



Soldiers of Christ

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

September 2026

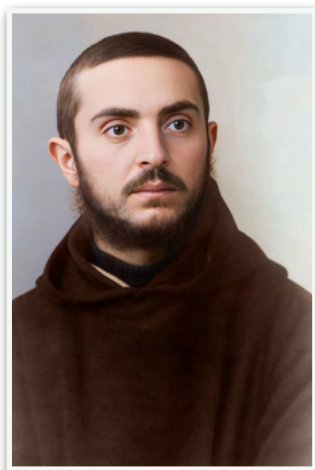
Sandy Baden, TOF Editor

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ST. PADRE PIO, OFM, PIETREICINA, ITALY

Feast day, September 23

May 25, 1887 – September 23, 1968



Francesco Forgione, born May 25, 1887 and known as Fr. Padre Pio, an Italian friar of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin. A young man of 15 years of age had joined the Capuchins and spent the rest of his life in the monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo.

St. Padre Pio is loved by most for many various reasons. Known for his wisdom, which he gave to many in the confessional, known for his stigmata, which was hard to hide, known for his bilocation, for being in multiple places at once, known for his many miracles, and known of his sufferings from the devil.

St. Padre Pio did have various visions and mystical experiences, especially in regards to the Blessed Virgin Mary. These experiences with Our Blessed Mother had begun for him when he was five years old when he also consecrated himself to Jesus. This was influenced by his mother, Maria Giuseppa, who made sure the religious values of the Catholic Church was instilled in her children along with their father Grazio.

St. Padre Pio had a devotion to prayer, and especially to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is the pathway to our Lord Jesus Christ and you would never see

Padre Pio without a rosary in his hands.



*Mary was his spiritual guidance as he had said, **“Some people are so foolish that they think they can go through life without the help of the Blessed Mother.”***

*In his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary he would refer to her as the **“Beautiful Virgin Mary,”** the **“Mediatrice of all Graces,”** or just simply, **“Mother.”** He stated the rosary, **“is a powerful weapon against the evils of the world.”** In urging the love for Our Blessed Mary, he said, **“she is the ocean one must cross to find Him,”** and **“be like Mary; trust fully in whatever the Lord asks of you.”***

*The Blessed Virgin Mary was with Fr. Padre Pio always. He was asked by his personal assistant, Padre Eusebio Notte, **“You see Our Lady don’t you?”** Then Fr. Padre Pio replied, **“she accompanies me to the altar, she remains with me in the confessional,”** and her loving care towards me cannot be described in words.”*

*Fr. Padre Pio preferred the rosary above any other prayer and encourages all of us **“to carry a rosary with us at all times and pray it every day.”** Very much like a Knight of Columbus.*

*Padre Pio’s Words of Faith: **“Reflect upon and keep your mental gaze on the great humility of the Mother of God, our Mother.”***

***“In my greatest sufferings it seems to me that I no longer have a mother on this earth, but a very compassionate one in Heaven.”**
“I feel myself held fast and bound to the Son by means of this Mother.”*

Sandy Baden, TOF

Sources: EWTN NEWS, Wikipedia

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



This story of St. Francis of Assisi could never be told without St. Clare, nor her without St. Francis. Their lives were intertwined as one in the Franciscan spirit as they independently struggled finding their way wherever God would lead them. It seems Our Lord made sure women were included in the Franciscan way of life.

St. Francis had everything a young man could want as he lived in Assisi, Italy. He was born in 1181 and was the son of thriving cloth merchant. He probably knew of St. Clare as she also was born in Assisi on July 16, 1194 to a noble family with the name Chiara Offreduccio.

St. Francis founded the Franciscan Order in 1209, the Order of Friars Minor, and Clare of Assisi founded the second Order of Poor Clares with the help of St. Francis in 1212. The Poor Clares are a monastic order dedicated to living in poverty and prayer. Today in the United States there are 53 monasteries and 504 monasteries worldwide. The Third Order was created in 1221 by St. Francis for laypeople, called the Brothers and Sisters of Penance.

San Damiano Church was the first Monastery of Poor Clares which St. Clare had lived for almost 40 years. This was the Church in 1205, where the miracle occurred before the Crucifix. The image of Jesus had come to life and Our Lord asked St. Francis to repair His Church, which was in ruin. St. Francis saw the walls were delapidated and repaired the Church. He then realized it was the Holy Church of God that needed repair.





St. Francis also composed “The Canticle of the Creatures,” in 1225, at San Damiano Church because of the inspiration of the beauty that had surrounded the Church. The San Damiano Cross has significant spiritual meaning to both St. Francis and to St. Clare.

Sandy Baden, TOF

Sources: The Challenge of Franciscan Spirituality, Spirituality for Everyone, Wikipedia, and Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.

St. Clare’s Flight from Home

By: Sandy Baden, TOF

A planning of all nights, the moon and the stars are shining, and the stillness of the darkness is frightening. Oh, how a soul must trust in the Lord.

Escape is a determination in love of our Lord. Then trying not to be seen, as the door opens to what awaits the other side. Oh, how a soul must trust in our Lord.

Quietly the door is closed, the escape in the night is terrifying, and to be caught would end it all. Was there a second thought? Oh, how a soul must trust in our Lord.

The run to the outer gate of the city is opened. In the dead of night the escape moves on as St. Clare feels joy and fear at the same time. Oh, how a soul must trust in our Lord.

What a cross to bear while pushing forward, and dare not look back at the city of Assisi where St. Clare had grown up. Oh, how a soul must trust in our Lord.

Seeing St. Francis is relief as if the struggle is over. Changing her beautiful garment for one of the poor, cutting her hair, which is a woman’s pride. Oh, how a soul must trust in our Lord.

Into the monastery she enters. Is the escape at an end or just beginning? The joy and fear have become one. Her love of God shows the world the ‘Will of God’ is complete. Oh, how a soul trust in our Lord.

INSPIRATION FROM "THE SOUL OF THE APOSTOLATE"
"The Soul of the Apostolate" Making Franciscan
Scapulars, by Patricia M. Ostaszewski, TOF



In his book, "The Soul of the Apostolate," Jean-Baptiste Chautard mentions a Fr. Saint-Jure (1588-1657) who gave an explanation of a text from Canticle 8:6: **"Put me as a seal upon thine heart and as a seal upon thine arm,"** because the heart stands for the contemplative life, while the arm, for the active or external life.

This was my inspiration to embroider scapulars, with the Tau. I found a place that sells swatches of real wool, not wool-felt. I've sewn a Tau on one side, and the other side either a Marian symbol, Immaculate Heart, Sacred Heart or monstrance, while contemplating on each image. I am delighted in this as an action/contemplation activity, as a way to grow in my spiritual life.



If anyone would like to have one of my Franciscan scapulars, please contact me by email at chesterton912@gmail.com. I offer these free of charge, except for shipping. With humility, Patricia Ostaszewski, TOF.



VIRTUAL MONTHLY ZOOM GATHERING, SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

Our topic for the Virtual Monthly Zoom Gathering will be presented by Wanda Ortiz, TOF, “How do we Communicate with God, as Franciscans?”



Wanda Ortiz was raised as a Southern Baptist in Beaumont, Texas. In her teen years she was attracted to the Catholic Church and attended Mass. She was later confirmed into the Roman Catholic Church.

Wanda met Ramiro and they were married in the Catholic Church, and now have five children. Wanda developed a close spiritual relationship with St Anthony of Padua and she believes he is responsible for her conversion into the Catholic Church.

It was our Ericka Witover, TOF, with the friendship they share, that encouraged Wanda to look into the Third Order of Franciscans. Wanda lives with her family in Bonham, Texas. We look forward to her presentation on September 3rd



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

NANCY CARABALLO'S HOLY PROFESSION

by: Erica Witover, TOF



Nancy Caraballo was born in Bronx. She became interested in St. Francis of Assisi after watching the classic Franco Zeffirelli movie “Brother Sun and Sister Moon.” In 2005 she had the privilege of visiting Assisi which deepened her faith. What she loves most about St. Francis is how he has helped her become more aware of the Lord in the world, realizing that His fingerprint is everywhere.

In March 2022, she entered the Novitiate program. On August 22, 2026, the Feast day of the Queenship of Mary, Nancy professed into the TOF in Sugar Land Texas, where she currently resides with her four dogs and two cats. We welcome Nancy into the Order.

**“Pray, hope and don’t worry,”
St. Padre Pio**

TONY PEREZ'S HOLY PROFESSION



Congratulations to Tony Perez who celebrated his Holy Profession at the Tridua Retreat in Ohio on August 23, 2026.

We are blessed to have Tony as a member of our Franciscan family.



"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, TOF
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

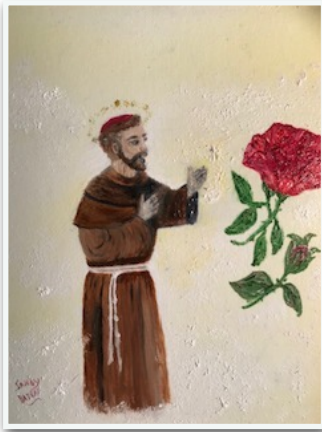
***Peter Emau, TOF
Ericka Witover, TOF***

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 XXV: LOVING THE ABSENT BROTHER
Study of the Admonitions of St. Francis of Assisi: Sandy Baden, TOF



Blessed that friar (=Blessed is the servant) who loves and respects his brother as much as when he is absent as when he is present and would not say anything behind his back that he would not say charitably to his face.

This Admonition is related to Admonition XXIV as it states, “this is Part II,” (namely true brotherly love). However, we are not talking about the absent brother and not the sick brother.

What do we say about our brother or sister who is not present among us to be grateful for what we said or what we might have said that may seem hurtful? Lothar Hardick, OFM, states again to prayer and meditation and how important this can be to bear good fruit.

‘True Love’ is what we should strive for in our journey towards perfection and put ‘True Love’ into practice, as Lothar Hardick, OFM reiterates. How many times in our lives have we said something behind our brother or sister’s back that we could not say charitably to his or her face? We bring this to confession again and again. The consequences of this sin can be phenomenal to the absent brother or sister and before our Lord Jesus Christ. If only we could remember to catch our tongue when we speak ill of our neighbor.

*We do have hope as our Lord has given us the Sacrament of reconciliation and through his suffering on the Cross, we can make things right. But why not put ‘True Love’ into practice and avoid our sin by loving our neighbor as our selves. It was Jesus, who said: **“I give unto you a new commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”** (Jn 13: 34).*

What a different world this would be today if we all loved everyone around us. What would it be like if we saw our Lord Jesus Christ as He healed the sick, rose Lazarus from the dead, expelled evil from sinners, and preached that God loves us. Let us follow St. Francis on our journey to our heavenly Father, taking up our cross, and place 'True Love' at the center of our lives."

'TRUE LOVE'

***My Lord and my God, where are
our hearts? Put love into our hearts
and help us to see you more clearly.
Save us from confusion and anxiety.***

***My Lord and my God, we are in sorrow
as we look for you in all the turmoil
in this world today. Why is love so
absent?***

***My Lord and my God, let your love
sustain us and guide us to your
light. Let the darkness disappear
and put love in its place.***

***My Lord and my God, our prayer
is to give 'True Love' to our
neighbor as you created us in
your image. Teach us to love as
you love us.***



Sandy Baden, TOF

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER: 3: IT ZOOM GATHERING: 7:00 PM Eastern time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time. Discussion Topic to be presented by: Wanda Ortiz, TOF, "How do we communicate with God as a Franciscan?"

SEPTEMBER 10: IT INQUIRY FORMATION GROUP 6: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time.

SEPTEMBER 7, 14, 21, & 28: MONDAY'S WITH MARY: 6:30 PM Eastern Time, 3:30 PM Pacific Time.

SEPTEMBER 17: IT NOVITIATE FORMATION GROUP 5: 7:00 PM Eastern Time, 4:00 PM Pacific Time.

SEPTEMBER 23: ST. PADRE PIO, PIETREICINA, ITALY

