November, 2026 **Volume 7, Issue 11**

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 – St. Francis & Sister Death: November, a Time of Franciscan Renewal

November holds a special place in the life of the Catholic Church. Through the Solemnity of All Saints on November 1 and the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed on November 2, the Church invites us to honor the saints, remember our departed loved ones and fellow Franciscans, pray for the faithful departed, and renew our hope in the promise of eternal life.

In this spirit of prayer and renewal, our Third Order Franciscan community will gather on November 14 at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown, Ohio, for a day of recollection and spiritual renewal. Guided by our spiritual director, Fr. Vit, we will deepen our commitment to our Franciscan vocation, strengthen our prayer life, and renew our dedication to pursuing Christian perfection in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

At the heart of our reflection is Saint Francis of Assisi and his beautiful greeting to Sister Death. In his *Canticle of the Creatures*, he proclaims, "Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death." These words reveal Francis's profound trust in God. He did not deny the sorrow of death or the pain of separation; rather, he viewed death through the lens of faith and the promise of the Resurrection. Having devoted his life to following the poor and humble Christ, Francis learned to surrender himself completely to the Father's will.

For Francis, welcoming Sister Death was the fruit of a life devoted to prayer, poverty, humility, and love. His example reminds us that readiness for death begins with faithful living. Before we can surrender our lives to God at the end of our earthly pilgrimage, we must learn to surrender our pride, selfishness, resentment, and excessive attachments each day.

November, therefore, is not merely a month for remembering the dead; it is also a call to examine our own lives. As we pray for our departed loved ones and fellow Franciscans, we are invited to ask ourselves: Am I living according to the Gospel? Am I growing in humility, simplicity, charity, and forgiveness? Am I faithful to the vocation I professed? These questions call us back to the heart of our Franciscan vocation.

For the Franciscan tertiary, recollection means returning to God's presence, examining one's conscience, and renewing the desire to follow Jesus Christ in the spirit of Saint Francis. Christian perfection does not mean achieving flawlessness through our own efforts; rather, it means allowing God's grace to transform us into people whose lives increasingly reflect Christ's love. This transformation unfolds through daily prayer, participation in the Eucharist, fraternity, service to the poor, reconciliation, and fidelity to our vocation.

The remembrance of death should neither make us fearful nor diminish our love of life. Instead, it should teach us to live each day with greater purpose. Life is a pilgrimage toward the Father, and every moment offers an opportunity to love more generously, forgive more sincerely, and serve more humbly. As we remember those who have completed their earthly journey, we are challenged to renew our own journey toward holiness.

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*

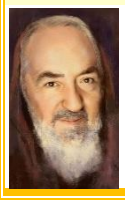
Next Gathering– November 14 – 8:30 PM Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted Shrine 517 S. Belle Vista Ave. Youngstown, OH 44509

We are expecting you!

In conclusion, Saint Francis and Sister Death offer Third Order Franciscans a powerful lesson in trust, surrender, and hope. November is a sacred opportunity to pray for the departed, reflect on life's fragility, and renew our commitment to the Gospel. May Saint Francis's example inspire us to die daily to selfishness, rise to newness of life in Christ, and persevere in our pursuit of Christian perfection. May we learn to praise God in life and in death, trusting that the Crucified and Risen Christ will lead us into the fullness of eternal life.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death. Amen.

Franciscan Quote of the Month



"We must empty Purgatory with our Prayers."

St. Pio of Pietrelcina (1887-1968) – Italian Franciscan Friar, Stigmatist, Visionary, Bilocator, Mystic, Tireless Confessor. Feast Day – September 23

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 <u>VITAL</u> 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.

Constitution Spotlight

Section 1, Article 5. Therefore, the tertiaries, instructed and trained in the gospel life, which is truly apostolic, should imitate in their own daily lives their Seraphic Father, who did not think himself a friend of Christ if he did not devote himself to the souls redeemed by Him.

Hospitality and Little Portion

Hospitality and the Little Portion will be suspended in November because we will meet at the Shrine in Youngstown for the Day of Recollection.

November Anniversaries and Birthdays

Profession Anniversaries

MaryCate Roberts, TOF – 35 Years

Jennifer Kerns, TOF – 9 Years

Jesse Kuhn, TOF; Denise Williams, TOF – 4 Years

Carolyn & Dennis Gacioch, TOF; Marlene Walker, TOF – 2 Years



Birthdays

Jesse Kuhn, TOF – 11/2

Carol Perrine, TOF – 11/9

Stand for Life



The Stand for Life will be suspended until Spring because of fierce Winter weather. Should you choose to witness to Catholic and Franciscan teaching on the sanctity of all human life during this time, please observe our fraternity guidelines for your own safety.

A Joy and a Blessing by Virgildee Daniel, TOF



Louise and I were privileged and blessed to share in the joy of the marriage convalidation for our Postulant, Gary Greathouse, and his wife Tess (Theresa) on October 10th. It was our first time setting foot inside of Little Flower Church. What a gorgeous worship space for so profound and joyful an occasion! (The mosaic over the altar is now my Facebook avatar.)

The ceremony was at 11am, exactly the same date and time as their marriage ceremony in 2020 in Sedona, Arizona. As things came together for this celebration, Tess felt that detail would make things all the more special. The only other witnesses were Debbie and Lynn Carnahan. Debbie and Tess have been friends since 3rd grade. Otherwise, there were only Father, the musicians, and necessary parish staff. All of this contributed to an environment that was both sacred and intimate. I am blessed and grateful to have been able to capture the occasion on my cellphone camera for their memory's sake.

After the ceremony and the usual "after photos," Gary and Tess hosted the six of us for a lovely luncheon time at Francisco's on Whipple Avenue. As I said – a day of joy and blessings! As we Byzantines say: "May God Grant Them Many Years!"

Formation Class Update

Inquirers: We currently have ten Inquirers, who meet in the room adjoining the St. Nicholas Social Hall. Dennis Gacioch, TOF and Jack Kellogg, TOF lead the Inquirer Formation Team. They will meet November 4 and 18, and December 2 and 16. Virgil Daniel, TOF and Debbie Ventosa, TOF are assisting in Inquiry Formation.

Novices: Rose Akins, TOF and Denise Williams, TOF lead the Novice Formation Team. They will have one more class before the Day of Recollection, and then a rehearsal for the Day of Recollection when the three Postulants will enter the Novitiate for their final year-long phase of Formation. They meet in St. George Social Hall off the parking lot at St. Nicholas.

November 5th: Day of Commemoration of All Souls of the Seraphic Order

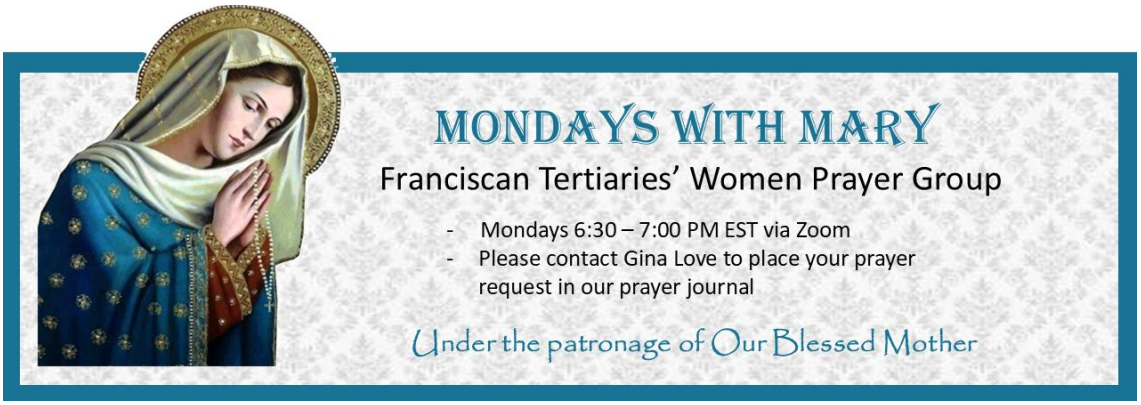
On November 5th, the Franciscan family remembers all the deceased members of the Franciscan Order. Our Tertiary community will be offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass via the Seraphic Mass Association for all the souls of the Order. Please remember them in your prayers. For more information about this Franciscan commemoration click the following link -
https://www.franciscantradition.org/blog/commemoration-of-all-souls-of-the-seraphic-order/

Fall Franciscan Fire by John Wilson, TOF



Our first Fall Franciscan Fire for Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity was held Saturday October 10 at Loyola Retreat House. The beautiful grounds of Loyola are a perfect setting for an evening of fellowship around a fire. We enjoyed doughnuts and cider, hotdogs, and other snacks. We prayed the Franciscan Crown Rosary together and shared our favorite stories or characteristics about St. Francis of Assisi that are important to us. Andrea Ferraro, who works for the Retreat House, provided a tour of the LRH facility to attendees. We had a wonderful time and will be back again for another fire next fall – and we look forward to seeing you all then!!!





Of Commentaries & Concordances by Virgildee Daniel, TOF

At our last Gathering, the question of "a good Catholic Bible Commentary" came up. Fr Vit noted that the best was probably the Jerome Bible Commentary, 1st Ed (1968), however, it is out of print, although available for a price. (I'm blessed to own a copy.) The New Jerome Bible Commentary (1993, the 2nd ed) has an outstanding editorial team, many of whom were contributors to the 1st ed. Although some areas were revised with more "modern" theological interpretation, Fr Vit suggested it was still useful. The great 20th century biblical scholar, Raymond E. Brown, SS, however, edited both. There is also the JBC for the Twenty-first Century (2022, the third edition of the work) with still more "modern" theologians. All editions are more academic in content, if that is your forte.

The Collegeville Bible Commentary dates from 1992. It is actually a collection of Collegeville's excellent Bible Study materials that were initially issued book-by-book and comes in two volumes, the OT and the NT, and is still available. This is a reliable source that is certainly less academic in tone, but still clearly Catholic. It was revised in 2017, the New Collegeville Commentary.

A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: The Old Testament is more properly a Bible study aid than a commentary, per se. Two excellent biblical scholars, John Bergsma and Brant Pitre, provide much insight, connecting the NT to its roots in the Old, as well as discussing the implications for passages used in the Mass and other liturgical readings. Many of you may have heard Bergsma speak at conferences alongside Scott Hahn. Pitre has written a number of excellent works including Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Holy Eucharist and Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary.

As to Concordances, it is hard to avoid Strong's, which is keyed to the King James Version. However, for Greek and Hebrew cross-references, some Strong's editions are still the best resource. That said, most of you probably use the New American Bible (NAB) which is used for the current Lectionary. The NAB Revised Edition Concise Concordance (2012) would be for you. If you are a user of the New Revised Standard – Catholic Edition Bible (NRSV-CE), then there is the Catholic Bible Concordance for the NRSV-CE (2022). Those of you using the excellent Didache Bible, which is NRSV-CE and also keyed to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, will want this one.

Fraternity Treasury Update

Thank-you for your generous response to the appeal to increase your donations to the common fund. Our fraternity is grateful for your sacrifices to meet the needs of our community expenses.



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

Lord, it is Good for Us to be Together!

- We met for our October Gathering on Sunday, October 18 at St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish. There were 32 in attendance. We quietly walked to the church for Liturgy of the Hours and Lectio Divina.
  - Roberto Meza, TOF led the Prayer Before the Liturgy of the Hours.
  - Kenny Green, TOF; Denise Williams, TOF; and Bill Marshall, TOF led the Liturgy of the Hours.
  - Virgil Daniel, TOF gave us a short dissertation on the differences between the Byzantine Rite and the Latin (Western) Rite in relation to the holy souls in Purgatory and other aspects of our traditions.
  - Virgil proclaimed the Gospel of the day for Lectio Divina, which was from St. Matthew, "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."
- We then returned to the Hall for our Lectio Divina discussion and prayer at our individual tables.
- Roberto led us in the Prayer Before the Meal, and we enjoyed vegetable soup, bratwurst and sauerkraut, and other delicious sides and desserts prepared by Cindy Russo, TOF; Denise Williams, TOF; John Wilson, TOF; and other very generous Franciscans.
- Before we ate, Cindy Russo, TOF spoke to us on a project of the Padre Pio Prayer Group:
  - The charisms of the Group include promoting charity, care of others, and prayer.
  - They wish to teach children how to pray the Rosary.
  - They have prepared prayers kits for this purpose, to distribute to Catholic schools and PSR classes, which consist of:
    - A beautiful, blessed statue of Our Lady of Fatima from Portugal.
    - A pamphlet on the Rosary
    - Rosaries
  - The plan is for the children to take the statue home for a week and pray with their families, and then to return it for another child to use.
  - Please contact Cindy if you wish to contribute, or if you wish to approach your pastor for permission to provide this for your parish school or PSR class.
- Roberto read a message from Theo Bennett on the Moshi seminarians.
- Susan Kramer, TOF read an email message from Frater Francis Tumaini relaying his gratitude for our prayers and for the privilege he has of studying in Italy for his seminary formation.
  - Susan also read a message from local seminarian William Martzaklis of the Diocese of Youngstown and St. Paul Parish, North Canton. William expressed his great thanks for our prayers and support.
- Roberto spoke of the need to increase Common Fund donations in order to keep up with rising costs the fraternity faces.

- Susan asked those who receive the newsletter via US Mail to please consider receiving it via email if they have access to a computer. Newsletter expenses for hard copies are becoming quite expensive, and receiving it by email would erase these costs. Those who are able to switch over are asked to contact Susan.

- Roberto reminded us of the Day of Recollection and to please sign the form provided by Mary for a headcount and to see her about paying for lunch, which will cost $13.
  - Roberto asked those who wish to carpool to let any Council member know, and also for those who are able to take passengers to see any Council member.
  - The Day of Recollection will take place on Saturday, November 14 at the Shrine.
  - We will meet at 8:30 AM for Mass, and then a light breakfast, talks from Fr. Vit, an opportunity for Confession, lunch, and further talks in the afternoon, ending around 3 PM.
- Roberto led the Grace After Meals.
- We welcomed Fr. Vit, who spoke on today's Gospel and on growing in sanctity.
  - The Pharisees hoped to set a trap for Jesus by asking him if they were bound to pay taxes to the Romans.
  - They thought, no matter how Jesus answered, that either the Jews or the Romans would arrest Him, which would put an end to Jesus' ministry.
  - Jesus's answer was perfect and left them unable to respond – and no excuse for His arrest.
  - What do we "owe" God?
    - To create the image of God in ourselves – in our souls and our outer demeanor.
    - We should aspire to grow in holiness, to become closer to Jesus and to live in imitation of Him.
    - For the laity, clergy, and religious:
      - What is the main call from God?
      - We must live our vocations as God would wish.
      - We should use the 12 Gifts of the Holy Spirit daily to make this happen.
  - When we fall into disobedience, we place our souls in danger.
  - Do not rely entirely on supernatural events such as visions for Faith.
  - Rely instead on the Sacraments, Mass, spiritual reading, and other interactions with Jesus to strengthen our Faith.
  - Have a plan for life that includes approaching God every day.
  - The Psalms are the prayerbook of the holy saints, and that is why we use them in the Liturgy of the Hours.
  - Cultivate good friendships and good companions.
  - Nourish the desire for Godly perfection – be aware of pleasing God in all we do.
  - Go to Confession regularly and often, which keeps us humble.
  - Routinely make small sacrifices, like leaving the television off, etc.
  - Discern good from bad in all things.
  - Holiness is greater than who we are.
  - Get up every day and start over again on perfecting ourselves spiritually.
- Virgil Daniel, TOF spoke on the Supplement to the Catechism, which is being used in the Formation program.
- We heard updates on the Formation Program and the progress of the students.
- <u>Infirmarian Report:</u>
  - Kenny Green, TOF spoke to Elizabeth Francis, TOF, who said her brother has returned home. They support one another and appreciate the outreach from the fraternity. She is interested in getting a ride to Gatherings.
  - Roberto has exchanged emails with Jennifer, who is in need of prayer support.
  - No recent updates on Sandy Pollino, OFS and Julia Tarulli, TOF.
- Roberto recognized those with October Profession Anniversaries (Elizabeth Francis, TOF and Roberto and Maria Elena Meza, TOF) and Birthdays (Rick Dunlap, TOF; Rose Akins, TOF; and Bob Burtscher, TOF)
- We then prayed for our Fraternity intentions:
  - Spiritual protection of our Fraternity members and our loved ones.
  - The sick and homebound of our Fraternity.
  - For our current and future Formation students.
  - The intentions included in the Eucharistic Adoration and Daily Prayer list.
  - For the spiritual and physical health and protection of Pope Leo XIV, as well as:
    - Bishop Bonnar of Youngstown, Bishop Pipta of the Eparchy of Parma, Bishop Botean of the Eparchy of St. George, Bishop Fernandes of Columbus, and Bishop Malesic of Cleveland

- Our parish priests, including Fr. Miron Kerul-Kmec; Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF; Fr. Ryan Furlong, TOF; and Fr. John Rickert, FSSP, TOF.
- The Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province of the OFM, including Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM; Fr. Christopher Gaffrey, OFM; and Fr. Patrick Boyle, OFM.
- Fr. Gastor Temu Bahati, Fr. Matthew Munishi, Fr. Augustine N'Depatanisho, and Frater Francis Tumaini of the Diocese of Moshi, Tanzania.
- All seminarians, particularly Deacon Arthur Bodenschatz and William Martzaklis of the Diocese of Youngstown; Joseph Rohan, Jonathan Green, Alex Krukemeyer, and John Paul Antalek of the Diocese of Cleveland; Eric Cormier of the Archdiocese of Atlanta; and Nathan Dias, a Jesuit seminarian. We also prayed for Conrad Crookston, who is in Diaconate formation for the Archdiocese of the Military.
- All FOCUS missionaries, in particular, Jakin Miller of the University of Rhode Island.
- Members of the TOF Sodality of the Hidden Cross and their intentions.

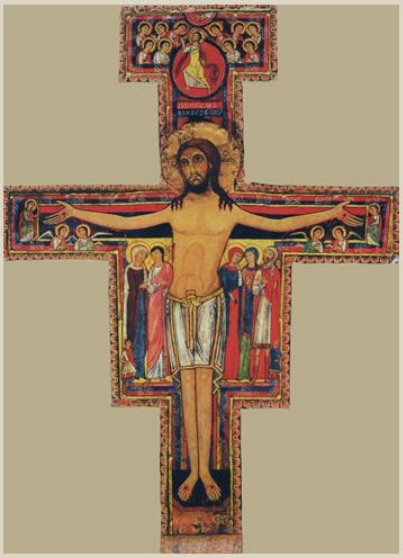
▪ All those who suffer for our Catholic Faith worldwide,

- We then prayed the Prayer for Seminarians, the Memorare, and the Prayer of St. Michael before the Concluding Prayers.
- Roberto reminded us our next Gathering will be November 14 for the Day of Recollection, hosted by the St. Padre Pio Fraternity of Youngstown at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted.

Our next Gathering will be Saturday, November 14 at 8:30 AM at the Shrine.

Save the Date (November is Dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory)

November 1	All Saints Day
November 2	All Souls Day
November 5	All Souls of the Seraphic Order
November 14	Day of Recollection – Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted
November 17	Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Patroness of the Third Order Franciscans
December 8	**Feast of the Immaculate Conception – Holy Day of Obligation**
December 12	Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas
December 25	**Christmas – Holy Day of Obligation**
January 1	**Feast of Mary, Mother of God**



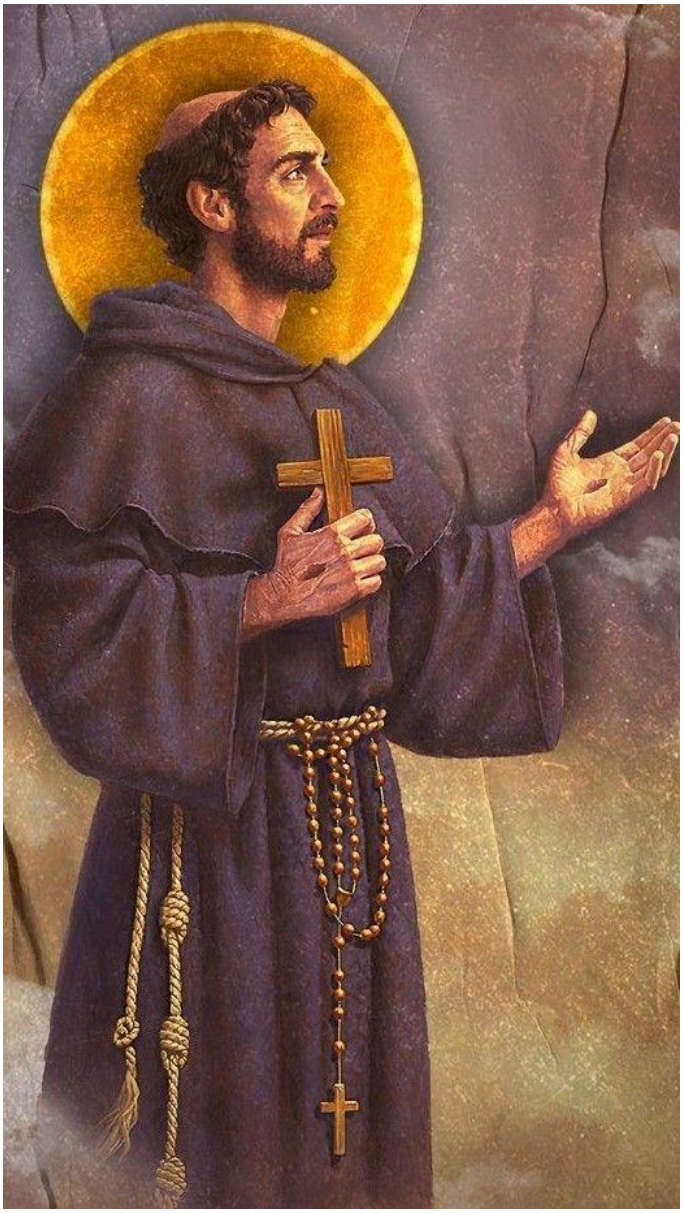
Annual Day of Recollection

Franciscan Tertiaries of the Province of the Immaculate Conception

When: November 14, 2026
Place: Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted
Youngstown, OH

Speaker: Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM

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!