



Soldiers of Christ

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

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Sandy Baden, TOF, Editor

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ST. BONAVENTURE, BISHOP AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Feast Day: July 15, 2026

Giovanni di Fidanza was born in 1221 in Civita di Bagnoregio, and was baptized with the name of John. We know little of his childhood except the name of his parents, Giovanni di Fidanza and Maria di Ritella. One interesting item of his childhood that we do know is he was saved by the prayers of St. Francis of Assisi from a serious illness. St. Francis had died approximately five years after the birth of St. Bonaventure on October 3, 1226.



Painter, Claude Francois

Giovanni de Fidanza became a Franciscan at the age of 22 and took the name of Bonaventure when he entered the Franciscan Order in 1243. His Franciscan love of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Church showed through his teachings, his administrative gifts, and his writings throughout his life.



His writings earned him the title of “Seraphic Doctor.” St. Bonaventure gave his fellow Friars an organized Spirituality, based on the insights of St. Francis of Assisi, along with being a mystical writer. Bonaventure became a Master of Theology in 1254 and taught at the Franciscan school in Paris until 1257. During that time he wrote commentaries on the Bible, “The Sentences,” and the “Breviloquium.” In 1256 he defended the Franciscan ideal of the Christian Life, which led to his election as Minister General of the Franciscan Order on February 2, 1257. In 1260 he wrote the “Life of St. Francis,” commissioned by the Franciscan Order.

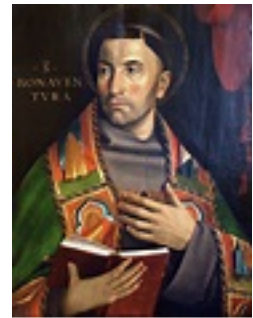
The Franciscan Order has highly regarded Bonaventure as one of the greatest Doctors of the Church. Before he ended his time as General Minister, Pope Gregory X appointed him as a Cardinal and Bishop of Albano. He died suddenly on July 15, 1274, and it was believed, or was a theory, he had been poisoned.



St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas, also a Doctor of the Church, were great friends and together wrote the “Compendia of Theology,” turned “Summas.” Both died the same year 1274. St. Thomas was on his way to the Second Council of Lyons and St. Bonaventure was already at the same Council, which both were asked to attend by Pope Gregory X. St. Thomas died of a head trauma. No investigations of either of the deaths of St. Bonaventure or St. Thomas Aquinas were ever initiated.

*In 1434, St. Bonaventure’s body was moved to a new church and was discovered to be incorrupt. In 1562, the Huguenots in the city of Lyon, burned Bonaventure’s body in the public square during the French Revolution. The head had been hidden in an urn, because it was entirely incorrupt, but was never found. However, his arm and hand had been saved and are now conserved at Bagnoregio, in the parish church of St. Nicholas. The only relic left of St. Bonaventure is his arm and hand, which it is said, **“the arm and hand, in which, he wrote his Commentary on the Sentences.”***



St. Bonaventure

St. Bonaventure was Canonized on April 14, 1482, in Rome, by Pope Sixtus IV. There was an Episcopal consecration by Pope Gregory X on November 11, 1273.

Sandy Baden, TOF

Sources: The Conventual Franciscan, Franciscan Media, Wikipedia, and catholicinsight.com

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
SPECIAL JUBILEE YEAR
WHAT ABOUT ST. FRANCIS, PART III
January 10, 2026—January 10, 2027**



St. Francis was blessed in his **“Nothingness,”** and was also blessed with **“Humility and Compassion.”** Only with God’s grace, St. Francis could do what we could not do in our normal state of being.

Pope Benedict XVI is quoted as saying, **“The humble person is perceived as someone who gives up, someone defeated, someone who has nothing to say to the world. But this...represents God’s own way of acting.”**



By God’s grace, St. Francis was able to surrender his self-love and was no longer burdened with his ego. This sacrifice St. Francis gave to our Lord Jesus Christ enabled him to be free within himself and to love God with his whole heart and soul.

A companion of St. Francis (Celano), had been in prayer, and went into ecstasy, “and saw among the many thrones in heaven one that was more honorable than the rest...and radiant with all glory.” Still in ecstasy he heard a voice which said, **“This throne belonged to one of the fallen angels, but now it is reserved for the humble Francis.”** When he came out of his prayer, he ran to St. Francis and prostrated himself before him and said, **“Pray for me to the Son of God, Father, that he will not impute to me my sins.”** St. Francis had realized something had been shown to Celano in his prayers.

St. Francis thought he was nothing but a sinner, which in his humility before God in the condition of his sacrifices, he would continue to desire perfection in Christ. St. Francis’ ability to imitate Christ in his poverty and love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, showed his enormous humility before our Lord.

Thomas of Celano, Servant of God, was St. Francis' biographer, and had written "First Life of Saint Francis," which was commissioned by Pope Gregory IX and completed in 1230. In his book he wrote of St. Francis and his humility in the Incarnation and the passion of Christ. Mostly, Celano saw St. Francis had embraced his humility in the love of God, which had influenced his teachings.



The emphasis for St. Francis was a life of no personal possessions, and in humility, relied on the generosity of other people. Celano reflected on St. Francis in his dedication to helping the poor, which also gave him the ability to receive divine revelations to perform miracles and receive the stigmata.

Quotes from St. Francis on Humility:

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

"Peace and goodness will reign in the world when people realize they are all members of one family."

"All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle."



"He who works with his hands is a laborer, he who works with his mind is a craftsman, but he who works with his heart is an artist."

"If you have life, you have everything."

Sandy Baden, TOF

Sources: The Conventual Franciscan, Franciscan Media, Wikipedia, Amazon, St. Thomas Aquinas Where Ever Institute.

THOMAS OF CELANO, OFM
1185—October 1265?
Servant of God

Thomas of Celano was an Italian friar and a hagiographical writer and a poet. **Hagiography**, is from Ancient Greek, and is a writer who does a biography of a saint, a priest, preacher, monk, or a nun, etc.



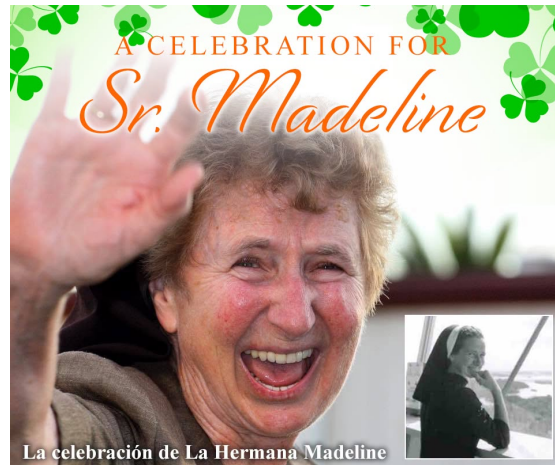
Thomas joined the Franciscan Order around the year 1215, and was a close companion of St. Francis. Between the years of 1221-1223 he was present at the Pentecost Chapter at Portiuncula, and then accompanied Caesar of Speyer on his mission to Germany. Caesar of Speyer was also a companion of St. Francis, and it was thought he wrote the Rule of 1223, which was dictated by St. Francis. Thomas of Celano and Caesar of Speyer were both known for spreading the Franciscan message while they were in Germany.

Thomas of Celano was born sometime between 1185 and 1190 and came from a noble family of the Conti dei Marsi at Celano, in the Province of the Abruzzi. He had a liberal arts education at a Benedictine monastery of Saint John the Baptist near Celano.

After the canonization of St. Francis, July 16, 1228, Thomas wrote the “First Life of St. Francis of Assisi” at the request of Gregory IX. Approximately, twenty years later he wrote the “Second Life of St. Francis,” by request of Crescentius of Jessi, the minister general of the Franciscan order. Then ten years later came the “Miracles of St. Francis” requested from the second minister general, Blessed John of Parma. He was also the author of the “Life of St. Clare of Assisi.”

The date of death for Thomas of Celano, OFM, seems to be uncertain as it was stated he died in 1255, 1260, and then between 1260-1270, but we do know he was buried in the Church of S. Francesco at Tagliacozzo. His process for beatification was started in Avezzano and the opening “Roman Phase” on November 27, 1991. He was granted the title, “Servant of God.”

Sandy Baden, TOF



A special farewell to Sister Madeline Fitzgerald today, June 25, 2026, after arriving to the St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Vista, Calif. in 1977. I had the pleasure of working with Sr. Madeline when I was a sponsor in RCIA and then as Formation Director for the Secular Franciscans, San Luis Rey Fraternity, for seven years when Sister was the Spiritual Assistant of the Order. Sr. Madeline is a true Franciscan with a loving heart and love for Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sister Madeline Fitzgerald was born in Ireland in 1941. She entered the Sisters of St. Clare in Ireland, professing her first vows in 1951. Sr. Madeline taught high school math in Ireland and in England and then was assigned to the US in 1966. Before arriving to St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Vista, California in 1977, she was assigned in Florida.

In Vista, California, Sr. Madeline served as Ministry to the sick, Jail ministry, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), infant baptism, and spiritual direction. She is a member of the Clergy Caucus along with the San Diego Organizing Project and has served in Congregation ministry and most recently as Regional Coordinator.

*Sr. Madeline is retiring and going back to Mother House in Ireland. **"I love what I do, and am blessed with the many St. Francis pastors, associates and staff, past and present, each offering their own charism and expertise for the building of the kingdom,...I will retire in heaven with the help of God and my escorts Mary, St. Clare, and St. Francis of Assisi."***

Sandy Baden, TOF

Source: The Southern Cross

VIRTUAL MONTHLY ZOOM GATHERING, JULY 2, 2026

Our topic for the Virtual Monthly Zoom Gathering will be presented by:
Peter Emau, TOF, "From Uganda to USA"

Peter Emau, TOF, a cradle Catholic and native of Uganda, Africa. He attended Catholic school until the University level, then the Government school is where he obtained a degree in Veterinary Medicine. Moved to California and attended the University of California, Davis Campus, and his graduate degree was completed.

Peter met his wife Margo, at the University of California and have three adult children. Throughout his career the family moved and lived in Washington State, California, Ohio, Georgia, Wisconsin, Kenya and Uganda. He was Professed on October 31, 2009 as a Secular Franciscan in Bremerton, Washington, and then transferred as an Isolated Tertiary on June 13, 2023. Peter has shared his time and talent by helping with Initial Formation with Groups 2 and 4. We look forward to his presentation on July 2, 2026, "From Uganda to USA."



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

AMERICA



On July 4, 2026 we celebrate Independence Day, the **Quarter Millennium**, or the 250th anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence.

What does this mean for all of us? We celebrate our Freedom from Britain, which was signed on August 2, 1776 by the Continental Congress.

George Washington read the Declaration of Independence to a crowd at City Hall Park in New York City. There was excitement among some of the people and of course in 1776 a riot had broke out in the streets. They charged down Broadway to Bowling Green Park and toppled a statue, which had been melted down and made into musket balls and used by the American army in the Revolutionary War. So, I guess you could say, nothing since then has changed.

So let us celebrate our Freedom and remember: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are **Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.**"

Source: Reader's Digest



Our fraternity is having a picnic
and would love to have you join us!

SS. Francis and Clare
Fraternity

Annual



Date: Sunday August 16, 2026
Place: Queen of Heaven Parish
1800 Steese Road,
Uniontown, OH
Time: 1:30pm





"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 XXIII: TRUE HUMILITY

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



Blessed that person (=Blessed is the servant) who is just as unassuming (=humble) among his subjects as he would be among his superiors.

Blessed the religious (Blessed is the servant) who is always willing to be corrected.

A man is a faithful and prudent servant (see Mt. 24-45) when he is quick to atone for all his offenses, interiorly by contrition and exteriorly by confessing them and making reparation.

Lothar Hardick, OFM, reiterates in this Admonition the attitude of living in a Community. However, we are Isolated Tertiaries living in the world as it is stated in Articles: 30 & 37.. “An Isolated Tertiary is one ‘who cannot be enrolled in any fraternity, but enjoy the rights and privileges which tertiaries have as individuals.”

As individuals living in the world as Isolated Tertiaries, not only should we treat our superiors with the respect they deserve we should also treat our fellow Franciscans with the respect they deserve. For that matter, we should treat everyone, our family members, those we work with, those we meet on the street, meaning everyone, with the respect they deserve.

In examining our consciences, do we treat our superiors differently than we would treat another Isolated Tertiary? It is something to contemplate if you have a particular assignment you have been given and you need to communicate with your superior. When communicating with another Isolated Tertiary from a distance, either by phone or a zoom meeting, we must keep our attitude in check with our brothers and sisters in Christ. What we say, or how we say it could be taken in a wrong light unintentionally.

In obedience we listen to our Superiors and follow through with what has been directed with a positive and Christ like attitude. At the same time with our Isolated Tertiaries, we should do the same.



Padre Pio stated, “Let us look up and then look at ourselves. The infinite distance between the sky and the abyss generates humility.”

“While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your hearts.”

“We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way.”

“Sanctify yourself and you will sanctify society.”

Realizing we live in a world of chaos, we must reflect a humble attitude towards everyone we meet. Meaning we should be humble at heart and compassionate with those around us. We may not know what the other person is going through in their own lives. Just a thought, would this kind of attitude be harder living in a monastic Community or as an Isolated Tertiary?

It may have been stated in a previous Admonition that in our love for our Lord Jesus Christ we should emanate this love within us and love our neighbor as ourselves. In loving our neighbor as ourselves we will then behave as we should as if it were in our DNA, glorifying our Lord in all that we proclaim and in obedience to our Rule.

Regardless if you are speaking to our Superior or to another Isolated Tertiary it should make no difference in our behavior towards each other. Our Lord loves all of us, good, bad, and the ugly, so to speak, and we should see Christ as our guide and love the good, bad, and the ugly. Let us be a “faithful and prudent servants when he is quick to atone for all his offenses, interiorly by contrition and exteriorly by confessing them and make reparation,” as St. Francis and Lothar Hardick, OFM, stated in Admonition XXIII.

SAVE THE DATE

JULY 2: IT ZOOM GATHERING: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific time. Discussion Topic to be presented by Peter Emau, TOF, "From Uganda to the USA.

JULY 4: INDEPENDENCE DAY

JULY 6: MONDAYS WITH MARY: July 6, 13th, 20th, and 26th, 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific time.

JULY 9: IT INQUIRY FORMATION GROUP 6: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time.

JULY 15: ST. BONAVENTURE

JULY 16: IT NOVITIATE FORMATION GOURP 5: 7:00 PM Eastern Time 4:00 PM Pacific Time.



