

The Troubadour

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



Ecce Mater Tua

Our Seraphic Father, St. Francis, called her *Virgo facta Ecclesia*, which means Virgin made Church. Franciscan Mariology holds that Mary and Jesus were predestined not as an afterthought, but were predestined from all eternity out of perfect love. We call this **The Absolute Primacy of Christ**. We hold that the Incarnation was God's original plan for creation, rather than a response to the fall in the Garden. This view was championed by John Duns Scotus. He also championed the Immaculate Conception, arguing that the most perfect form of redemption was Mary's sinlessness, a concept called **Preservative Redemption**. In Franciscan Mariology, these are the two pillars upon which Marian Coredemption stands out the most.

St. Maximillian Kolbe taught that Mary is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit; as the Holy Spirit is the eternal love between the Father and Son, Mary is the created expression, his human counterpart. He found it profound that in Lourdes in 1858, upon St. Bernadette's asking, Mary said that she was the Immaculate Conception, as opposed to saying she was immaculately conceived. Kolbe believed that the Immaculate Conception was not merely an absence of sin, but the fullness of the Spirit. This theological concept is known as the **Created Immaculate Conception**, which Kolbe describes as Mary being the human created reflection of the Holy Spirit. In other words, Kolbe taught that the Holy Spirit is the uncreated Immaculate Conception, and Mary is the created Immaculate Conception, animated by divine love from the moment of her existence. Because Kolbe believed that Mary is the Created Immaculate Conception, he believed that she acts as the perfect instrument as Mediatrix of all graces to humanity.

In *Lucunda Semper Expectatione* (1894), Pope Leo XIII affirms this by referring to Mary as **Mediatrix of Divine grace**. Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, pray for us.

Spiritual Director

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



Editor
Luis Guzman, TOF

Franciscan Quote for Fall 2026

Canticle of the Creatures 1225 (7) "Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water, so very useful and humble, precious and chaste."

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.

The Wisdom of Our Holy Mother Clare - Virgildee Daniel, TOF

St. Clare is my patron saint as a member of the Third Order. I've had an on-again/off-again "love affair" with her since I discovered her some thirty years ago as a new member of the theology faculty at a Franciscan high school. In fact, my very first presentation at a student retreat focused on her injunction to "Place your mind before the Mirror of Eternity." I spent my allotted time attempting to open up what St. Clare meant as one contemplates our Crucified Lord hanging upon the Crucifix. At the time, I knew little about the San Damiano Cross, except that Clare had custody of this prime relic of our Franciscan tradition, so I'm not sure how well I even remotely captured her thought back then.

Perhaps her best-known quote, however, comes from one of her letters to St. Agnes of Prague, a long-time friend whom she had installed as the Prioress of the Convent of Poor Clares in that city. These letters are some of her best-preserved thoughts and wisdom. The words have actually been set to music, and we often used them as a prayer mantra in retreats and in classroom exercises with our students. I, myself, use these phrases regularly to help me focus during my weekly Adoration/Holy Hour.

Gaze upon Christ.

Consider Christ.

Contemplate Christ.

Imitate Christ.

But what might they mean? First, Gaze upon Christ. Seems simple enough. For Clare, most assuredly she was speaking of the image of Christ upon the San Damiano Cross which she had before her every day. But there is "looking upon" and there is gazing. For me, the injunction from the Letter to the Hebrews: "... persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of our faith" sets the tone here. (12:1b-2a, NAB) The beauty of this injunction is that it can apply to every crucifix we might encounter and, in every place, even at home. Most certainly we can do this mentally with our spiritual eyes, even if our physical eyes are not falling directly upon the image, as in when we pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet or the Rosary. And, if we are at Mass, we can always come back to the Crucifix should our mind tend to wander. Even the great St. Thomas Aquinas admitted to his mind wandering while at prayer.

Consider Christ. This is "to think about carefully," especially attentively and reflectively. This opens up a full range of possibilities as appropriate to the moment. It is where the Holy Spirit might lead you, not unlike how we reflect upon Scripture, particularly the Gospels, as through *lectio divina*. Now, we begin to add context to our "gazing." This context might lead us to an even more intent gaze upon Him with our spiritual eyes.

Contemplate Christ. On the surface, this could be simply "to look carefully at" our Lord in the moment – Monstrance, Crucifix, Stations, statue/icon, sacred art, image (perhaps mentally as with the Rosary).

The Wisdom of Our Holy Mother Clare - Virgildee Daniel, TOF

Likely, though, most of us will advert to the more common understanding of “to think deeply or carefully.” This would, of course, follow upon either what came to mind as one “considers Christ,” or it could be to focus on a particular concern/issue that brought you to prayer in the first place. *Imitate Christ.* It seems easy “to copy someone’s behavior,” whether it be Our Lord, His Blessed Mother, or one of the saints. Or is it?

Don’t we often ask ourselves WWJD? (“What would Jesus do?”) Don’t we often struggle with “Despise the sin and vice of your body...” as St. Francis commends us to do in his “Letter to all the Faithful”? How absolutely difficult is it “to give birth to Christ through our spiritual practice, as a shining example before all people.” (The Letter, again.) How do we “strive to be fruitful as the result of your penance”? (And, again.) Well, we aren’t our Lord, for sure, and we certainly are a long way from the near-perfect example of “Imitate Christ” in our Seraphic Father’s exemplary life— or Clare’s for that matter. Yet, every journey begins with a small step, and so should we in seeking to “Imitate Christ.” There is an excellent saying: “I am only one, but I am one. I can’t do everything, but I can do something. That which I can do, I should do. And, that which I should do, by the grace of God I will do.” In other words, baby steps. And, let’s not forget that “I have the strength for everything through Him who empowers me,” which brings us back again to grace. (Philippians 4:13, NAB)



As members of the Third Order, all this underlies the opening articles of the Constitutions (1957), Articles 1 through 5. Grounded in our Baptism and our Profession, all of us should periodically review and both “consider and contemplate” how we might “imitate Christ” as outlined in the wisdom of these few paragraphs, most especially Article 4. All of us most certainly can here find “That which I can do, I should do,” no matter how small. Remember, too, St. Francis chose to call the friars “minor” as a nod towards the lowest classes, in mediaeval times the serfs and the truly poor. In this he saw a manifestation of the humility and poverty of Christ as his followers, themselves now voluntarily poor, ministered to the lowly of society. The same also for St. Clare, who insisted upon the equality of poverty among all the sisters as a sign of their humility and service to others; again, being “minor.” As tertiaries, on the other hand, we are called to minister from where we are in our particular lives in society – where we live, work, play, and have our being – both in and outside the Church. In other words, “to bloom where we are planted.” Here, again, we do this most perfectly in our human frailty and weaknesses when we “Gaze upon Christ. Consider Christ. Contemplate Christ. Imitate Christ.”

Well, these are my humble thoughts on these beautiful, poetic words of our beloved St. Clare. (With gratitude to Merriam-Webster, too.) Next time, I will take us to the interpretation of an excellent Franciscan scholar, before we look through Clare’s actual words in that now famous letter. Peace & All Good!

Spiritual Void - Loiose Daniel, TOF

I attended the Third Annual Tridua this August at the Shrine in Youngstown. On Saturday, as I was walking outside, I met this young man. "Hello! Where do you live?" I asked. "Minnesota," he responded. "You came all this way for a three-day retreat? How did you come?" He said that "We drove eleven hours to get here."

Let me note here that the retreat was not special or spectacular. It did, however, include Mass every day. Of course, there were talks by Fr. Vit, fellowship at meals, plenty of unstructured time for prayer and reflection, and group prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours, the Crown Rosary. Well, it did end with a Profession; so that's pretty spectacular!

Back to my encounter on Saturday – Wow! I was shocked. Driving eleven hours to get here on Friday and leaving late Saturday to be home and ready for work on Monday morning? We also had a sister from Arizona and a brother from Alaska – both Isolated Tertiaries; but they flew in. A family from Pennsylvania, too. So, I began to seriously wonder, what is so special about coming to the retreat, to this Tridua.

Later that day, I became better acquainted with a sister I had met last year. (Actually, I had met her several years earlier on another retreat experience in Indiana, but "memory fails," as they say.) Of course, I asked her where she lived. She has in fact lived throughout the United States since her youth, although she has now settled in Indiana. Another Isolated Tertiary. Her two children live out West, while her siblings live in other states. I was curious why she made such a trip to be here at the Tridua. She said, "I'm here because of the Franciscan people." In my mind I asked, "What's so great about Franciscan people? Hmm ... because of 'the Franciscan people.'" And, what about the other Isolated Tertiaries in attendance, especially the two that drove for eleven hours to be here?

Later that day, I was thinking about my own life. There were events in life that I looked forward to and was excited to attend – especially family get-togethers. I can, however, remember often feeling disappointed when driving home, that something was missing. "Is that all there is?" Don't get me wrong. My husband and I love to get together with our children and grandchildren, but, sadly, faith is often at the perimeter. Even getting everyone to just stop for grace can be an endeavor!

My reflection actually answered my question about the retreat. I was looking for something deeper from my family events, but it was somehow missing. There was a "spiritual void."

I started to perceive that "the Franciscan people" fill that void for me, too. We become "little Francis's" who follow the Gospels and deeply care for each other like Jesus cares for us. We seek out and enjoy those times when we can be together as "brothers and sisters in Francis," to be a concerned and a loving family gathered in the Lord. Then, those words of St. Francis came alive for me: "Preach the Gospel at all times and, if necessary, use words."

The Basis of Spiritual Life - Virgildee Daniel, TOF (cont.)

Going through a pile of old papers in one of my filing cabinets, I recently happened upon a major paper I wrote about 40 years ago, early in my graduate theological studies: “The Internalization of Religious Truths as the Basis of the Spiritual Life.” (It was done with my ancient Tandy 1000SX computer and a dot-matrix printer!) Reading it over, I could see that, although a mere infant in Catholic theology at the time, I did have a fair grasp of the process, as it were. At this point, I had been officially Catholic for about 10 years, but my catechesis in the faith had been “a bit of this and a bit of that.” Although I did not mention it as such in the paper, my 1985 Cursillo experience resonates from the background. A profound experience of faith, that weekend was indeed the catalyst to my seeking a deeper understanding of my Catholic Faith and the deeper meaning of living it out in daily life, including the decision to seek a master’s degree in Catholic theology. When I wrote that paper, I was seeking something that I could not yet appreciate, although I clearly knew that it existed and that I wanted it. The paper, as such, I believe is still viable today – I wouldn’t substantially change it, although it has that somewhat mechanical feel that I suppose all such early efforts at theology can entail. “Baby Cursillista” that I was, the paper was all in my head and did not reveal my heart – at least not much.

“The spiritual life is a life motivated by faith,” I wrote back then, and then spent time connecting that to St. Paul’s teachings. “The internalization of religious truths is essential for the spiritual life and the spiritual life facilitates the internalization of religious truths,” or so I wrote. Again, although I focused more on the process, as such, I also noted that “An experience, either directly or vicariously, will grasp in such a way that one cannot but help to at least pause and give it credence. That experience, either of itself or because of a chain of experiences which it initiates, will lead one to a moment of ‘decision’ – a decision to be open, at least tentatively, to the religious truths of one’s faith.” The heart of my argument then went on to say, “It is the moment when one decides that faith, and the religious truths contained therein, is not simply to be held, but that it must be possessed in the fullest sense – that one’s faith must be lived and experienced rather than kept at a noncommittal distance. In other words, it is the time when one begins to relinquish control of one’s life experiences and to hand them over, as it were, to the reality of the mystery which one’s faith defines as deity.” Further, “But whatever it is, one will not just stumble into this moment; rather, the moment will find and grasp you. And this moment is an experience of grace, ... Grace is not something that just happens, ... In fact, it is one of those very religious truths.” That 1985 Cursillo weekend was exactly that moment for me. On the other hand, looking back, I can see that I was still largely at that “noncommittal distance” for quite a very long time. In some ways, to be honest, I might be that way still, just a bit anyway.

I also noted that “there will inevitably be plateaus, points where this dynamic process will level off or even seem to stop altogether. These plateaus can be of either internal or external origin, but basically they are points when the openness abates, ... for whatever reason, the motivation to dispose oneself to religious truths wanes.” At these points, we can become at least apathetic, perhaps even indifferent, to the spiritual life as other aspects of our life can take over and crowd it out. Then an experience, another moment, will happen and Grace will grab hold of us again. We leave the plateau to reengage and begin again the journey, our pilgrimage toward “The City of God.” As St. Pier Giorgio Frassati said, “The higher we go, the better we shall hear the voice of Christ.” For me, this happened when I discovered my love for the Byzantine tradition – the Divine Liturgy and the music, the beauty of iconography, the deeply spiritual environment leading one to experience “Heaven on Earth.”

It was again when I became employed at a Franciscan high school – the freedom to express my faith and to share it with the next generation. Yet, there was even one more moment of this “grasp of Grace.” It was when I discovered the Third Order Secular of St. Francis of Assisi and entered formation. My wife was the catalyst for that experience – she was the first drawn and I followed, perhaps more out of curiosity at the beginning. That was in 2019. Profession followed in June 2021. The one thing I learned most clearly through my formation is that, even though employed at a Franciscan high school for some twenty years, and after making a Pilgrimage to Assisi in 2007, I did not know Francis! So, there I was – another plateau.

The Basis of Spiritual Life - Virgildee Daniel, TOF (cont.)

Many of you may know that I have made my principal apostolate as a Tertiary “to advance the interests of the Third Order ... to promote and spread it with prudent zeal,” particularly through formation: (Constitutions, Art. 82; New Catechism of the Third Order, NCTO, Q271). To circle back to the title of my paper, my work in the apostolate of formation has been the source of much “internalization of religious truths as the basis of (my current and ongoing) spiritual life.” I am currently involved as a member of the team in our fraternity that is forming our Postulants towards entering the Novitiate. Every time I experience, and sometimes present, the religious truths of our faith through the prism of the Third Order and the life and examples of Saints Francis and Clare, I am indeed drawn more deeply “into the mystery.” Sometimes, I even feel it viscerally! Most recently, it has been through the NCTO’s Lesson XIII and the truths of “A Life of Virtue.” Much food for thought and for prayer there. I commend it highly to your ongoing formation as tertiaries. And, yet, without the truths and fruits of prayer itself (NCTO Lesson XIV “A Life of Prayer”), how can one even begin to live a life of virtue? There is the challenge of a lifetime, indeed!

Finally, as our father Francis said in his “Letter to All the Faithful,” “***Always strive to be fruitful as a result of your penance.***” Here, again, I commend this most essential writing of our Father Francis to your regular reading and prayerful reflection. PEACE & ALL GOOD!

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 first 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

Third Annual Tridua 2026 - Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Our Annual Tridua took place on August 21–23, 2026 at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted. Approximately 55 people attended, including professed members and members in Initial Formation. All three local fraternities and Isolated Tertiaries were represented, with some coming as far as from PA, IN, MN, AZ and Alaska. The retreat started with the Opening Mass, which was followed by a Eucharistic Procession. We had the opportunity for Eucharistic Adoration, Confession, prayer, reflection, and fellowship throughout the weekend. We were gifted by thought-provoking talks by Fr. Vit. Tony Perez, TOF, from the SS. Francis and Clare Fraternity, who made his Profession at the closing Mass on Sunday. Welcome to the TOF family, Tony! You are a blessed addition to our community.

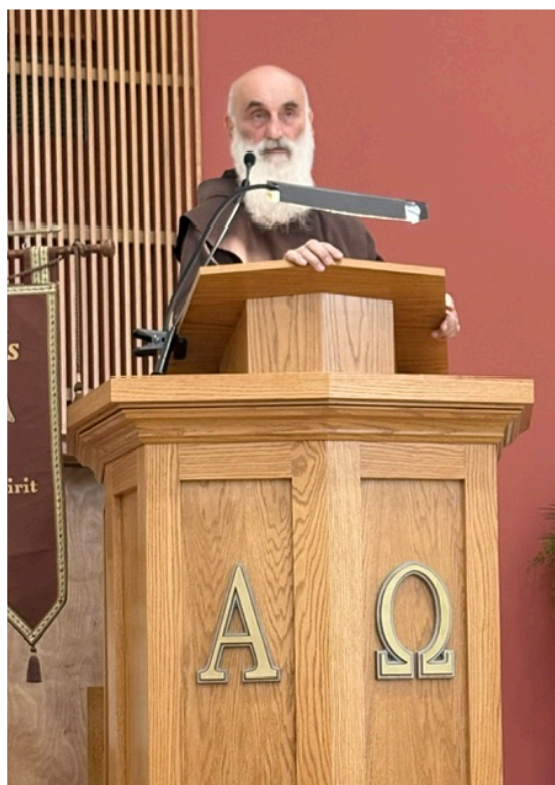
Plans are already in for our 4th Tridua retreat next year. Hope you can join us!



Third Annual Tridua 2026 - Pepe Ventosa, TOF (cont.)



Third Annual Tridua 2026 - Pepe Ventosa, TOF (cont.)



Third Annual Tridua 2026 - Pepe Ventosa, TOF (cont.)



Third Annual Tridua 2026 - Pepe Ventosa, TOF (cont.)



Third Annual Tridua 2026 - Pepe Ventosa, TOF (cont.)



News from Isolated Tertiaries - Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Our Lord continues to bless our Isolated Tertiary Community with new vocations. Nancy Caraballo, from TX, just made her Profession into the TOF on August 22nd, 2026. A warm and heartfelt congratulations, Nancy! Currently we have a total of 16 individuals discerning a call to the TOF. Seven of them are novices who, if so discerned, will be celebrating their Profession before the end of this year. The other nine are Inquirers who have already discerned to enter the Novitiate and will be celebrating their investiture within a month. God willing, we will be having the next group of Initial Formation (Group #7) starting in a few months from now. There are already 9 prospective Inquirers waiting to start Initial Formation. If you know of anyone who may be interested in the Third Order of St. Francis, please refer them to me.

The Isolated Tertiaries continue to meet via Zoom on the first Thursday of each month. They welcome all TOF members in fraternity to join them at their gatherings. Please contact me if you would like to attend.

News from St. Padre Pio Fraternity

In May, we donated \$1,000 for Fr. Leo's school in Uganda. Fr. Leo visited our Fraternity on August 25th to request funds for continued construction of his boarding school for village children. During the month of July, Katie Moran, OFS, presented a traveling statue of Our Lady of Fatima and spoke on the importance of keeping the "First Saturday Devotion." She brought for sale the publication: "Mary's Gentle Path— Daily Meditations from the Writings of Sr. Lucia," published in 2022 by Blue Army Press.

On August 8th, our Fraternity held our annual picnic. On August 21st–23rd, we hosted the Annual Tridua retreat once more. Prayer, spiritual direction, adoration, Mass, confession, and fellowship were offered to the Fraternities. We continue to pray for all members' intentions and the growth of our Fraternities!

News from Our Lady of America Fraternity

Valerie Ferrante will complete her final profession during the November Day of Reflection, serving as a valuable addition to our Family. We are also hosting a picnic on September 13, 2026, beginning at 2 p.m. at Margaret Sartor's home in Ohio; other fraternities are welcome, so please contact Margaret to RSVP. Members of our Fraternity who attended The Tridua found the experience rewarding. Please keep our Fraternity in your prayers. We also ask for prayers for our Come and See on August 26 at St. Joseph's Church in Jefferson. Inquiry will start in January. Pax et Bonum!

News from SS. Francis & Clare Fraternity

Debbie and Pepe Ventosa, TOF, generously hosted our Franciscan Movie Night at their home on June 24th. We watched ***St. Francis of Assisi: Sign of Contradiction***, narrated by Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR, who currently serves as President of Franciscan University of Steubenville.

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

Over the past several years, Fr. Pivonka has produced a series of Catholic films and other media resources. Several of our members enjoyed this thought-provoking film, followed by an engaging discussion. We all came away having learned something new and interesting about our Seraphic Father, St. Francis of Assisi.

At our July 19th gathering, we were pleased to welcome Jakin Miller, a missionary with The Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS). FOCUS missionaries are sent to American universities to support and accompany Catholic students and to encourage them to remain faithful to their Catholic faith. FOCUS missionaries receive extensive training in apologetics from well-known Catholic theologians, including Dr. Edward Sri. Jakin shared with us about his ministry at MIT in Boston, where he recently completed his assignment. Beginning this fall, he will be reassigned to the University of Rhode Island in Providence, where he will serve as Team Director. Jakin has also participated in several podcasts about his missionary work. His grandparents, Jim and Nettie Miller, both members of TOF, have kindly shared the following links with those who may be interested:

Varsity Catholic Podcast

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/35qByUr2cPXnyQfBkjAlfa?si=67c8fb1a59274f6a>

New Mission Placement

<https://mailchi.mp/60f8d86a18d0/new-mission-placement?e=dacd017227>

Final Weeks of the Semester

<https://mailchi.mp/f9fa4d6efcae/final-weeks-of-the-semester?e=dacd017227>

We were also inspired by Sidney Ebin and John Fajardo, a recently married couple who are FOCUS missionaries assigned to serve at a public university in Massachusetts. Their dedication and determination to serve the Roman Catholic Church were an encouragement to all of us.

On August 16, we enjoyed a wonderful Fraternity picnic at the pavilion at Queen of Heaven Parish in Green, Ohio. Fr. David Durkee, the parish pastor, stopped by and spent some time visiting with several members of our Fraternity. Before leaving, he blessed us; after that, we prayed the Crown Rosary, which was a beautiful conclusion to our gathering.

On August 25, we will hold our “Come and See” event at the small hall of the Byzantine Catholic Church of St. Nicholas in Barberton, Ohio. We look forward to welcoming those who may be interested in learning more about the Franciscan way of living. Through prayer, fraternity, service, simplicity, and a deeper love for the Catholic faith, Franciscans seek to follow Christ in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare. The “Come and See” event is an invitation to discover how this Franciscan way of life can be lived in the midst of our everyday families, communities, and responsibilities.

Our postulants—Conney Corey, Donna Lovas, Paula Bank, and Gary Greathouse—continue their formation and study program under the guidance of an excellent team: Denise Williams, TOF; Virgil Daniel, TOF; Rose Akins, TOF; Dennis Gacioch, TOF; and Marlene Walker, TOF.

We are grateful for the dedication of our postulants and for the generous service of all those Fraternity members who assist in their formation. May the Lord continue to bless them as they discern and deepen their Franciscan vocation.

The Soladity of the Hidden Cross - Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Of the Third Order of St. Francis
Under the Patronage of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted

The Franciscan Tertiary Community is pleased to announce the formation of the **Sodality of the Hidden Cross**, a spiritual apostolate for those who carry the often-unseen crosses of illness, chronic pain, grief, loneliness, anxiety, hardships, or any other physical or spiritual suffering.

Inspired by the Franciscan spirituality of embracing the cross, members of the sodality unite their daily sufferings with the Cross of Jesus Christ, offering them for the glory of God and for the prayer intentions entrusted to this apostolate. Through this ministry of prayer and sacrifice, our trials become a powerful source of grace for the Church and for souls. Membership to this apostolate of the Third Order of St. Francis **is open to everyone**. Being a Franciscan Tertiary is not a requirement to belong to the Sodality. Anyone who faithfully bears a cross and desires to offer it to God in union with Christ is warmly invited to become a member.

Members are asked to:

1. Offer their physical and/or spiritual sufferings to God each day.
2. Pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be daily for the intentions entrusted to this apostolate (see below.)
3. On the first Friday or first Saturday of each month, pray the Prayer to Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted.

The prayer intentions of the apostolate are:

1. For the Catholic Church, our Holy Father and his intentions, our bishops and priests and for religious vocations.
2. For the prayer intentions of the Franciscan Tertiary community.

As members faithfully offer their sufferings and prayers, they become part of a spiritual family united in prayer. Our Franciscan Tertiary Community will faithfully remember every member of the Sodality in its daily prayers, praying especially for their personal intentions, strength and holiness. Each member's name is inscribed in the Book of Prayers of the Sodality of the Hidden Cross. This book is a continual reminder of our commitment to remember every member before God in prayer.

If you or someone you know is carrying a heavy cross and would like to transform that burden into a daily offering of love for God and neighbor, we warmly invite you to join our Sodality of the Hidden Cross.

For more information, or to enroll in the sodality, please visit our website at thirdorderfranciscans.com and click on "Sodality of the Hidden Cross" in the menu bar.

"Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted, pray for us."

Lucunda Semper Expectatione - 1894

Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on The Rosary (Excerpt)

"The recourse we have to Mary in prayer follows upon the office she continuously fills by the side of the throne of God as Mediatrix of Divine grace; being by worthiness and by merit most acceptable to Him, and, therefore, surpassing in power all the angels and saints in Heaven. Thus is confirmed that law of merciful meditation of which We have spoken, and which St. Bernardine of Siena thus expresses: "Every grace granted to man has three degrees in order; for by God it is communicated to Christ, from Christ it passes to the Virgin, and from the Virgin it descends to us."



Save the Dates!

Solemnity of Saint Francis of Assisi	Oct. 4th
All Saint's Day	Nov. 1st
Annual Day of Recollection	Nov. 8th
Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary (<i>Patroness of TOF</i>)	Nov. 17th
Feast of All Franciscan Saints	Nov. 29th
The Immaculate Conception	Dec. 8th
Christmas	Dec. 25th

Pieta by William-Adolphe Bouguereau - 1876

