

The Troubadour

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



Ecce Mater Tua

Mary, Mother of Divine Grace, has always spoken the most gentle and loving words to her children:

“Do not be sad and cast down, my son, because you are no longer permitted to place wreaths of flowers on my statue. I will teach you to change this pious practice into one that will be far more pleasing to me and far more meritorious to your soul. In place of the flowers that soon wither and cannot always be found, you can weave for me a crown from the flowers of your prayers that will always remain fresh”.

According to tradition, these were the words that Mary told a novice in 1422, having no longer been permitted to adorn Mary’s statue with a wreath of flowers, as a result of his novitiate into the Franciscan Order:

“Recite one Our Father and ten Hail Marys while recalling the seven joys I experienced. If you recite these prayers as I have directed, rest assured, dear son, you will weave for me a most beautiful and acceptable crown and will merit for yourself innumerable graces.”

Mary, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, tells the novice to recite one Our Father and ten Hail Marys for each of the following Joys:

- I. The Joy of the Annunciation
- II. The Joy of Visiting Elizabeth
- III. The Joy of giving birth to Christ without pain and remaining a virgin
- IV. The Joy of presenting her Divine Son to the adoration of the Magi
- V. The Joy that thrilled her soul upon finding Jesus after three days
- VI. The Joy of beholding her Divine Son risen from the grave
- VII. The Joy of her assumption and coronation as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

Two additional Hail Marys were later added in honor of the seventy-two years that tradition holds that Mary lived on Earth. In addition, one Our Father and Hail Mary for the intentions of the Pope. This is our beloved psalter of joy, given to us by our Mystical Rose, the **Franciscan Crown**.

Hail Mary, admirable Mother of the Son and cause of our joy, pray for us.

Sources: A Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals by Ann Ball, EWTN

Spiritual Director

Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM
Shrine of
Our Lady Comforter
of the Afflicted
Youngstown



Editor

Luis Guzman, TOF

Franciscan Quote for Summer 2026

Canticle of the Creatures 1225 (6) “Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather, through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures”.

Franciscan Scapular Medals

Franciscan scapular medals are now available for purchase online. To order please visit the Patron Saint Medals website at www.patronsaintmedals.com and then search for "Franciscan scapular medal." These are sterling silver scapular medals. We will be ordering pewter scapular medals that will be available in the near future at the Shrine for a lower cost.

“He Descended Into Hell” ... Hell??? - Virgildee Daniel, TOF

O Savior, you descended into Hades. You crushed its gates as the Almighty.

You raised the dead and destroyed the sting of death, O Creator.

You delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of us all;

therefore, all cry out to you, O Lord, save us.

Resurrection Kontakion, Tone 5, Byzantine Divine Liturgy

“Hell” can be such a problematic term as we use it in our meditations and prayers. Is it truly the “place of the damned”? Don’t we petition St. Michael the Archangel to “cast into Hell Satan and all the evil spirits ...”? So why would the Apostles’ Creed, which we all pray at least once daily, suggest that the human soul of our Lord, God, and Savior went down “into Hell” while His body rested in the tomb? At least some of this confusion comes from the accident of translation into English from the ancient languages in which Scripture was composed and in which the Church Fathers wrote.

St. Paul mentions in Ephesians (4:9-10) that Jesus “descended into the lower regions of the earth.” To the Jewish people of that time, these “lower regions” were termed *Sheol*. The Greeks had used the term *Hades* for centuries, giving them a ready grasp of the concept, only needing the Christian “spin,” if you will, to adapt to their new faith; the same ultimately for the Romans, too. Notable in either case, however, is that there is no express intent of “damnation” as we associate with their translation into English: “Hell.” For instance, Psalm 49 verses 12-15: “Their tombs are their homes forever, their dwelling through all generations ...” It is where everyone goes – evil or righteous (CCC #633; Ps 49:11). I am a Byzantine Catholic. Since our careful liturgical reforms in the early 21st century, we now use exclusively the Greek term “Hades” in all of our liturgical services. When we Byzantines say “Hell,” we mean just that – “Hell,” as Pope Leo XIII meant it in his giving us the Prayer to St Michael the Archangel. So, what, then, about the Apostles Creed – the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet? They say “He descended into Hell,” and so does the Catechism, for that matter.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) #637 notes “*In his human soul united to his divine person, the dead Christ went down to the realm of the dead. He opened heaven’s gate for the just who had gone before him.*” #633 notes that this “realm of the dead” included both the just and the damned, the just being the “*holy souls who awaited their Savior in Abraham’s bosom, who Christ the Lord delivered when he descended into hell.*” The footnote #482 clarifies that this statement came from the Roman Catechism, published after the Council of Trent (often cited in the CCC to demonstrate continuity of Church teachings). Note how “Abraham’s bosom” gets translated here as “Hell.” It is actually a rather consistent translation error found also in the Douay-Rheims translation from the Latin, not to mention the King James Bible. Thus, medieval translations still bind our thoughts and speech in English to this day. To this end, CCC #633 states emphatically that “*Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him.*” This declaration dates from a Synod/Council held in Rome in 745 A.D., suggesting that this subject has been a topic of debate from the earliest days of the Church.

“He Descended Into Hell” ... Hell??? - Virgildee Daniel, TOF (cont.)

This icon, in Greek *Anastasis* or “Rising Up,” is the principal icon of Easter in the Eastern Churches, Catholic and Orthodox. It shows Our Lord in Hades “*in his human soul united to his divine person*” while his body rested in the tomb on Holy Saturday. Indeed, Hades had no option but to admit Our Lord in His full humanity into its gates. That was the “contract,” if you will. Hades must receive the souls of the dead, all the souls. Imagine how Hades trembled confronted with an impossible reality for itself – God Himself, united fully with His human nature (i.e. the Incarnation), was there waiting for admission. What to do but to let him in – reluctantly, for sure? One might look at this icon and consider that Our Lord kicked in the Gates of Hades. Rather, the Gates imploded when Our Lord revealed Himself in all His glory.



What is central to this icon, though, is that Our Lord is reaching out, grasping both Adam and Eve and raising them from their tombs. At the Resurrection, Our Lord might be “the first fruits of the dead” through His bodily resurrection (I Cor 15:20), but His first action was in Hades, to raise up Adam and Eve. How often we hear in the Byzantine liturgy: “Adam set free. The curse wiped out. Eve rejoices.” Yes, on Easter morning and throughout the forty days of Easter we joyously proclaim “Christ is Risen from the dead, by death He trampled death ...” But, it was on Holy Saturday, with His body yet resting in the tomb, that Our Lord’s “soul and divinity” raised up our first parents, Adam and Eve, turning the curse of Genesis 3:23-24 on its head and opening Paradise once again to those who call upon Him in faith and in love, offering eternal life as He promised in John 3:16. Psalm 49, verse 16, says: “...God will redeem my life, will take me from the hand of *Sheol* (or *Hades*).”

Notes:

- 1) This article is based upon “He Descended Into Hell,” CCC #631-637, pages 164-165, 2nd edition.
- 2) A lengthy citation, in smaller print, given in #635, is taken from an ancient homily on Holy Saturday. It well describes this icon. Note, the use of “hell.” Sigh!
- 3) At Jesus’ right are Kings David and Solomon, from whom he is descended in his humanity, and his cousin, John the Forerunner (the Baptist). At His left in this presentation are Abel, the innocent shepherd, Abraham, and Moses; this shows the fulfillment of prophecy.
- 4) The blue background in which Our Lord is standing is termed a “mandorla,” in iconography symbolizing Divinity breaking into Creation. White robes symbolize Our Lord’s glory.

Byzantine 101 - Virgildee Daniel, TOF

We celebrate the Feast of Pentecost with great joy throughout the entire Church. Yet, each tradition retains its own particular character and traditions, as Pope Saint John Paul II so famously said – the Church “breathing with both lungs.”

At first glance, then, would be the vestments worn on this Feast. The liturgical color for Pentecost in the Western Church is red. In much of the Eastern Church, however, following the Byzantine heritage, the liturgical color is green. Indeed, any liturgical service or prayer for the Holy Spirit will find the celebrant in green vestments, green symbolizing the new life in the Holy Spirit. In the East, the season of Pentecost proceeds for the next octave or eight days, ending with the Feast/Sunday of All Saints (as opposed to November 1 in the Western Church).

The Western Church’s liturgical cycle of “ordinary time” begins after the Christmas season and continues until the Feast of Christ the King, interrupted by the seasons of Lent and Easter. In the East, we observe “Sundays after Pentecost,” a cycle that continues until the beginning of the Great Lent, interrupted by the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany.



There are essentially two themes to icons depicting the Pentecost. My favorites are those where the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is at the center. This celebrates Mary’s central role in our salvation as “the God-bearer.” We can only surmise that she was there, in the Upper Room, at that event (Acts 1:14); indeed, this is the earlier tradition in iconography, still preserved today among the Copts and others. The majority of modern icons of this Feast, however, while similar to the image shown here, have an empty seat where the Blessed Virgin would otherwise be seated. This empty seat symbolizes the continuing presence of the Eternal High Priest, Our Lord Jesus Christ – perhaps influenced by Acts 2, especially verses 1-4, which might suggest that only the Apostles were present at that moment. Think of the Bishop’s throne, unoccupied when the bishop is not present. In most Eastern parishes, there is a vacant throne behind the altar (not just in cathedrals), which is occupied only when the bishop makes a visit. Some parishes place a Gospel book in the vacant throne for the same reason. In either representation, the Apostles Peter and Paul are present in the foreground of the icon which connotes that this is a universal event for the entire Church. On the other hand, Paul’s presence is otherwise an anachronism, since he could not have been present at the actual event.

One other point may be of interest: while Eastertide in the West extends several weeks after Pentecost to the Feast of Corpus Christi, formal observance of Easter in the East ends with the Ascension of the Lord. There is then a ten-day interregnum suggested by Acts 1:12-13. The intervening Sunday is celebrated in honor of the Fathers of the First Nicene Council (A.D. 325), the opening session of which took place between the Feasts of the Ascension and the Pentecost. Some of the prayers anticipate the Pentecost, and we pray “*Be exalted above the Heavens, O Lord, and let your glory be over all the Earth.*”

Byzantine 101 - Virgildee Daniel, TOF (cont.)

Finally, in the East we suspend formal prayers to the Holy Spirit from Easter to Pentecost. Our Lord was present to the Apostles – ate and drank with them (Acts 10:41) – for 40 days after Easter, until the Ascension. Then the Apostles waited expectantly “... you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, ...” (Acts 1:8a). This liturgically creates a longing for the Holy Spirit as gift to the entire Church. It is thus with great joy, on the eve of Pentecost at Great Vespers, that we sing for the first time in 50 days:

*Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things,
Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life,
come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious One!*

Speaking of Martyrs... - Virgildee Daniel, TOF

It was Tertulian (c. 197 A.D.) who famously declared that “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church,” meaning that a Christian’s willingness to die for their faith leads to the conversion of others. Pope Francis in his prayer intentions for March 2024 called us to “*pray for those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world; may their courage and missionary zeal permeate the Church.*” Two statements on Christian martyrdom, separated by some 1800 years, yet consistent in their proclamation of the crucial role of martyrs in the history and development of the Christian faith. Pope Francis is especially calling us to note the many modern martyrs, who are so often little known and soon forgotten, yet who gave their lives in total faith. We hear of such stories frequently. In Nigeria alone, those constitute 80% of all Christians killed for the faith - clergy, religious, laity. The statistics for the first quarter of the 21st century worldwide give pause to ponder – and to pray – for these new martyrs, and to ask ourselves “am I up to this challenge to my own faith?”

Do you recall “the Georgia Martyrs”? Five Spanish Franciscan friars were martyred on the coast of what is now the State of Georgia in 1597. That makes them contemporary with the famous “Lost Colony of Roanoke” (1585-1590), but not a common notation in most books of American history, which largely tell the English history of the colonial period. They were martyrs some twenty-three years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.

These Spanish friars had enjoyed a comfortable relationship with the local population, the Guale. Many Guale became Catholics through the efforts of these six friars. However, a candidate for chieftain, although a Catholic himself, sought permission to take a second wife as this offered him both status and increased wealth in terms of the politics of the day. Fr. Pedro de Corpa refused. Once refused by Fr. de Corpa, this chieftain gathered together a loyal following and then set about to systematically eliminate the friars and their influence. While five were outright killed, one was imprisoned and later escaped to tell a story that might have otherwise been lost except as a footnote to some report to their superior. Ironically, the bloodbath began on September 14th, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and ended on September 17th, the Stigmata of St. Francis. Not coincidental for these dedicated Franciscan friars.

Speaking of Martyrs... - Virgildee Daniel, TOF (cont.)



The following excellent website: www.thegeorgismartyrs.org includes much interesting material, including the video “For the Sake of the Gospel.” It is interesting that while certainly they were martyrs in defense of their faith, they were specifically martyred in defense of the Church’s teaching on marriage, which gives their cause an interesting spin. The cause for the Franciscan friars Pedro de Corpa and companions was opened by the Diocese of Savannah just in 1984, nearly four centuries after their martyrdom. The petition for the cause notes “*for having given their lives in defense of the sanctity of Christian marriage.*” Glory be to God, they will be beatified this coming October 31 in Savannah, Georgia.

TOF Women Prayer Group - Gina Love, TOF

We are so blessed to live in a time when we can take advantage of some of the most sophisticated technology the world has ever seen, for the purpose of praying for one another and giving glory to our God in heaven. On the 1st week of May, we began a women’s Rosary ministry called Mondays with Mary. Using Zoom, women from all three of our fraternities and the isolated tertiaries of the Immaculate Conception OFM Province living around the world can now log in together, pray together for all of our intentions, and connect with each other in a way that was impossible just a few years ago. Tertiaries, if you have a prayer intention that you would like us to pray for, please send it to me. It will be recorded in our book, and our women will pray every Monday with our Blessed Mother, the Queen of Heaven, for those intentions. Ladies, we welcome you to log in with us every Monday night at 6:30 p.m. (EST) with your rosary. Be sure to check your email for the invitation and the link. If you are not receiving an invitation, send me an email and I will add you to my list. We believe in the power of prayer!



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

Annual Tridua - Pepe Ventosa, TOF

TRIDUA

Franciscan Tertiaries

OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception



What is a *Tridua*?

As it is impossible for a great number of Tertiaries to be several days away from home or work, tridua, also known as public Tertiary retreats, have been introduced. On three successive days, a sermon is preached in the morning and in the evening, or at least in the evening. During the day, the members are to practice recollection and devote as much time to prayer as their condition allows. Special opportunities for confession are offered.” From: *Handbook of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis of Assisi*, p. 275.

As a simple Franciscan Tertiary retreat, most of the time in the Tridua is dedicated to individual prayer, recollection, spiritual reading, and meditation. The object of the Tridua “is not only spiritual renewal in general but renewal in the spirit of St. Francis” (*Handbook of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis of Assisi*, p. 276). Group activities are few and optional, and participation in these is left for the participant to discern. They are provided as an aid to keep your focus on God. The main talks for reflection will be provided by Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM. Attendees can stay at their homes or at facilities provided. Participants can attend one, two, or the three days of the Tridua, as personal responsibilities allow.

Annual Tridua - Pepe Ventosa, TOF (cont.)

Available during the Tridua:

- Daily Mass
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Confession
- Spiritual Direction
- Quiet areas for prayer and spiritual reading
- Station of the Cross for individual meditation
- Common areas for fellowship
- Simple meals

DATE: August 21-23, 2026
Starts Friday at 5:00 p.m. with Opening Mass
Ends Sunday at 2:00 p.m. after lunch

PLACE: Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted
Youngstown, OH

DONATION: \$40

HOUSING:

- Camping at the Shrine's grounds
- House at the Shrine—there are just a few rooms available at this house, and bathrooms are shared. There are also steps in the house.
- Local Hotel: a retreat group discount is available at TownePlace/Springhill Suites by Marriott in Youngstown/Canfield for \$139/night plus tax. The rooms at TownePlace (not Springhill) have a full kitchen. Please note that this special rate is only good for reservations made by Tuesday, July 21, 2026. Please contact Pepe for the link to make a reservation.
- At your home or friend's house

REGISTRATION:

Registration deadline: July 20, 2026

Registration available via Mat Posts or by completing the form included.

Annual Tridua - Pepe Ventosa, TOF (cont.)

REGISTRATION FOR TRIDUA

August 21-23, 2026

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: July 20, 2026

Name:

Address:

Email address:

Phone number:

Fraternity name (if applicable, or if Isolated Tertiary):

Please select:

- Professed member
- Attending Initial Formation, please specify:
 - Inquirer
 - Postulant
 - Novice

ATTENDANCE

I will be attending the following days (place an "X" inside parentheses for all that apply):

- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

HOUSING INFORMATION

I will be staying at (place an "X" inside parentheses that applies)

- at my home or friend's home
- I will make my own reservations at a local hotel
- I would like to stay at the house next to the Shrine. If a room is available, please let me know. I'm aware that steps are involved and that bathrooms are shared.
- I will camp on the Shrine's grounds and will bring my own camping gear.
- Other plans (please specify):

MEALS

Meals are included, but unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate special dietary restrictions. You are welcome to bring your own meals if necessary.

DONATION

Donation for the Retreat is \$40. Please make check payable to: Jose Ventosa, and write "Tridua Retreat" on the memo line.

Please send registration along with donation to Pepe Ventosa, TOF.

Annual Pilgrimage - Debbie Ventosa, TOF

Our 5th Annual Pilgrimage, sponsored this year by St. Pio Fraternity in Youngstown, OH, took place on May 16, 2026. Forty Third Order Franciscans enjoyed a day of prayer, fellowship, lunch, lecture, and liturgy at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon. We were welcomed by Kara Sertic, TOF, Minister of St. Pio Fraternity and pilgrimage organizer, who led us in prayer before the meal and distributed the agenda.

We were reminded by Virgil Daniels, TOF, about the plenary indulgence attached to the feast of St. Margaret of Cortona and with confessions and liturgy available to fulfill the obligation. Time during lunch was filled with sharing and reconnecting with our fellow brothers and sisters. Following lunch, we walked the grounds, prayed, visited the gift shop, and reconvened at 3 p.m. in the main chapel for the bishop's lecture. The bishop beautifully shared many stories of the Shrine and the daily miracle of the Eucharist that takes place during the liturgy. He wove the year of St. Francis into the lecture and encouraged us to be ambassadors of peace. Choir Bishop and Fr. Vit heard confessions, and a renewal of Profession and Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary were prayed together in the Chapel. We concluded with the reverent Sacred Liturgy at 5 p.m. We appreciated all those brothers and sisters who attended, including our Isolated Tertiaries Tien and family (from Harrisburg), Patricia (from Pittsburgh), and Bob (from OH).





News from Isolated Tertiaries - Pepe Ventosa, TOF

The Isolated Tertiaries welcomed the new group of Inquirers at their monthly gathering in May 2026. This group, Group #6, meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month via Zoom and will be studying lesson 3 of Inquiry in June. Elizabeth (IN) and Joe (Australia) are assisting Ericka with the Initial Formation of this group.

There are 8 novices in Group #5, which meets every 3rd Thursday. They will be studying Novitiate Lesson 7 in June and, God willing, will be able to profess into the Third Order before the end of the year. Brian (MN) and Andrew (PA) are assisting Ericka with this group.

Please keep all of them in your prayers as they discern a call to the TOF. Three of our Isolated Tertiaries, Novice Patty (PA), Tien, TOF (PA), and Bob, TOF (PA), were able to attend the Annual TOF Pilgrimage in May and meet some of their sisters and brothers who live in fraternity.

News from St. Padre Pio Fraternity

On May 16, 2026, the St. Padre Pio Fraternity of Youngstown, Ohio, organized this year's annual All-Fraternity Retreat at the Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio. The day commenced with a hearty lunch, followed by socializing among the fraternities. Afterward, individuals had the chance to engage in prayer and contemplation in either the small chapel dedicated to Our Blessed Mother, the basilica, or on the verdant grounds adorned with statues of the cross. A talk was given by Chorbishop Anthony Salvatore Spinozza, followed by confessions (Fr. Vitavail himself for our reconciliation), and finally mass. What a blessed day!

Mark your calendars! The Tridua Retreat, a three-day event, will be held from August 22 to 24 at Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown, Ohio. This retreat will be hosted by St. Padre Pio Fraternity. More information will be provided. St. Padre Pio Fraternity is fortunate to have fourteen members currently in formation.

News from Our Lady of America Fraternity

No news from Our Lady of America Fraternity!

News from SS. Francis & Clare Fraternity

We held our monthly gathering on April 19th and were pleased to witness the admission to postulancy of Connie Corey, Paula Banks, Donna Lovas, and Gary Greathouse. Father Vit received their allegiance, offered his blessing, and prayed for them as they began this new stage of formation.

A newly formed TOF Women's Prayer Group held its first prayer meeting on May 4th. The group now meets via Zoom every Monday from 6:30–7:00 p.m. eastern time to pray the Rosary. All female members of the TOF community—both novices and professed members—receive the Zoom invitation and are warmly encouraged to participate. A prayer journal is also being maintained for special intentions and prayer requests. Any TOF member wishing to submit a prayer request may contact Gina to have it included in the journal. Our Fraternity has also decided to pray the "Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Saint Francis of Assisi" by Pope Leo XIV at every gathering.

News from SS. Francis & Clare Fraternity (cont.)

On May 16th, our Fraternity joined the TOF community on a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio. The group attended Mass celebrated by Chorbishop Anthony Spinosa, who delivered a beautiful homily reflecting on St. Francis as an Instrument of Peace.

Our Fraternity is currently planning a pilgrimage to the Poor Clares Monastery in Canton, Ohio, since many members of our Fraternity belong to Little Flower Parish in Middlebranch, Ohio. An invitation will also be extended to their pastor and parishioners. The date has not yet been determined. We will hold our annual picnic on August 16th at the Queen of Heaven Parish pavilion. All are warmly invited to attend. In addition, we will join the TOF community for the Tridua celebration on August 21st–23rd at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown, Ohio. During this event, Fr. Vit will receive Tony Perez's Franciscan Profession. Everyone is welcome to join us for this holy week. We are also planning a "Come and See" event on August 25 from 6:30–8:00 p.m. at St. Nicholas Byzantine Church in Barberton, Ohio.

Save the Dates!

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ	June 7th
St. Anthony of Padua Feast Day	June 13th
Memorial of St. Junipero Serra	July 1st
Memorial of St. Bonaventure	July 15th
Canonization of St. Francis of Assisi	July 16th
Memorial of St. Clare of Assisi (Virgin)	August 11th
Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	August 15th
Annual Tridua Retreat	August 21st -23rd
Memorial of St. Louis IX	August 25th

Official Act of Consecration to Mary by Maximillian Kolbe

O Immaculata, Queen of Heaven and earth, refuge of sinners and our most loving Mother, God has willed to entrust the entire order of mercy to you. I, (name), a repentant sinner, cast myself at your feet humbly imploring you to take me with all that I am and have, wholly to yourself as your possession and property. Please make of me, of all my powers of soul and body, of my whole life, death and eternity, whatever most pleases you.

If it pleases you, use all that I am and have without reserve, wholly to accomplish what was said of you: "She will crush your head," and, "You alone have destroyed all heresies in the world." Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands for introducing and increasing your glory to the maximum in all the many strayed and indifferent souls, and thus help extend as far as possible the blessed kingdom of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. For wherever you enter, you obtain the grace of conversion and growth in holiness, since it is through your hands that all graces come to us from the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

V. Allow me to praise you, O sacred Virgin.
R. Give me strength against your enemies.

Auspicato Concessum - 1882
Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on Francis's 700th Birth Anniversary
(Excerpt)

“One day St. Francis was absorbed in ardent contemplation of the wounds of Jesus crucified, and was seeking to take to himself and drink in their exceeding bitterness, when an angel from heaven appeared before him, from whom some mysterious virtue emanated: at once St. Francis feels his hands and feet transfixed, as it were, with nails, and his side pierced by a sharp spear. Thenceforth was begotten an immense charity in his soul; on his body he bore the living tokens of the wounds of Jesus Christ”.



St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata

By Gentile da Fabriano (c.1420)

