – Day of Abstinence, along with all other Fridays of Lent
April 3	Good Friday – Day of Fast and Abstinence
April 5	Easter Sunday
May 16	Annual TOF Community Pilgrimage – Details TBA!
May 24	Pentecost



**«THE CHARITY WHICH BURNED IN THE
HOUSEHOLD AT NAZARETH SHOULD BE AN
INSPIRATION FOR EVERY FAMILY. ALL THE
CHRISTIAN VIRTUES SHOULD FLOURISH IN
THE FAMILY, UNITY SHOULD THRIVE, AND
THE EXAMPLE OF ITS VIRTUOUS LIVING
SHOULD SHINE BRIGHTLY»**

San Juan XXIII

St. John XXIII (Angelo Guiseppe Roncalli) 1881-1963 – Feast Day October 11

Priest; Papal Nuncio to France, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey; Papal Diplomat;
Protector of Holocaust Victims; Cardinal and Patriarch of Venice; Pope; Third Order Franciscan

Prayer for the Jubilee Year of St. Francis of Assisi by Pope Leo XIV



*Saint Francis, our brother,
you who eight hundred years
ago went to meet
Sister Death as a man at peace,
intercede for us before the Lord.
You recognized true peace in
the Crucifix of San Damiano.
Teach us to seek in Him the
source of all reconciliation that
breaks down every wall.*

*You who, unarmed,
crossed the lines of war
and misunderstanding,
give us the courage
to build bridges where
the world raises up boundaries.*

*In this time afflicted
by conflict and division,*

*intercede for us so that we may become peacemakers:
unarmed and disarming witnesses of the peace that comes from Christ. Amen.*