



Soldiers of Christ

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

April 2026

Sandy Baden, TOF Editor

Vol 6, Issue 4

THE PASSION OF THE LORD **Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026**

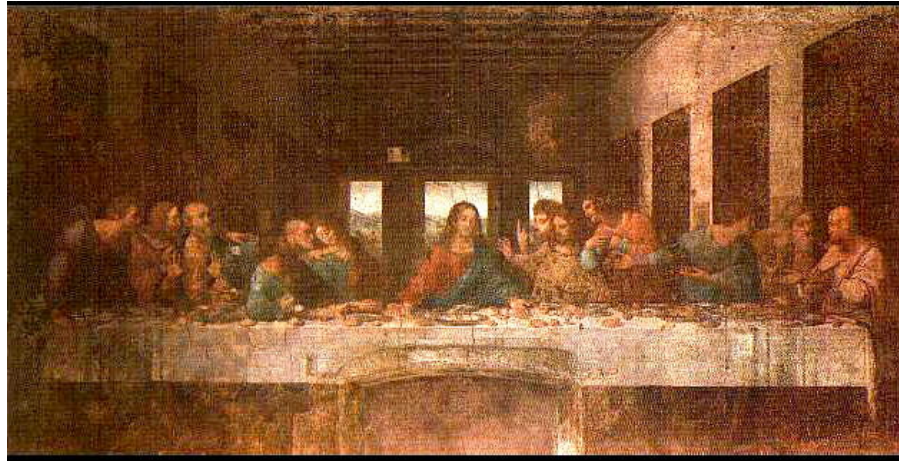


Jesus comes to Jerusalem on a donkey to declare He is the messiah, **(Zechariah 9: 9)**. **Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See your King shall come to you; a just savior is He, meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass.**

A joyful day at the beginning of our Lord's passion for the people gathering palms when Jesus enters Jerusalem on a foal of an ass, but a sorrowful one for the Mother of Christ as it is the beginning of her sorrow and passion during Holy Week. The Mother of our Lord is not mentioned on this day of Palm Sunday in Scripture, but it does mention the "large crowd" and the disciples were present, **(Mt. 21: 1-3 and Mark 11: 1-2)**. Prior to Palm Sunday, Jesus was in Bethany with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and it is said, because they were so close to Jerusalem Mary most likely was present, **(John 12: 1-3)**. It is confirmed in the gospels she was present during the Crucifixion of her Son at the foot of the Cross **(John 19: 25-27)**.

The reason for Jesus to arrive on a donkey was an Eastern tradition symbolizing "arriving in peace," and if He arrived on a horse it would mean He was arriving on "a mission of war." Let us sing "Hosanna" on this day of Palm Sunday like the crowds had celebrated, because this meant victory with their Palms.

Thursday of Holy Week (Holy Thursday) April 2, 2026



Leonardo Da Vinci

This is the Last Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ where we celebrate the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and the priesthood. It is not mentioned in the Scriptures if Mary had been there at the Last Supper, but why would she not. Did she not witness the betrayal of Jesus by the disciple, Judas? Jesus had predicted His betrayal during the meal he shared with his disciples. But then, Mary may have been in sorrow with Mary Magdalene knowing this was the last supper Jesus would share with his Disciples, and He would begin His passion and death on the Cross.

*The institution of the Holy Eucharist is for us when Jesus changed the substance (transubstantiation), of the unleavened bread and the wine into His body and His Blood (**Corinthians 11:23-26, Mk. 14:22 and Lk. 22:19**). Christ had said, **“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world (John 6: 51 & 53-58)**. These words from our Lord clearly indicates what the Holy Eucharist represents. It is not a symbol of bread and wine, but the body, blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ in the form of unleavened bread. Only in our faith in Christ can we come to know the reality of these words from Jesus. Our Lord died in order to give Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist to save us from our sins and give us the gift of His grace.*

Friday The Passion of the Lord, April 3, 2026



In this Paschal mystery of the Passion of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary was there, walking on the side of the road with Jesus, as He carried His cross. After the scourging of Jesus it is difficult to imagine how He managed to carry the cross, and Mary, in agony, as she watched the suffering of her Son.

*Jesus fell three times carrying the cross and Simon of Cyrene was forced to pick up the cross for Jesus, on the road to calvary, **(Mt. 27:32 and Lk. 23:26)**. What graces our Lord must have given Simon, as he the father of Alexander and Rufus, **(Mk 15:21)** who both are known later to became Christians.*

When we pray the “Stations of the Cross” and meditate on the nails in His hands and feet, we think of Mary and the pain in her heart when she heard the sound of the nails that were hammered into her precious Son, Jesus. His entire body was racked with pain from head to foot. It is hard to contemplate the cruelty of the Cross during those times.



*Our Lord Jesus spoke while on the cross with much difficulty, **“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do; This day you will be with Me in paradise; Woman, behold your Son, Son, behold your Mother; My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me; I thirst; It is finished; and Father into Your hands I commend My spirit.”** We should consider a second “Stations of the Cross” for the seven phrases said by Jesus. **(Lk 23-34, Lk 23:43, Mk 15:34, Jn 19:26-27, Jn 19:28, Jn 19:30, and Lk 23:46)**. We could then meditate on the “sword that pierced Mary’s heart, **(Lk 2:35)**.*

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD, APRIL 5, 2026



“The angel said to the women, do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, he has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples. ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee’ (Mt. 28: 1-7).”



We know this to be true, it is written in the Gospel and also in our hearts. On the third day Jesus rose from the dead in His glorified body. They say He first appeared to the women, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, **(Mt. 28: 9-10, Mark 16: 9, and John 20: 14-17)**. In Franciscan tradition it is the belief Our Lord Jesus Christ had appeared first to his mother. Mary who carried Jesus in her womb, the first tabernacle of the Lord, who was most important throughout His life, and shared in sorrow His passion and death on the cross. Jesus would naturally appear to His mother first before appearing to the women at the tomb and the Apostles in Galilee.

He has risen from the dead, and from that time in history to the present day it has been given to us to change the world because Christ died for us. As He told His disciples, we are to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are to love one another and preach the good news, **(Mk 16: 15).**”

Sandy Baden, TOF



MY VISIT WITH ST. FRANCIS IN ASSISI
Submitted by: Linda Menser, TOF

You would think Linda could stay out of trouble in Assisi!?????



I will try to keep this article short and just hit the basic facts. When I found out St. Francis' body would be on display for one month due to Pope Leo, XIII's Jubilee Year Decree, I did not hesitate and booked my flight.

The crowds in Assisi were huge, the police had everything running smoothly, and the Franciscans ran the whole operation with such ease.

I visited and venerated St. Francis' skeletal body twice. A Franciscan Friar took small groups at a time and we also renewed our Baptismal Vows.

It is hard to put into words, but St. Francis looked so peaceful lying in the glass-see-through coffin with his eyes shut.



Skeleton Of St. Francis Of Assisi Is Now On Public Display For First Time

St. Francis died in 1226 and for four years he was buried at St. George Church where he had attended school and preached. He was moved from St. George Church, under heavy guard to the St. Francis Basilica, and they hid his body well until 1818 when his body was discovered. His body was examined and proven to be St. Francis of Assisi.



One-half million people had registered to see the skeletal body of St. Francis of Assisi and will continue to be on display until March 22, 2026.



It has indeed been a blessing to have made this spiritual pilgrimage. I even was able to see Pope Leo XIII, just a few feet away from me, as he processed into the Sacred Heart Church in Rome. I called to him that my mother was born and raised in Chicago! Pope Leo took the time to bless the crowd as he entered the church.

In summary, staring at the fully intact skeletal body of St. Francis, I never would have believed this could be something we would be able to see 800 years after his death. I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit and of St. Francis of Assisi.

My mission was confirmed that the salvation of souls is the most important work for me to do. I believe that is the mission God has given to us all.



MONDAYS WITH MARY
Franciscan Tertiaries' Women Prayer Group

- Mondays 6:30 – 7:00 PM EST via Zoom
- Please contact Gina Love to place your prayer request in our prayer journal

Under the patronage of Our Blessed Mother

MONDAYS WITH MARY: BEGINNING MAY 4, 2026

MEET OUR NEW ISOLATED TERTIARY

Patricia Ostaszewski, TOF
Submitted by Debbie Ventosa, TOF



Patricia Ostaszewski, TOF was accepted into our community of Isolated Tertiaries, by Fr. Vit on March 6, 2026. She was born in Manila and is the fourth of seven children to faithful Catholic parents who prayed the family rosary daily and watched Archbishop Fulton Sheen. She attended catholic grade school and high school at Assumption Convent School. Patricia holds a BS degree in Business management from the University of Louisville, KY. and worked for the Engineering School and the School of Medicine at the University.

She is a devoted wife of 37 years to her husband Kris, has three daughters, one son, two granddaughters, and two grandsons. Patricia has a devotion to

St. Maximillian Kolbe and St. Padre Pio. We welcome Patricia to the TOF.

FAITH JOURNEY BY: Patricia M. Ostaszewski, TOF

When does one's Faith Journey begin? It could possibly be on the day of one's Baptism, or even at the time before one was born. Many journeys end, then begin again, pause and then continue. A Journey isn't necessarily linear, as one can jump from present to past, highlighting minor events, connecting the dots that serve as guiding lights pointing the way. In my case, a closer relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ.



It was in 2018 when I began formation studies in the OFS St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity. That year, I accompanied my husband, Kris, to a conference in Madeira, Portugal. In the small town of Funchal, a rectory next to a church piqued my curiosity and I asked the priest if I could explore. As I entered the side room, this is what I saw. I'd never seen anything like it before and proclaimed, "Oh, I could imagine myself underneath Jesus' arm."

Little did I know that that Corpus Christi was taken from a famous painting by the artist Murillo, of St. Francis embracing the Crucified Christ, but without the figure of St. Francis!



My naïveté in 2018 served me well, for as a Third Order Franciscan, I was well within my rights to make such a proclamation: "I, like our Seraphic Father, take my place, under Christ Crucified's welcoming arm." To discover the life of St. Francis is such a treasure; to understand it is an entirely different story. I felt that I didn't deserve to have the letters 'ofs' after my name. What does life to the Gospel, and Gospel to life even mean? It sounded nothing more than a Catholic bumper sticker. I had to understand it.

I thank God most merciful, and the Immaculate Heart, for close friends who told me about the Isolated Tertiaries. A person named Jose contacted me, which launched my journey as an Isolated Tertiary.



"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

*Nancy Caraballo
Judith Inglesby, TOF*

TUESDAY

Linda Menser, TOF

WEDNESDAY

*Luis Guzman, TOF
Paul & Mary Tag, TOF*

THURSDAY

*Mary Colon, TOF
Bob Zupanek, TOF
Lisa Bute*

FRIDAY

*Sandy DeWaal, TOF
Pepe Ventosa, TOF*

SATURDAY

*Peter Emau, TOF
Ericka Witover, 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 the intentions of the members of the Isolated Tertiaries community.

ADMONITION XX

The Virtuous Religious

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



Blessed that religious who finds all his joy and happiness in the words and deeds of our Lord and uses them to make people love God gladly. Woe to the religious who amuses himself with silly gossip, trying to make people laugh.

Lothar Hardick, OFM changes the word silly in the above Admonition to the word, “empty,” which we will also use in describing the word silly or silly gossip.

Lothar Hardick, OFM states, “It is extremely important in the religious life to question again and again the meaning of what we do and why we do it. If we do not ask these questions our practices lose their inner meaning and become merely external formalities.” Our love of Christ should be in our hearts and minds, which we could then emanate the “joy and gladness” of Christ to all we meet or encounter in our daily lives. This beautiful statement from St. Francis, “You **are** joy and gladness” and **not** “You will **be** joy and gladness.” This, becomes our DNA. How can we evangelize the love of Christ if we do not feel “joy and gladness” in our hearts. It would then be impossible to emanate this love we have of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must be obedient in our prayer and pray the Liturgy of the Hours each day with “joy and gladness.” St. Francis said in this Admonition, “Blessed that religious who finds all his joy and happiness in the words and deeds of our Lord.”

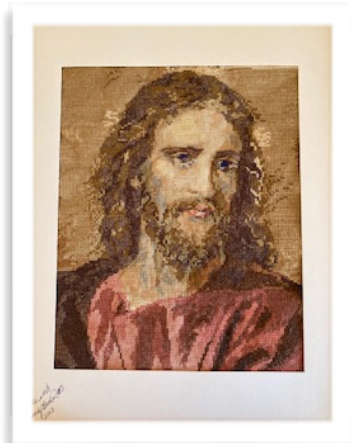
Emphasizing, “Blessed that religious who finds all his “joy and happiness” in the words and deeds of our Lord,” as explained by Lothar Hardick, OFM, “God’s deeds are holy!” This is what brings us “joy and happiness,” God’s redemption, Easter Sunday, the holy Eucharist, and Christ’s resurrection. “That will remain,” says Lothar Hardick, OFM.

Our own Fr. Vit also spoke about a “joyful peace.” Here are a few of thoughts from Fr. Vit.: “We should learn and practice to be joyful. First, be sorry for our sin, and second be joyful because Christ has forgiven our sin. We should rejoice.”

Fr. Vit continues, “We should turn it around into “social joy” and accept everything with an open heart and not worry. Confession wipes everything clean so our ego diminishes and Jesus will increase.”



Keeping our eyes, our hopes, and sometimes our sadness, we can find our “Joy and Happiness,” in God alone. Finding God in those we meet and those we know, we can remain in God’s love and “His Will” for us.



The joy we emanate from within ourselves for the love of Christ comes from our hearts, the happiness we express also comes from our hearts, and only God knows this love, which is in our hearts. Let us always be joyful with the love of Christ and find true and lasting peace with “authentic” or “genuine” faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Needle Point 2013 by,
Sandy Baden, TOF*



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Save the Date

MARCH 29: PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

APRIL 2: THURSDAY OF HOLY WEEK, (Holy Thursday)

NO IT ZOOM GATHERING, due to Holy week.

**APRIL 3: FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD (Good Friday)
(Fast and Abstinence)**

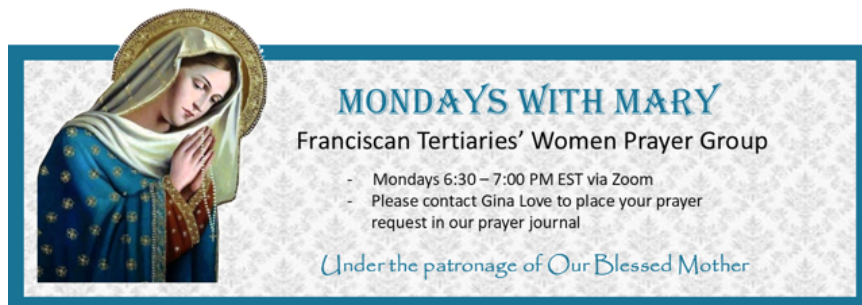
APRIL 5: EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

**APRIL 9: IT INQUIRY FORMATION GROUP 6 BEGINS: 7:00 PM
Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time**

**APRIL 16: IT NOVITIATE FORMATION GROUP 5: Lesson 5: 7:00 PM
Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time**

*******Heads Up: The Tertiary Retreat will be August 21-23*******

May 4, 2026



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