

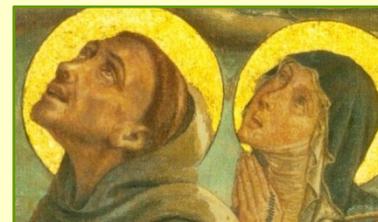
March, 2026

Volume 7, Issue 3

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

Celebrating the Solemnity of St. Joseph: A Recommendation from Pope Leo XIII



The Solemnity of St. Joseph, celebrated on March 19th, honors the just, pure man who is the Most Chaste Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the fatherly Guardian of the Son of God. Article 70 in our Constitution dictates that we shall venerate specific saints, including Saint Joseph. So, we need to celebrate his Solemnity.

The Prayer to Saint Joseph, listed below, was composed by Pope Leo XIII in his 1889 encyclical, *Quamquam pluries*. He asked that it be added to the end of the Rosary, especially during the month of October, which is dedicated to the Rosary. Enriched with a partial indulgence (*Handbook of Indulgences*, conc. 19), this prayer may be said after the customary *Salve Regina* and concluding prayer and may also be used to conclude other Marian devotions.

Prayer to Saint Joseph

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also. Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities. O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness. As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen. (From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

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

We are expecting you!

Franciscan Quote of the Month

“His [St. Joseph’s] intercession cannot be but all-powerful. For what could Jesus and Mary refuse St. Joseph, as he was entirely devoted to them all his life, and to whom they truly owed the means of their earthly existence?”

Pope Pius XI (1857-1939) - Ordained in 1879, he became a scholar, a paleographer, and a prefect of the Vatican library. Nuncio to Poland in 1919, he was made cardinal and archbishop of Milan in 1921 by Pope Benedict XV, whom he was elected to succeed on February 6, 1922.



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.

March Anniversaries and Birthdays

Profession Anniversaries

Joe Zbasnik, TOF – 1 Year



Birthdays

Joanne Angeletti, TOF – 3/4
LeeAnne Devore, TOF – 3/24
Judith Hoyt, TOF – 3/29

Stand for Life



Rose Akins TOF; and Mike Butts, TOF will be praying in front of the abortion clinic in Cuyahoga Falls in March. 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

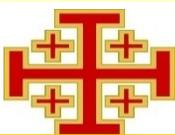
Andrea Ferraro, TOF; Jerry Johnson, TOF; Jack Kellog, TOF; and John Wilson, TOF will prepare our Gathering Hospitality for the March Gathering.



Jerry Johnson, TOF will prepare the Little Portion this month 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.**

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

Formation Class Updates by Debbie Ventosa, TOF

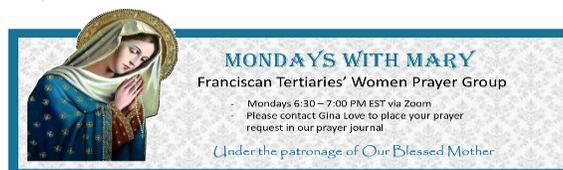


March 2 will be the overview of the Postulancy phase.

April formation dates are April 13 & 27 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the St. George Center. All members are welcome to join.

TOF Women Prayer Group – Submitted by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

A TOF women's prayer group, "Mondays with Mary," is being formed by Gina Love, TOF (St. Pio Fraternity) and Debbie Ventosa, TOF and planned to launch the first Monday in May on May 4th, 2026. The group will meet via Zoom every Monday from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. Eastern time to pray the Rosary. All female members (novices and professed) of the TOF community will receive the Zoom invite and are welcome to attend. A journal will be kept for prayer requests. Any TOF members who may have a prayer request can contact Gina to have their request placed in the prayer journal.



New Appointment – Submitted by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

John Wilson, TOF has graciously accepted his appointment to help me in assisting Fr. Vit with the endeavors of our community of Tertiaries. As you all know, John was recently professed in November 2025. He, like all of us, professed a few months ago or years ago, is learning to incorporate the spirit of our Seraphic Father in his new life as a Franciscan. At this time, he has been studying and collecting documents tracing back to the development of our community. We are grateful for his generosity in giving of his time and talents, and I look forward to working side by side with him.



FRANCISCAN REMINDER

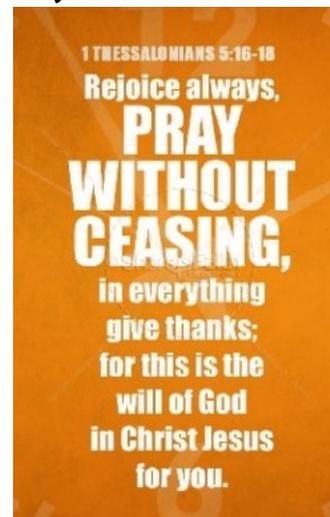
We begin our monthly gatherings with prayer inside the Church. As we pray Lectio Divina, we continue meditating on the Word of God as we return to our table. Please remember to keep **Holy Silence** during this transition until after sharing the word at your table.

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!

Our February Gathering took place on Sunday, February 15, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. at St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish. We had approximately 35 members in attendance, along with three of our current Inquirers, Donna Lovas, Paula Bank, and Gary Greathouse, visitor Peggy Swyrydenko, Executive Director of the Embrace Clinic and Care Center, and our friend, Annie Butts (St. Mary, Wooster).

After determining our table assignments in the Hall, we walked in silence to the Church for Mid-Day Office, led by Kenny Green, TOF followed by the recitation of our Consecration to the Sacred Heart on the Feast of St. Claude de Columbiere (2/15).

Virgil Daniel, TOF read the Gospel of the day in which Jesus explained that He had not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them by calling for a righteousness that goes beyond mere legal obedience to true, inner conversion of heart. We then returned to the Hall in silence for our Lectio Divina discussion at each table.

Minister Roberto Meza, TOF led our gathering and announced that Tony Perez has been approved by Council for Profession, which will occur at the Shrine of our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted during this year's Tridua, August 21st-23rd (save the date!). Council also approved the requests from our five inquirers to advance to postulancy. At our March gathering, we will welcome Barb Roussel, Connie Corey, Donna Lovas, Paula Bank, and Gary Greathouse!

Roberto read a letter from Bishop Malesic, Diocese of Cleveland, in response to our end-of-year report submitted to each of our Bishops. He found our report inspiring and expressed his happiness to have Franciscans in NE Ohio, especially during this Jubilee Year of St. Francis.

Yellow laminated prayer cards with St. Francis's Prayer before the San Damiano crucifix and Pope Leo's prayer for the Jubilee Year were distributed. We were encouraged to pray these prayers privately every day and to bring the cards to our Gatherings so we can pray them together during this Jubilee Year. Pope Leo XIV's special plenary indulgence for the Jubilee Year was also discussed. It can be gained when one of the yet-to-be-designated Franciscan churches are visited and the Our Father, Creed and another prayer are recited.

Roberto also read a letter of appreciation from the Hartville Migrant Ministry Council for our donation of New Testaments in both English and Spanish.

Mary Dye, TOF then asked for volunteers for our Stand for Life Apostolate in which we join three to four other churches on the third Saturday of the month from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. across the street from the "Women's Center" in Cuyahoga Falls from March through October.

The Grace Before Meals prayer was led by Roberto, and then we enjoyed a wonderful brunch prepared by Marlene Walker, TOF; Jim & Nettie Miller, TOF. Denise Williams, TOF donated Valentine heart cookies. Thanks to all!

After lunch, Peggy Swyrydenko from Embrace (Barberton) shared with us her inspiring messages about the work they do. Some important facts: Embrace has grown annually and in 2025, it served over 900 families; it empowers parents to choose life and to be the best parents possible; and it offers material goods, free pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, and STI testing. Peggy said they need volunteers and counselors for the clients. She also thanked us for the donations and monies collected.

Roberto then shared that Pepe Ventosa, TOF and John Wilson, TOF will be attending the Columbus Conference of Catholic Men to represent our Fraternity.

Also announced was the St. Francis de Sales Lenten Mission on Thursday March 26th at 7:15 p.m., following the 6:30p.m. Mass. Fr. Joseph Tuscan, Capuchin, will be speaking on St. Francis.

The Pantry Drawing was won by Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and will be delivered by Mary Dye, TOF.

A special thanks to Virgil Daniel, TOF for working so hard to produce our Formation materials in book form, which are now available for purchase by both our Inquirers and Professed. These are "Call to Commitment" (\$14) and a supplement to the 1972 "New Catechism of the Third Order" (\$9) with updates on our Rule, Office guidelines, Indulgences, etc.

Roberto then presented Profession Certificates to: John McGugh, TOF, 36 years; Elizabeth Frances, TOF, 35 years; Bill Marshall, TOF, 34 years; Judith Hoyt, TOF, 25 years; Eileen Dunlap, TOF, 25 years; Larry & Lucy McNutt, TOF, 10 years; Marlene Walker, TOF, 1 year; and Dennis & Carolyn Gacioch, TOF, 1 year.

We then wished Happy Birthday to those with January birthdays (Eileen Dunlap, TOF; Chris Devore, TOF; Kenny Green, TOF; John Wilson, TOF; Roberto Meza, TOF; Pepe Ventosa, TOF; Lucy McNutt, TOF; Matt Poletti, TOF; and Maria Elena Meza, TOF). We also wished Happy Birthday to those with February birthdays (Mike Butts, TOF; Louise Daniel, TOF; Julia Tarulli, TOF; Jack Kellogg, TOF; Carolyn Gacioch, TOF; and Mary Cate Roberts, TOF).

Next year, St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish will begin having its annual parish anniversary celebration on the third Sunday in January. Thus, beginning in 2027, our January Gatherings will be on the **second** Sunday in January instead of the third Sunday.

The Council is considering hosting Zoom meetings in place of canceled in-person Gatherings.

Roberto then announced the 2026 leaders for the following Ministries:

Prayer Chains - Rick & Eileen Dunlap, TOF

St. Elizabeth Ministry – Maria Elena Meza, TOF

Birthday Cards - Mary Cate Roberts, TOF

Sympathy Cards - Jerry Johnson, TOF

Hospitality Set-Up - Carol Perrine, TOF; Joanne Angeletti, TOF; and Mary Dye, TOF

Room Set-Up - Jesse Kuhn, TOF; Jerry Johnson, TOF; and Virgil & Louise Daniel, TOF

Webmasters - Pepe Ventosa, TOF; and Virgil Daniel, TOF

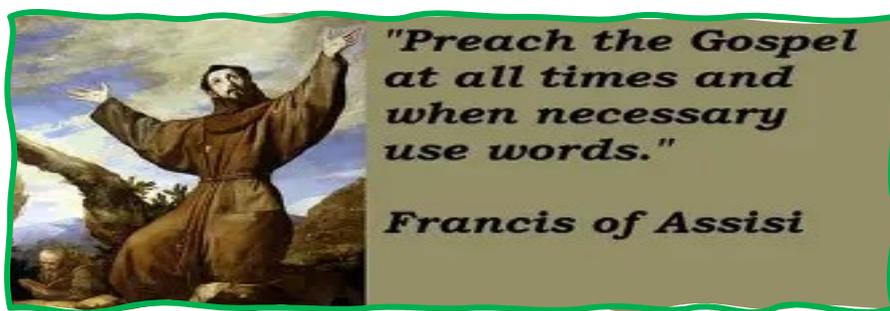
Apostolate Schedule - Mary Dye, TOF

Archivist - Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Newsletter Editor - Susan Kramer, TOF

Roberto led the Closing Prayers. Our petitions included the sick, our bishops, priests, seminarians, Jakin Miller, FOCUS, and world peace. Before the Closing Prayer, we also prayed Pope Leo XIV's Jubilee Year Prayer Renewal of Profession and The Memorare Prayer.

Our March Gathering will be Sunday, March 15, at 1:30 p.m. at St. Nicholas. Hope to see you there!



Save the Date (March, the Solemnity of St. Joseph)

March 15	March Gathering, St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish, 1:30 PM
March 19	Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary
March 29	Palm Sunday of The Passion of The Lord
April 3	Good Friday – Day of Fast and Abstinence
April 5	Easter Sunday
May 16	Annual TOF Community Pilgrimage – Details on Next Page
May 24	Pentecost
August 21-23	Third Annual TOF Tridua Retreat – Details TBA

ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026

OUR LADY OF LEBANON

2795 N. Lipkey Road, North Jackson, Ohio 44451

1:00 PM / **LUNCH**

\$20 (INCLUDES TIP)

*PASTA, MEATBALLS, GREEN BEANS, POTATOES,
SALAD, ROLLS, DESSERT, COFFEE, WATER.*

2:00 PM / **PRESENTATION**

BY CHORBISHOP ANTHONY SPINOSA

*FOLLOWED BY AN OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT
THE CHAPEL, GIFT SHOP, AND WALK THE
BEAUTIFUL GROUNDS.*

4:30 PM / **CONFESSION**

5:00 PM / **MASS**

IF NECESSARY: CONTACT KARA SERTICK, TOF
AT 330-501-7853

A FREE-WILL OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN
FOR THE CHORBISHOP AND THE SHRINE



Initial Formation Review – Reflections on Lent

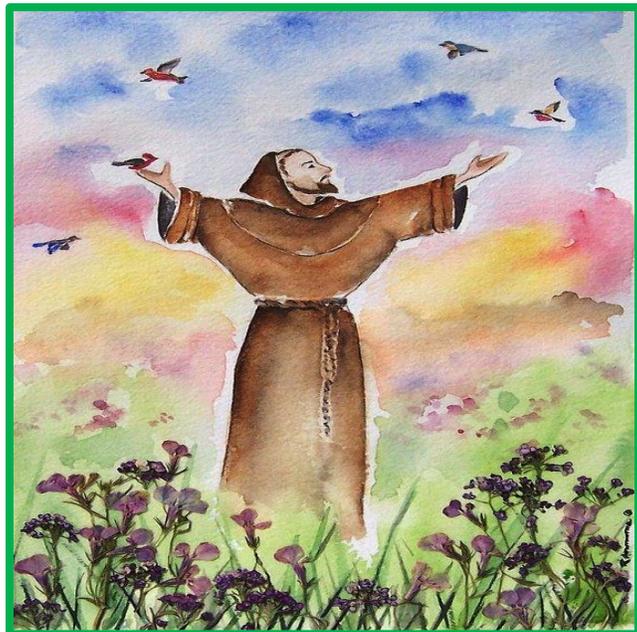


During this Lenten season, it is important to keep in mind that we should be performing our voluntary mortifications out of love for Christ, not as a “duty” of Lent. As we progress through these 40 days, let’s gain some inspiration from some of our teachings from the Eighth Lesson of our Franciscan Formation – *Loving Christ Crucified* – that can help us with our daily Lenten undertakings, especially on days when we feel quite challenged.

- Since the Son of Man died on the cross, there is no other way save the cross by which we can reach the Father. There is no other way, either, by which we can become conformed to the crucified and risen Christ whom God intended from all eternity to be our model in all things (l.2b)
- Above all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit which Christ gives to his friends is that of conquering oneself and willingly enduring sufferings, insults, humiliations, and hardships for the love of Christ (l.2b, Englebert, pp. 230-232)
- Thanks to him [Christ], suffering is no longer a stumbling-block; it can become fuel for love (l.2b)
- Our very lives themselves will help us imitate our Lord on this point, because suffering is a reality which no one can escape. St. Francis wants to teach us how to see in it a God-given means of uniting ourselves to the redeeming cross of Christ (l.2b)
- St. Francis: “We adore you, O Lord, and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the word” (ll. 2a)

Happy Lent!

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.

For the Jubilee Year of St. Francis, The Diocese of Cleveland has created a "passport" to the nine pilgrimage sites where you can visit, pray, and seek indulgences. Here is the link to the passport:

<https://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/files/assets/francis-passport.pdf>