

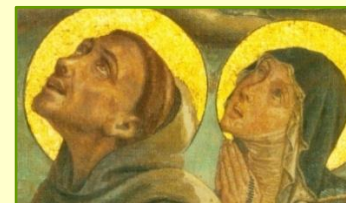
September, 2026

Volume 7, Issue 9

Il Poverello

The newsletter of the SS Francis and Clare Fraternity
of the Third Order of St. Francis

O holy Father, protect those in Your name whom You have given to me in the world; they were Yours and You have given them to me. And the words which You gave to me I have given to them. - St. Francis of Assisi
www.thirdorderfranciscans.com



Something to Consider – by Roberto Meza, TOF

September offers us a beautiful spiritual journey through several feasts and memorials that invite us to renew our Franciscan vocation. Each celebration reminds us that holiness grows through humility, prayer, perseverance, compassion, and faithful service.

September 8, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we celebrate Mary, the humble woman who said “yes” to God and became the Mother of our Savior. Her openness and willingness to trust God challenge us to carry Christ into the ordinary circumstances of our own lives.

September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, we turn our hearts to Christ Crucified. For St. Francis, the Cross revealed God's self-giving love. It reminds us that true love often requires forgiveness, sacrifice, perseverance, and faithfulness when the journey is difficult. September 14 also marks **Pope Leo XIV's 71st birthday**. Let us thank God for his life and pray that the Holy Spirit will grant him wisdom, courage, humility, & peace as he serves the Church and the world.

September 15, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, we stand with Mary at the foot of the Cross. She teaches us to remain faithful even when we cannot understand God's plan. Like Mary, we are called to accompany those who suffer—not always with answers, but with compassionate presence, prayer, and love.

September 17, the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, we remember the extraordinary grace by which Francis was conformed more deeply to Christ Crucified. His life challenges us to become more like Christ—humble, merciful, peaceful, compassionate, and willing to love sacrificially. This feast also offers the opportunity for a **plenary indulgence**, provided the required conditions are fulfilled: sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion, prayer for the Holy Father's intentions, detachment from sin, and participation in the Year of St. Francis through pilgrimage or prayerful observance at a place connected with St. Francis, concluding with the prescribed prayers and invocations.

September 23, the Feast of St. Pio of Pietrelcina - a saint whose life was marked by prayer, suffering, the Eucharist, reconciliation, and love for souls. Padre Pio teaches us that holiness often grows through perseverance in the hidden struggles of daily life. May his intercession strengthen us when we are weary or discouraged.

These September celebrations lead us through a profound spiritual path: **Mary's humble “yes,” the Cross of Christ, Mary's faithful sorrow, Francis' conformity to Christ, and Padre Pio's perseverance in prayer.**

May the Lord bless our fraternity, strengthen our vocation, and make each of us instruments of His peace. Praised be You, my Lord, through all Your creatures.

Fraternity Council

Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM
– *Spiritual Director*
Roberto Meza, TOF
– *Minister*
James Miller, TOF –
– *Vice-Minister*
Debbie Ventosa, TOF –
– *Master of Formation*
Mary Dye, TOF –
– *Secretary*
Therese Harper, TOF –
– *Treasurer*
Virgil Daniel, TOF –
– *Councilor*
Rick Dunlap, TOF –
– *Councilor*
Pepe Ventosa, TOF –
– *Councilor*
Susan Kramer, TOF
– *Newsletter*

**Next Gathering–
September 21 – 1:30 PM
St. Nicholas Parish
1051 Robinson Ave.,
Barberton, OH 44203**

We are expecting you!

Franciscan Quote of the Month

“Fix your whole heart upon God and love Him with all your strength.”

St. Louis IX (1214-1270) – King of France, Crusader, Prisoner, Defender of the Poor – Feast Day August 25



Eucharistic Adoration



Sunday

Betty DeMarco, TOF
Marlene Walker, TOF

Monday

Rose Akins, TOF
Louise Daniel, TOF
Virgil Daniel, TOF
Chris Devore, TOF
LeeAnn Devore, TOF
Judith Hoyt, TOF

Tuesday

Michael Butts, TOF
Eileen Dunlap, TOF
Rick Dunlap, TOF
Therese Harper, TOF
Jerry Johnson, TOF
Larry McNutt, TOF
Lucy McNutt, TOF
María Elena Meza, TOF

Roberto Meza, TOF
Carol Perrine, TOF
Cindy Russo, TOF

Wednesday

Mary Dye, TOF
Bill Marshall, TOF
Jim Miller, TOF

Thursday

Joanne Angeletti, TOF
Denise Williams, TOF

Friday

Robert Burtscher, TOF
Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Saturday

Susan Kramer, TOF

The apostolate of daily Eucharistic Adoration is VITAL to our Fraternity. It does not depend only on the 27 brothers and sisters listed above and is not only limited to one day. If you wish to take a place on the Adoration list, please contact Susan Kramer. When you find yourself at church, say a prayer of adoration to our good Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He will never abandon us.

September Anniversaries and Birthdays

Profession Anniversaries

None this month!



Birthdays

Rose Zaratsian, TOF – 9/10

Larry McNutt, TOF – 9/17

Virgil Daniel, TOF – 9/22

Stand for Life



Mary Dye, TOF and Therese Harper, TOF will participate in the Stand for Life on September 20. If you choose to witness to the Church's teaching on life by praying at the abortion clinic, don't forget our rules for your own safety.

Remember to use the residential parking around the corner. Do not use business parking or Acme's parking – you will be towed. It may be easier to pray without distractions across the street, rather than in front of the clinic. Be sure to always remain on the sidewalk. If you cannot fulfill your commitment, find a substitute. *NEVER* go alone to the clinic – pray from home if your partner will be absent and you cannot find a substitute.

Hospitality and Little Portion

Andrea Ferraro, TOF, Jerry Johnson, TOF, Jack Kellogg, TOF, and John Wilson, TOF will provide our September Gathering luncheon. If you would like to help in some way, please contact one of them.

Denise Williams, TOF will prepare and deliver the Little Portion this month. The Little Portion Apostolate ministers to the homeless and street people of Canton and Akron by providing a simple meal of sandwiches, fruit, and anything individually wrapped for our brothers and sisters in Christ – usually at least 2 meals. You may also add small sized toiletries such as Purell, soap, religious articles, disposable razors, etc. Tube socks are always very useful. Or you may want to deliver the offering. **If you are interested in helping, please contact Mary Dye, TOF.**



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

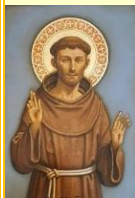
Franciscan Reminder!

We begin our monthly gatherings with prayer inside the church. As we pray Lectio Divina, we continue meditating on the Word of God as we return to our tables in the Hall.

Please remember to keep Holy Silence during this transition until sharing the word at your table!



Wake Service by Debbie Ventosa, TOF



As you organize your end-of-life planning documents, remember the Franciscan Wake Service that is available for all professed members. If you are interested in purchasing a full habit, please contact Jim Miller, TOF. The cost for the full habit, including the cord, is currently \$85. Checks can be made care of Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity, and given to Therese Harper, TOF. There are men's and women's sizes available. As Third Order Franciscans, it is an act of charity to put our end-of-life arrangements in order.

September Ongoing Formation

LeeAnn Devore, TOF will speak to us about the Stigmata of St. Francis and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross at the September Gathering, which are very timely topics in view of the celebration of the Jubilee Year of St. Francis.



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



The Franciscan Sodality of the Hidden Cross

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

For more information or to participate
in this apostolate please contact us through
our website: www.thirdorderfranciscans.com

Fraternity Treasury Update

Due to ongoing running expenses and their rising cost, our Fraternity funds are running low.

The **Common Fund** is drawn upon to pay for mailing and printing costs for the newsletter, costs associated with Formation of our future members such as textbooks and teaching tools, on very rare occasions - assistance to members who face job loss or other unanticipated trouble, monthly donation for Fr. Vit, donation to St. Nicholas for the use of their facilities, and a variety of miscellaneous costs that come with managing a healthy fraternity.

The **St. Maximilian Kolbe Charity Fund** is used for all expenses associated with the charities we support, including Bibles for prisoners at Christmas, and various other charities in which our Fraternity takes an active interest. The **St. Carlo Acutis Ministry for Youth Outreach** is supported by the St. Maximilian Kolbe Charity Fund, and currently is used to fund the sponsorship of the FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) missionary we have taken on, Jakin Miller, who spoke at the July Gathering. FOCUS actively, specifically reaches out to university students whose Faith is under attack and subject to worldly distractions, and keeps them close to our holy Faith.

The **St. John Vianney Fund** is used to support a Diocese of Moshi, Tanzania seminarian as part of our commitment to nurturing our priests and seminarians worldwide, for whom we also pray daily at Mass and private prayer.

The Council is grateful for the generous sacrifices our members have always made, and we ask you to remember that the cost of nearly everything has risen. We deeply appreciate anything you can do to help.

3rd Annual Tridua – 2026 by 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 Pennsylvania, Indiana, Minnesota, Arizona and Alaska. The retreat started with the Opening Mass which was followed by Eucharistic Procession. We had the opportunity for Eucharistic Adoration, Confession, prayer, reflection, and fellowship throughout the weekend. We were gifted by thought provoking talks and ongoing formation provided by Fr. Vit.

Tony Perez, TOF, from the SS. Francis and Clare Fraternity, 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 the works for our 4th Tridua retreat next year. Hope you can join us!

Muchas gracias to Pepe Ventosa for these beautiful photos!







Come and See Meeting by Virgil Daniel, TOF

Our annual Come & See was held at St Nicholas on Tuesday, August 25 (*the Feast of our patron, King St. Louis IX*) at 6:30pm. Virgil Daniel, TOF welcomed everyone attending in the name of Debbie Ventosa, TOF, our Master of Formation, who was out-of-town.

After opening prayer, the evening began with Fr Vit's message about Franciscanism and the "interior monasticism" practiced by tertiaries. He had to leave then, after giving all his blessing. We took a brief break to enjoy the hospitality provided by Mary Dye, TOF and Joanne Angeletti, TOF. After the break, Roberto Meza, TOF, our Minister Prefect, welcomed the potential inquirers and shared his thoughts on becoming a tertiary. Virgil then continued with the planned program, presenting an introduction to the Third Order and the structure of Initial Formation. After questions, we had a concluding prayer and adjourned a bit before 8:30. There were 7 potential inquirers in attendance, with another 2 who could not attend also being interested in the process. Thus, we stand at 9 potentials, with several others in contact with the Fraternity. At least one came as a result of a bulletin announcement, another via contacting us through the website. The system works!

Two other formators were in attendance – Rose Aikens, TOF and Dennis Gacioch, TOF. (Three of the 9 were their specific guests.) Also supporting the evening were Carolyn Gacioch, TOF and "the Three J's," Jerry Johnson, TOF, Jack Kellogg, TOF, and John Wilson, TOF. Thanks to each of our brothers and sisters who came and made the evening a success.

Constitution Spotlight

Article 3. This life can be perfectly lived only in the union of the mystical Body of Christ, in which the tertiaries are intimately united by their profession. Hence, joined together by gospel charity, they should zealously foster a family spirit both in their own fraternity and in the whole order, and thus prove themselves a true community.



Postulant Classes

The Formation Team has submitted the following dates for Formation Class for our Postulants:

September 14 and 28

October 12 and possibly October 26

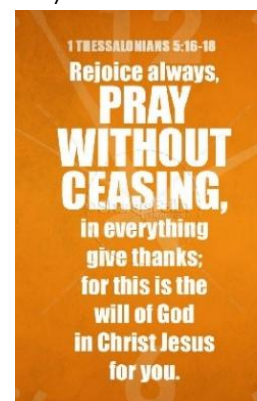
Professed members are always welcome to attend and support the Formation of our students – and it is a good way to strengthen and update the formation of every Third Order Franciscan!

Eucharistic Adoration and Daily Prayer

Council asks those of us who participate in Eucharistic Adoration – and the rest of our fraternity – to remember the following intentions every day when you pray:

1. **The spiritual protection of our fraternity and of all our members.**
2. **Those in our fraternity who are sick, and their families.**
3. **For the spiritual and physical health and protection of Pope Leo XIV.**
4. Our bishops and their intentions: **Bishop David Bonnar, Bishop Robert Pipta, Bishop Earl Fernandes, and Bishop Edward Malesic, JCL.**
5. The Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province of the OFM, particularly **Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, Fr. Chris Gaffrey, OFM, Fr. Dennis Arambasick, OFM, and Fr. Patrick Boyle, OFM**, who is the Provincial Minister.
6. **Our beloved, hard-working pastors and parish priests, and our parishes**, including **Fr. Miron Kerul'-Kmec, Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF, Fr. Ryan Furlong, TOF, and Fr. John Rickert, FSSP, TOF** of Illinois, who is an Isolated Tertiary.
7. **Fr. Gastor Temu Bahati, Fr. Matthew Munishi, Fr. Augustine N'Depatanisho and Frater Francis Tumaini** of the Diocese of Moshi.
8. **All the seminarians of St. Mary Seminary and Borromeo Seminary in Cleveland**, which serves the Youngstown and Cleveland Dioceses, as well as **the seminarians of SS. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Seminary**, which serves the Eparchy of Parma. Our fraternity has spiritually adopted **Arthur Bodenschatz, (St. Paul, North Canton)** and **William Martzaklis (St. Paul, North Canton)** from the Diocese of Youngstown, **Joseph Rohan, (St. Joseph Parish, Cuyahoga Falls), Alex Krukemeyer, (Our Lady of Victory Parish, Tallmadge), Jonathan Green (Holy Family Parish, Stow)** and **John Paul Antalek (St. Mary Parish, Akron)**, all from the Diocese of Cleveland. And Archdiocese of Atlanta seminarian **Eric Cormier**, who has been attending Initial Formation with the Isolated Tertiaries. We have also been asked to pray for **Nathan Dias**, a Jesuit seminarian from California.
9. Please add prayers **for the safety and protection of our Ukrainian brothers and sisters, and for the conversion of Russia.** Also, **for the protection of Catholic priests, religious, and lay people everywhere, particularly in Nigeria, Peru, Nicaragua, the Middle East, the Far East, and other locations where our Faith is attacked.**
10. For the **protection of all life**, born and unborn, womb to tomb.
11. For the blessing of **an increase in priestly and religious vocations – including the Third Order Franciscans - and for an increase of faithful Catholic marriages and families.**
12. For the spiritual and physical health and protection of **Jakin Miller and all FOCUS missionaries**, who are working to keep the Faith among university students nationwide.
13. For the members of the **TOF Sodality of the Hidden Cross** and their needs.

It is part of our holy Franciscan vocation to prayerfully support our fellow Franciscans, the Pope, our bishops, our priests, and seminarians and anyone in distress and danger. **We have no Order without prayerful Franciscans, no priests without our seminarians, no Eucharist without our priests, and no Church without the Eucharist.** We all work together doing the mission God has given us, for His glory. All these individuals on the list sacrifice daily for us, and it is our privilege to pray for them!



Right to Life – Help Needed!!!

Matt Poletti, TOF is coordinating our annual presence at the Right to Life booth at the Stark County Fair. The day assigned to us is Labor Day – Monday, September 7. There are several time slots that remain open, and we are in urgent need of Fraternity members who are willing to witness for the Church's unchanging teaching on the dignity of human life. Additionally, we face a further challenge on our upcoming election day, in which there will be a statewide vote on the "right" to die – another term for assisted suicide and legalized euthanasia, both of which are dire mortal sins. Are you willing to stand up to defend Church teaching? If you can spare a couple of hours to help, please contact Matt ASAP!!!

Transitus News!

Our Fraternity Transitus will be Saturday, October 3 at 7 PM at our beautiful Fraternity home - St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish. Our Minister, Roberto Meza, will lead our prayerful remembrance of the holy death of our good St. Francis, which will be 800 years to the day – and which occurs in the Holy Jubilee Year of St. Francis.

If you wish, you may also attend the Divine Liturgy for the Vigil of Sunday. *Trustworthy sources confirm that our own Virgil Daniel, TOF may cantor at this particular Divine Liturgy, which will fulfill our Sunday duty.*

We will meet in the church for the Transitus. Please be aware that there will be another event at the same time in the parish social hall. If necessary, you may park in the driveway in front of the church, as long as you park in the lane closest to the church so that you do not block traffic leaving the parking lot.

****If you wish to attend the Transitus at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted, Bishop Bonnar of the Diocese of Youngstown will celebrate a Mass for the 800th Anniversary of the death of St. Francis at 5:30 PM. The Transitus will follow after Mass. His Excellency wishes to especially honor St. Francis in this Jubilee Year. Please check the Shrine website or the Diocese of Youngstown website for more information.***

Lord, it is Good for Us to be Together!

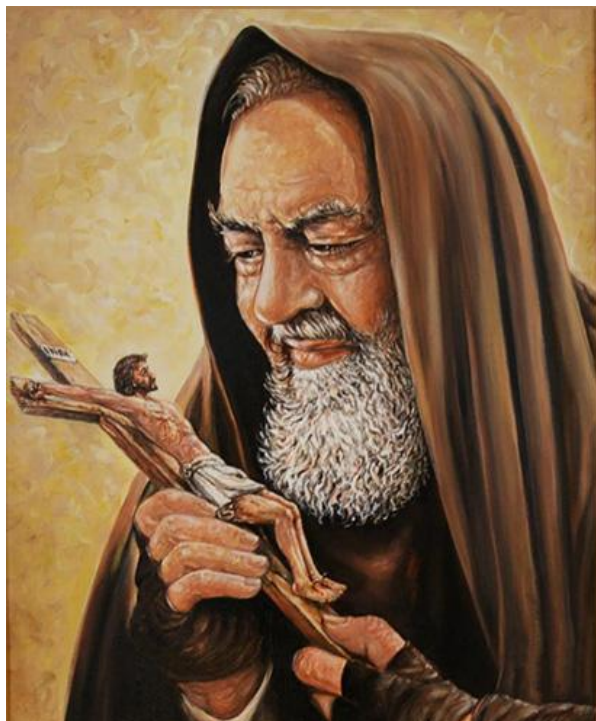
- We met for our August Gathering and Annual Picnic on Sunday, August 16 at Queen of Heaven Parish in Green, where we once again enjoyed the hospitality and warm welcome of Fr. David Durkee and his parishioners. There were more than 35 in attendance. After a greeting and prayer of thanks from our Minister, Roberto Meza, TOF, we enjoyed a delicious picnic lunch provided by members of the Fraternity, who brought a variety of good food – we are blessed indeed!
- A special thanks to Bill Marshall, TOF, who provided his usual gift of fabulous fried chicken from Showcase Chicken in Kenmore, with more than enough for everyone! And also, to our good Mary Dye, TOF, who organized the food donations and contacted every member of the fraternity to ensure we had plenty of food and drinks for ourselves and for any visitors. Well done and thanks, Bill and Mary!
- It was an added blessing to share the afternoon with our newest Franciscan brother, Tony Perez, who was scheduled to celebrate his Holy Profession at the Tridua the following weekend. We thank God for the fine and faithful Formation students He continues to send to our Fraternity!
- Shortly after we had our fill of the tasty lunch and were catching up with our Franciscan family, we had a downpour with a great deal of thunder and lightning! Fortunately, Queen of Heaven's pavilion was equipped with storm curtains, which we put to good use and we were able to sit out the storm, and were safe and dry.



Our next Gathering will be Sunday, September 21 at 1:30 PM at St. Nicholas Parish.

Save the Date (September is Dedicated to the Sorrowful Mother of Jesus)

September 17	Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis (Plenary Indulgence – see article on Page 1)
September 21	September Gathering – St. Nicholas Parish – 1:30 PM
September 23	Feast of St. Pio of Pietrelcina
October 3	Transitus – St. Nicholas Parish Church – 7 PM (Divine Liturgy at 5 PM – fulfills Sunday duty – Day of Fast for the Third Order Franciscans)
October 4	Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (Plenary Indulgence – usual conditions of Confession, Receiving Holy Communion, praying for the intentions of the Pope in addition to Renewal of Profession)
November 14	Day of Recollection – Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted



**"WHERE THERE IS NO OBEDIENCE,
THERE IS NO VIRTUE;**

**WHERE THERE IS NO VIRTUE,
THERE IS NO GOOD;**

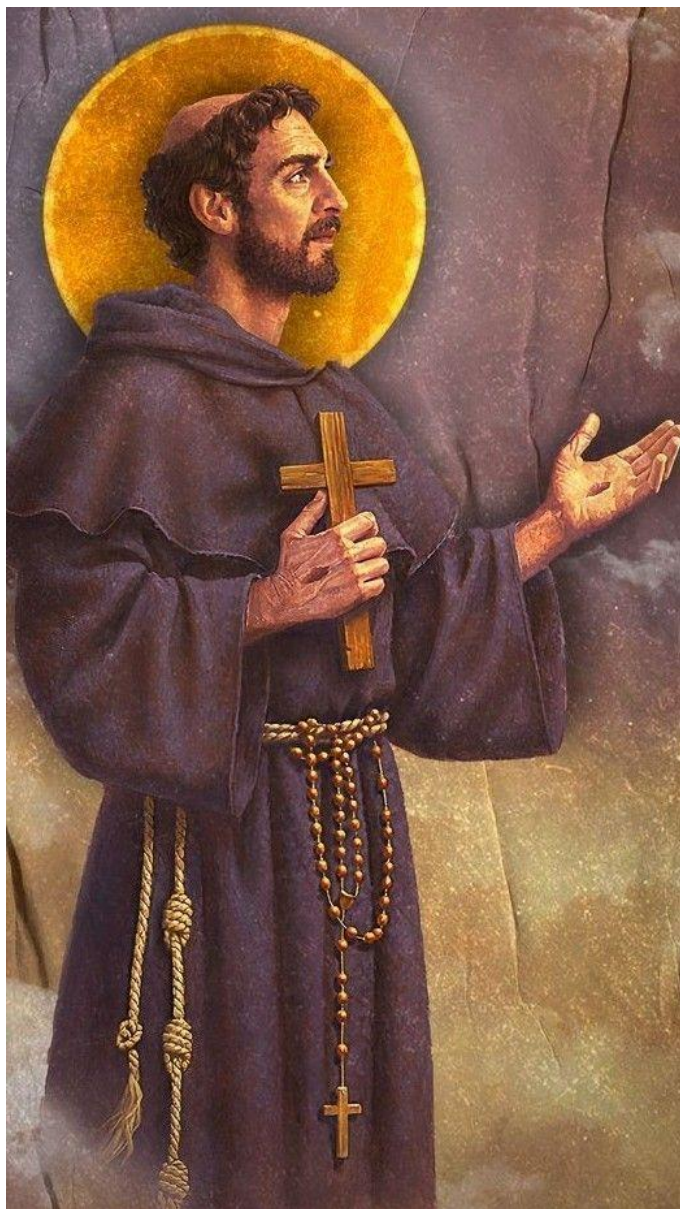
**WHERE THERE IS NO GOOD
THERE IS NO LOVE;**

**WHERE THERE IS NO LOVE,
THERE IS NO GOD;**

**AND WHERE THERE IS NO GOD,
THERE IS NO PARADISE"**

– St. Padre Pio –

Prayer for the Jubilee Year of St. Francis by Pope Leo XIV



Saint Francis, our brother, you who 800 years ago
went to meet Sister Death as a man of peace,
intercede for us with the Lord.

In the crucifix of San Damiano, you recognized true
peace. Teach us to seek in Him the source of all
reconciliation that breaks down every wall.

You who, unarmed, crossed the lines of war and
misunderstanding, give us the courage to build bridges
where the world erects borders.

In this time plagued by conflict and division, intercede so
that we may become peacemakers, unarmed and
disarming witnesses of the peace that comes from Christ.

Amen.

St. Francis of Assisi, Pray for Us!