



# Monthly NEWSLETTER

*Secular Franciscan Order of Central North Carolina*

PADRE PIO FRATERNITY ofscentralnc.org SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

— *A Snapshot from the Life of St. Francis* —

## ST. FRANCIS & THE VIRGIN MARY

St. Francis had a profound devotion to Our Blessed Mother

**W**ith great joy we celebrate some significant Marian feast days during the months of September and October.

Upcoming Marian feast days are The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8 September), Our Lady of Sorrows (15 September), and Our Lady of the Rosary (7 October).

Franciscans have a deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a great love for her, that is clearly rooted in St. Francis of Assisi's own profound love for Our Blessed Mother whom he considered the mother of God and a personal guide to Jesus. St. Francis was truly a faithful "Knight of the great Queen". The closer we become to Mary, the closer she brings us to Jesus. Mary is a model of complete faith, humility, obedience and self-surrender to God. Her "yes" to God in the Annunciation directly serves as an example

See FRANCIS, PAGE 4 ➡➡



Artwork by Christine Skall

St. Francis of Assisi had a profound love for the Virgin Mary, Our Blessed Mother, whom he considered the mother of God and his personal guide to lead him to Jesus, as she is also a personal guide for each one of us.

— OUR HEAVENLY FAMILY: THE SAINTS —

# Saint of the Day // September 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 SAINT GILES	2 BLESSED JOHN FRANCIS BURTE AND COMPANIONS	3 SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT	4 SAINT ROSE OF VITERBO	5 SAINT TERESA OF CALCUTTA	6 BLESSED CLAUDIO GRANZOTTO
7 BLESSED CLAUDIO GRANZOTTO	8 NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	9 SAINT PETER CLAVER	10 SAINT THOMAS OF VILLANOVA	11 SAINT CYPRIAN	12 MOST HOLY NAME OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	13 SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM
14 EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS	15 OUR LADY OF SORROWS	16 SAINT CORNELIUS	17 SAINT ROBERT BELLARMINE	18 SAINT JOSEPH OF CUPERTINO	19 SAINT JANUARIUS	20 SAINTS ANDREW KIM TAEGON, PAUL CHONG HASANG, AND COMPANIONS
21 SAINT MATTHEW	22 SAINT LORENZO RUIZ AND COMPANIONS	23 SAINT PIO OF PIETRELCINA	24 SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN	25 SAINTS LOUIS MARTIN AND ZÉLIE GUÉRIN	26 SAINT PAUL VI	27 SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL
28 SAINT WENCESLAUS	29 SAINTS MICHAEL, GABRIEL, AND RAPHAEL	30 SAINT JEROME				

— SOURCE: FRANCISCANMEDIA.ORG

SEPTEMBER 15

MARIAN FEAST DAY



*Our Lady of Sorrows*

Painting of Our Lady of Sorrows in Pleinfeld, Germany (left) and Statue of Our Lady of Sorrows at Žebbuġ, Gozo (right).

## REFLECTION

**John's account of Jesus' death is highly symbolic.** When Jesus gives the beloved disciple to Mary, we are invited to appreciate Mary's role in the Church: She symbolizes the Church; the beloved disciple represents all believers. As Mary mothered Jesus, she is now mother to all his followers. Furthermore, as Jesus died, he handed over his Spirit. Mary and the Spirit cooperate in begetting new children of God—almost an echo of Luke's account of Jesus' conception. Christians can trust that they will continue to experience the caring presence of Mary and Jesus' Spirit throughout their lives and throughout history.

— SOURCE: FRANCISCANMEDIA.ORG



— COLUMN —

# SEPTEMBER 23: ST. PIUS OF PIETRELCINA

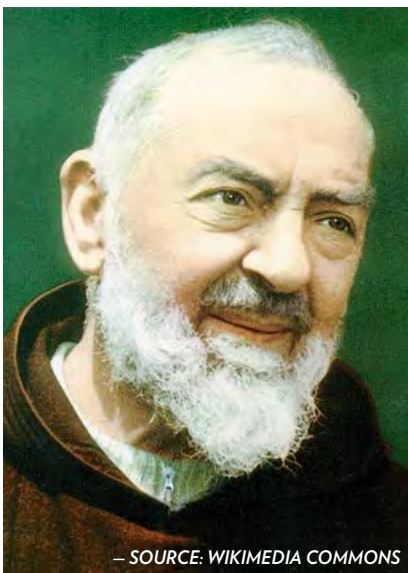


**DEACON PHIL  
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*PhilRzewnicki@gmail.com*

## SHARING OUR BLESSINGS

### A Poor Brother Who Prays

Born into a poor Italian farm family, from a young age Francesco Forgione desired to be a friar. When he was sixteen, he entered the novitiate of the Capuchin Order, and took the name Brother Pius (Fra Pio). He was ordained to the priesthood in 1910. Six years later, he joined the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie in San Giovanni Rotondo, where he spent many hours every day hearing Confessions.



— SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

A portrait of Padre Pio, probably from between late 1950s and early 1960s.

The height of his apostolic commitment was the celebration of the Holy Mass. He described himself as “a poor brother who prays.” “Prayer is the greatest weapon we have,” he said. It is “a key to open the heart of God.”

### An Extraordinary Meeting

In 1948, Padre Pio heard the Confession of a young Polish priest, Father Karol Wojtyła, who thirty years later would ascend the throne of Peter, taking the name John Paul II. It was during John Paul’s pontificate that Padre Pio was declared blessed. During the rite of beatification, the Pope said that in the humble friar, we see the image of Christ suffering and rising. “His body,” he said, “marked by the ‘stigmata,’ showed the intimate connection between death and resurrection. Not less sorrowful, and humanly much more scorching, were the trials he had to suffer as a consequence, one could say, of his singular charisms.”

For Padre Pio, “suffering with Christ” was a gift: “In contemplating the Cross on Jesus’ shoulders,” he said, “I always feel strengthened and I exult with holy joy... All that Jesus suffered in His Passion, I too have suffered, insofar as it is possible for a human creature.

### Relief From Suffering

The life of Padre Pio also shows an intense commitment to alleviate the sufferings of families. In 1956 he inaugurated the “Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza” (the House of Relief from Suffering), a new state of the art hospital. “It is the apple of my eye,” the friar said when



— SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

A young Padre Pio showing the stigmata (detail from a photo from August 19, 1919).

the hospital opened. “This is the creation that Providence, with your help, has created. Gaze at it in wonder, and with me bless the Lord God. He has placed upon the earth a seed that He will warm with His rays of love.”

### Death

Padre Pio died during the night of 23 September 1968, at the age of 81. On 16 June 2002, he was proclaimed a saint by Pope John Paul II. In his homily, the Pope said, “The life and mission of Padre Pio prove that difficulties and sorrows, if accepted out of love, are transformed into a privileged way of holiness, which opens onto the horizons of a greater good, known only to the Lord.”

— (Source: Vatican News)

# FRANCIS ++++++

➔ Continued from PAGE 1

for Franciscans to follow.

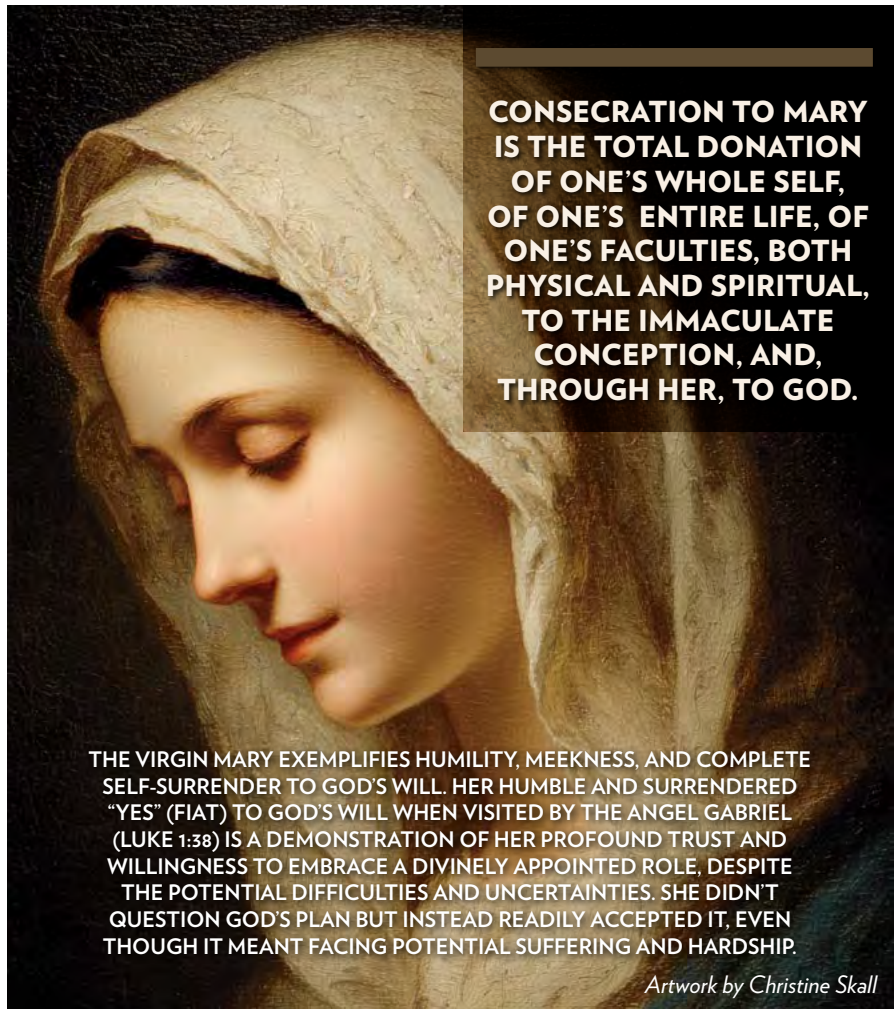
Because Mary surrendered to God, Jesus came through her into the world. Mary shows us how to be a follower of Jesus, making a loving surrender into the hands of God who loves us, giving our will to Him and asking Him to give us His Will in return.

“The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to His every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.” — **Rule, Article 9.**

Mary, Mother of Jesus, is the model of listening to the Word and of faithfulness to vocations. We, like Francis, seek all the gospel virtues realized in her. The brothers and sisters should cultivate intense love for the most holy Virgin, with imitation, prayer,

“The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to His every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.”

RULE, ARTICLE 9



**CONSECRATION TO MARY IS THE TOTAL DONATION OF ONE'S WHOLE SELF, OF ONE'S ENTIRE LIFE, OF ONE'S FACULTIES, BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL, TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, AND, THROUGH HER, TO GOD.**

THE VIRGIN MARY EXEMPLIFIES HUMILITY, MEEKNESS, AND COMPLETE SELF-SURRENDER TO GOD'S WILL. HER HUMBLE AND SURRENDERED "YES" (FIAT) TO GOD'S WILL WHEN VISITED BY THE ANGEL GABRIEL (LUKE 1:38) IS A DEMONSTRATION OF HER PROFOUND TRUST AND WILLINGNESS TO EMBRACE A DIVINELY APPOINTED ROLE, DESPITE THE POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES AND UNCERTAINTIES. SHE DIDN'T QUESTION GOD'S PLAN BUT INSTEAD READILY ACCEPTED IT, EVEN THOUGH IT MEANT FACING POTENTIAL SUFFERING AND HARDSHIP.

Artwork by Christine Skall

and filial abandonment. They should manifest their own devotion with expressions of genuine faith, in forms accepted by the Church. Mary is the model of fruitful and faithful love for the entire ecclesial community. Secular Franciscans and their fraternities should seek to live the experience of Francis, who made the Virgin the guide of his activity. With her, like the disciples at Pentecost, they should welcome The Spirit to create a community of love.” — **SFO Constitutions, Article 16.1, .2**

Go to Mary and she will take you straight to Her Son, Jesus. This is her primary role. She is not meant to overshadow Jesus or the work

of the Holy Spirit in our lives but rather to point us directly towards Him and bring us to Him, acting as a guide for us on the path to holiness.

## CONSECRATION TO MARY

Many Franciscans (and Catholics in general) practice a total consecration to Mary, entrusting their entire lives to her care and guidance. Consecration to Mary is the total donation of one's whole self, of one's entire life, of one's faculties, both physical and spiritual, to the Immaculate Conception, and, through Her, to God. This gift, which the consecrated soul offers to his Mother and

See FRANCIS, NEXT PAGE ➔



# FRANCIS ++++++

➡ Continued from **PREVIOUS PAGE**



*Artwork by Christine Skall*

Francis's love for Mary was so much a part of him that it is almost impossible to separate his Marian devotion from his daily life. His deep spirituality, devotion to Mary, and every aspect of his daily life were all so interconnected they were simply one and the same.

Queen, is a perfect sacrifice that man offers (of himself). We will delve more deeply into Total Consecration to Mary within upcoming newsletters since it is a devotion of tremendous importance. I can imagine just how much Jesus loves seeing us become closer to His beloved mother. How could He not?

Sometimes there is the tendency to view Francis's devotion to Mary as somewhat

of an isolated entity, separate from his spiritual life. Yet, Francis's love for Mary was so much a part of him that it is almost impossible to separate his Marian devotion from his daily life. His deep spirituality, devotion to Mary, and every aspect of his daily life were all so interconnected they were simply one and the same.

According to a pious legend, one day St. Francis of Assisi had a vision in which he saw

“Tertiaries shall love the most Blessed Virgin Mother of Jesus with a tender and filial affection, and honor her as Queen and Patron of the Order with special devotion and reverence.”

**SFO CONSTITUTIONS,**  
ARTICLE 69

his friars trying to reach Christ by a ladder that was red and very steep. After climbing a few rungs, they would suddenly fall back. Our Lord then showed St. Francis another ladder, white and much less steep, at whose summit appeared the Blessed Virgin, and He said to Francis: “Advise your sons to go by the ladder of My Mother”<sup>1</sup>

## MARY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HER SON

To develop a true understanding and love of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made Man, requires a sincere devotion toward His mother. Mary was with Him from the womb to the tomb. She responded to God's call. The Holy Spirit came upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowed her (*Luke 1:35*). She gave birth to Him. She and Joseph presented Him at the Temple. She raised Him and taught Him, with Joseph, how to pray. She sought Him until she found Him in the Temple. She was with Him when He left us at Calvary. Saint Francis recognized Mary's powerful and extraordinary relationship with Her Son in light of our salvation. Therefore, Francis implored his followers to love her as their self-effacing gentle queen and mother. <sup>2</sup>

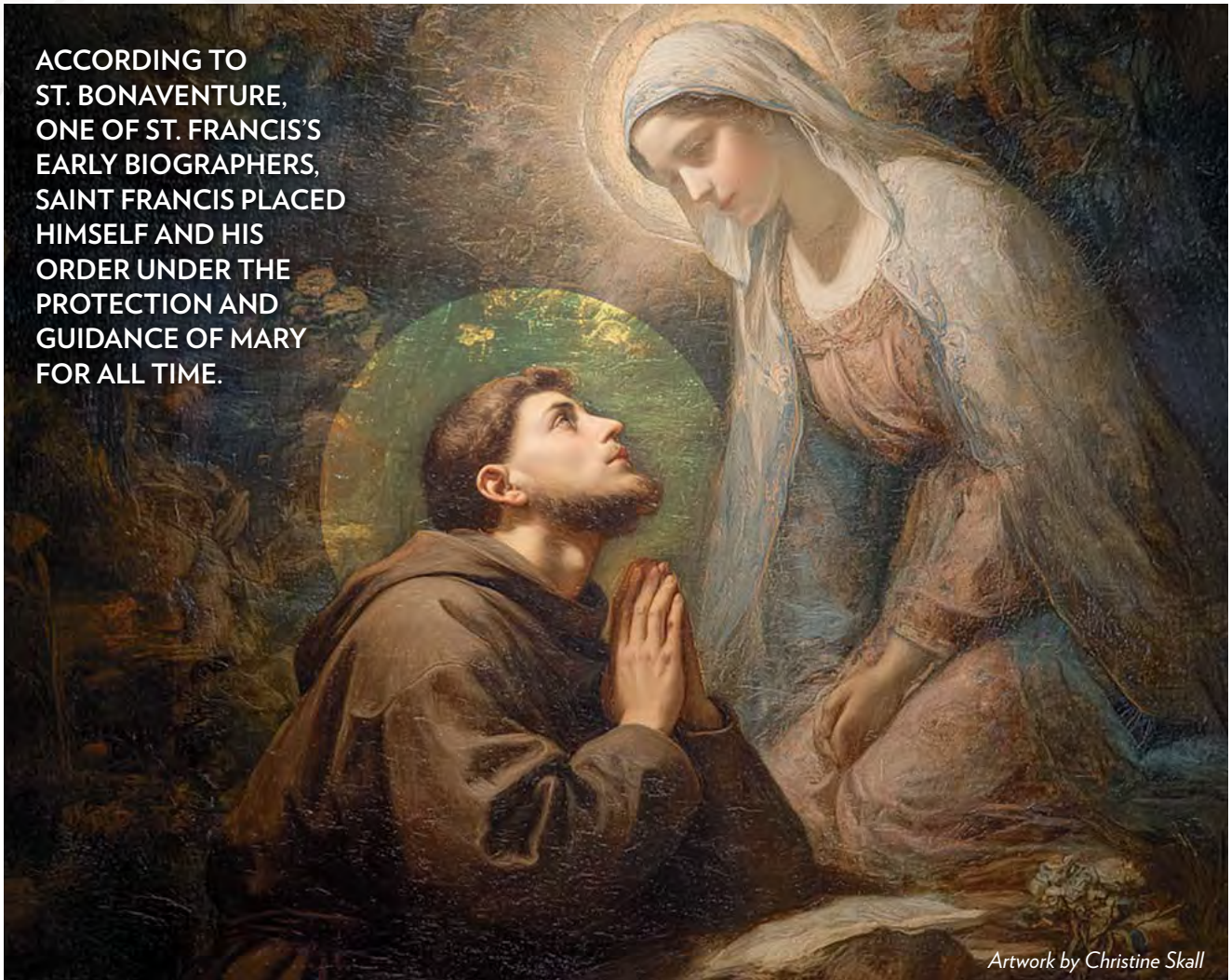
See FRANCIS, NEXT PAGE ➡



# FRANCIS

➤ Continued from **PREVIOUS PAGE**

ACCORDING TO ST. BONAVENTURE, ONE OF ST. FRANCIS'S EARLY BIOGRAPHERS, SAINT FRANCIS PLACED HIMSELF AND HIS ORDER UNDER THE PROTECTION AND GUIDANCE OF MARY FOR ALL TIME.



Artwork by Christine Skall

## HONORING MARY AS QUEEN AND PATRON

Fr. Chris Shorrock, OFM Conv., CNSA shares the following: “The seraphic father himself admonished his brethren that they should attribute to the blessed Mother of God every privilege which may be appropriate to her excellence, and that they should exalt her with all the praise that is appropriate for such a pure human creature.”<sup>3</sup>

“Tertiaries shall love the most Blessed Virgin Mother of Jesus with a tender and filial affection,

and honor her as Queen and Patron of the Order with special devotion and reverence.” — *SFO Constitutions, Article 69.*

Fr. Chris Shorrock, OFM Conv. continues: “Let us then turn to some rather general remarks about Francis and his love and devotion to Mary. Francis endeavored to follow Christ as closely as possible by surrendering his life into the hands of his loving Father and therefore could not help loving in a special way the pure and most holy Virgin who was chosen by The Father to

be the mother of His Divine Son. Francis clearly perceived and presented Mary as the model of every Christian who responds to the presence of God in their lives.”

“According to St. Bonaventure (d. 1274), one of Francis’s early biographers, Francis placed himself and his order under the protection and guidance of Mary for all time.”

On one side we should show Mary in all her poverty of Bethlehem placing the most

See **FRANCIS, NEXT PAGE** ➤




# FRANCIS

➔ Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

sweet Son of God upon the rough straw of the manger. In the other half of our painting, we would portray Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God, and Queen of the Seraphic Order, in the chapel of Mary of the Angels stretching forth her arms in motherly protection over all her Franciscan sons and daughters. <sup>4</sup>

‘From his earliest days, according to the biographer Thomas of Celano, Francis “burned with devotion toward the mother of all good.” When Francis abandoned the world, he placed himself under the loving care and protection of his heavenly Mother. He asked her to be his guide and advocate in his new life of poverty after the pattern of her Son. Thomas of Celano tells us, “He embraced the Mother of Jesus with inexpressible love, since she made the Lord of Majesty a brother to us. He honoured her with his own Praises, poured out prayers to her, and offered her his love in a way that no human tongue can express. But what gives us greatest joy is that he appointed her the Advocate of the Order and placed under her wings the sons he left behind, that she might protect and cherish them to the end.”

Recalling the words of Thomas of Celano, “he embraced the Mother of Jesus with an inexpressible love, since she made the Lord of Majesty a brother to us,” Bonaventure adds “and, through her, we have obtained mercy.”<sup>6</sup>

‘In these simple words of the early biographers, we see the deepest foundation for the reverence Francis showed toward Mary. For him, the Incarnation was the basis of his whole spiritual life, and he would go out of his way to follow in every way the example of the word made flesh. Therefore, it would seem only natural that he “owed” a special love to this unique woman, who brought God within our reach and “made the Lord of Majesty a brother to us.”’ 



*Coronation of the Virgin  
by Velázquez, Diego.*

– SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

St. Francis honoured her with his own Praises, poured out prayers to her, and offered her his love in a way that no human tongue can express. But what gives us greatest joy is that he appointed her the Advocate of the Order and placed under her wings the sons he left behind, that she might protect and cherish them to the end.

1. Capuchins.org
2. "Francis and The Blessed Virgin Mary" by Susan Simeone, SFO
3. Cited by Geoffrey Bridges, "Mary's Mediation in the Franciscan Tradition," *The Cord IV* (1954), 217.
4. Mark Sheehan, "Mary's Troubadour," *The Cord VII* (1957)
5. Cel 198 (FA:ED 2:374)
6. LM 9:3, FA:ED, 2:598





## [ ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING ]

*Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC*

# A Wonderful Reunion with Fellow Franciscans



**SHARON  
WINZELER, OFS**  
swinzeler@gmail.com

## FROM THE MINISTER...

**D**ear brothers and sisters, all good news from the Annual Regional Gathering this weekend at Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC.

Fraternity members Ellen Ferrone, Lee Cunningham, and Travis Bongiorno were elected to the regional council.

Ellen was re-elected minister, and Lee was re-elected counselor. Travis will serve his first term as councilor. Thank you to all of you for your dedication to our order.

Many thanks to outgoing regional treasurer Zubair Simonson for his years of service. Zubair also provided golf cart concierge service to ARG attendees who were challenged by the hilly terrain.

Mary Cockrill served as sacristan for the Masses, assisted by Monica Monahan. Michael Hancock supervised the audio/visuals and was assisted by David and Lourdes Shick.

Orientees Vicki Jack and Lynn Meserole attended



Honored guests from Travelers Rest, SC.: Sister Bernadette, left, and Sister Nancy.



RIDGECREST CONFERENCE CENTER  
IN BLACK MOUNTAIN, NC



PENITENTIAL PRAYER SERVICE



EUCCHARISTIC PROCESSION

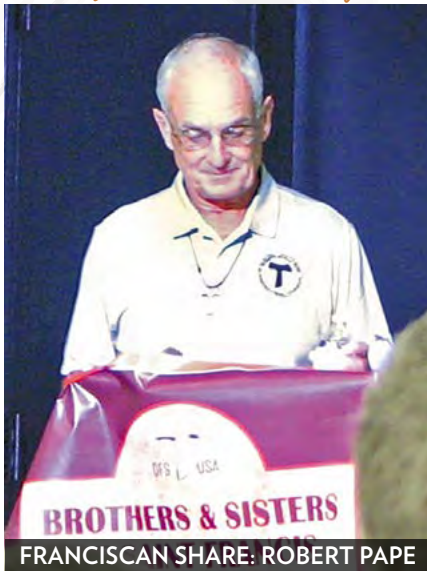
— All Photos  
by Padre Pio  
Fraternity

See ARG, PAGE 10 ➡  
More Photos, NEXT PAGE ➡



## [ ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING Cont. ]

*Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC*



FRANCISCAN SHARE: ROBERT PAPE



RENEWAL OF FRANCISCAN PROMISES



NATIONAL GUEST

### St. Francis Quote

“Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love.”

**ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERINGS FOR THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER** provide a space for prayer, fellowship, learning, and strengthening commitment to the Franciscan way of life. These events offer opportunities to deepen understanding of St. Francis' charism, connect members across different fraternities, and engage in communal activities and teachings that foster spiritual growth and community.

*More Photos, NEXT PAGE ➡*



NEW REGIONAL COUNCIL



## [ ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING Cont. ]

*Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC*

### ARG

➔ Continued from **PAGE 8**

and brought the Padre Pio spirit. Vicki saw a bear upon her arrival!

Deacon Phil Rzewnicki and Anna Rzewnicki also attended, and Phil assisted at the Masses.

Anna was busy helping make gleanings bags. We turned over 10,000 bags to the Society of St. Andrew for work in the fields.

Next year's ARG will be Sept. 11-13 at Black Mountain. Mark your calendars now!! There will be a nationally known guest speaker on the program.

Peace, Sharon. 



**EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION**



**Fr. Bob Menard, OFM speaks about The Canticum of Creatures**



**BANNER PROCESSION**



**ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW FRATERNITY**



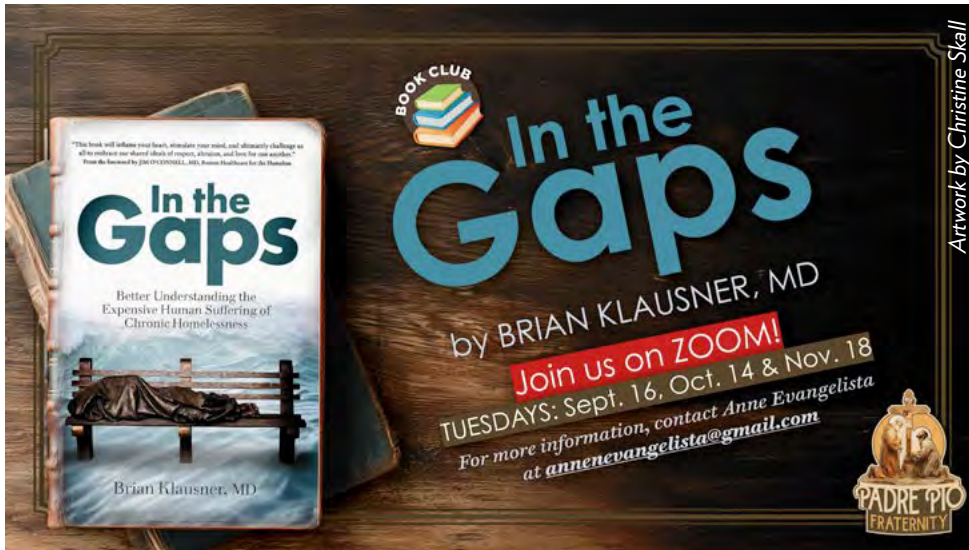
**PADRE PIO FRATERNITY DISPLAY**



# Important DATES

SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AND AROUND THE PADRE PIO FRATERNITY. Take note of upcoming important events and remember upcoming Birthdays & Profession Anniversaries.

## Upcoming EVENTS



## Anniversaries of PROFESSION

9/23/2000



JOANNE JACOVEC, OFS

## Happy BIRTHDAY



SEP 2



MARIE  
ROCCOFORTE, OFS

SEP 7



LORI ZAGIBA

SEP 19



BEN WHITEHOUSE,  
OFS

SEP 19



ELLEN FERRONE,  
OFS

SEP 20



JEANE CASCIERE,  
OFS

FROM NOW  
VARIOUS  
DATES

### ST. MICHAEL'S LENT OBSERVANCE

Saint Michael's Lent is a 40-day period of personal spiritual discipline and

fasting, observed by some Catholics from the Feast of the Assumption (Aug. 15) to Michaelmas (Sept. 29), excluding Sundays, as a Franciscan tradition to honor the Archangel Michael. All sessions will begin at 7:30pm and last approximately 30 minutes to an hour. While its exact practices vary, common disciplines include prayer, fasting from meat, and abstaining from social media or news. **UPCOMING DATES:** Aug. 31 (No zoom in observance of Labor Day Weekend. We will pray privately that weekend), Sep. 7, 14, 21 & 29. (St. Michael's Lent concludes the week of the Feast of the Holy Archangels, Sept. 29) ➔ Meetings are via Zoom. Click Zoom link below: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6922596590?omn=88454375099>

SEP. 13

### PADRE PIO PICNIC

A wonderful time to be had at Bond Park with fellow fraternity members and family. Picnic starts at 11:30am. Don't miss out on this special time to relax and get to know your Franciscan family a little more. Bring a dish to share and your own nonalcoholic drink. Buehler Picnic Area. ➔ Bond Park, Cary, NC

SEP. 17

### DEATH PENALTY DISCUSSION

Sr. Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking* and anti-death penalty activist, will speak to an audience live on Zoom from 7-8pm. Bring your questions because there will be time for Q&A. Please RSVP to [director@catholicsforabolitionnc.org](mailto:director@catholicsforabolitionnc.org). ➔ St. Francis of Assisi Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613. [www.stfrancisraleigh.org](http://www.stfrancisraleigh.org). 919-847-8205

VARIOUS  
DATES  
(ONGOING)

### GATHERINGS

These are the upcoming regular monthly Fraternity gatherings on the 4th Sunday of

each month. Note that there will not be a meeting in December for the Christmas week. **UPCOMING DATES:** Sept. 28 (visitation), Oct. 26, Nov. 23 ➔ St. Francis of Assisi Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613. [www.stfrancisraleigh.org](http://www.stfrancisraleigh.org). 919-847-8205.

**OAK CITY CARES** The Padre Pio Fraternity contributes to, and helps to serve, the Saturday mid-day meal for hundreds of clients of Oak City Outreach in the downtown Raleigh area. Fraternity members may sign up to

VARIOUS  
DATES

See EVENTS,  
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# Padre Pio Fraternity GATHERING

## NOTES

A RECAP OF THE MOST RECENT FRATERNITY GATHERING. Highlights and discussion points from the July Fraternity Gathering are noted below.

## Gathering HIGHLIGHTS

— WRITTEN BY —  
SHARON WINZELER, OFS

In a heartfelt presentation, Travis Bongiorno, OFS, shared his personal journey of rediscovering faith through the maternal love of the Blessed Virgin Mary at our monthly gathering on August 24.

### MARIAN DEVOTION & FRANCISCAN FRATERNITY

Reflecting on the legacy of St. Francis and the quiet strength of his grandfather, Travis explored how Marian devotion and Franciscan fraternity brought healing, purpose, and deep spiritual renewal.

Travis offered a deeply moving reflection titled **“Fiat Voluntas Tua: A Franciscan Journey in the Love of Mary, the Mother of God.”** In his address, Travis

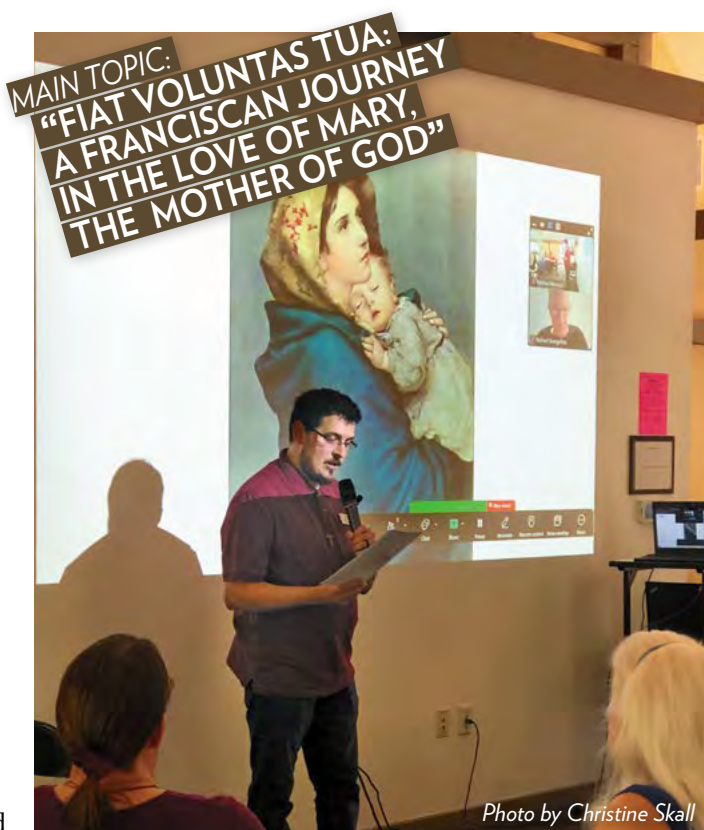


Photo by Christine Skall

Travis Bongiorno, OFS, reflects how Marian devotion and Franciscan fraternity brought healing, purpose and deep spiritual renewal to himself and his family. He shared his personal journey of rediscovering faith through the maternal love of the Blessed Virgin Mary in a heartfelt presentation at our Padre Pio Fraternity Gathering in August.

invited brothers and sisters into his personal journey of rediscovering faith through the lens of Marian devotion and Franciscan spirituality.

Travis began by grounding his story in the life of St. Francis of Assisi, who rebuilt his own heart while rebuilding the sanctuary

### TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How does a relationship with Mary factor into your spiritual life as a Catholic?
- 2 What resonated with me in what others have shared?

**And Mary Said, “MY SOUL GLORIFIES THE LORD AND MY SPIRIT REJOICES IN GOD MY SAVIOR”**

— LUKE 1:46-47

of the Portiuncula. Francis’ love for the Blessed Virgin Mary was central to that transformation, and Fr. Stefano Manelli, a Franciscan friar of the Immaculate, would later reflect on this chapel as a “Marian womb,” where Mary spiritually formed Francis in virtue and love.

Travis connected this sacred history with his own experience.

See **GATHERING**,  
NEXT PAGE ➡



# GATHERING

➡ Continued from **PREVIOUS PAGE**



*Madonna of the Streets*  
by Roberto Ferruzzi  
— SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Travis reflected on how his grandfather, Felix, had a tremendous devotion to Mary and remained always faithful to her despite adversity, often praying before an image of the “Madonna of the Streets”, pictured above, which shows Mary as a spiritual warrior holding the Christ Child.

## A PERSONAL WITNESS TO DEEP TRUST IN GOD

A cradle Catholic, he said he once had little personal devotion to Mary. But that began to change through the quiet witness of his grandfather, Felix Ruggieri, a man who modeled profound trust in God through immense suffering. Felix lost his teenage son, cared for his wife through years of mental and physical illness, and faced his own terminal diagnosis with unwavering joy

and service. Despite adversity, Felix remained faithful to Mary, praying before an image of the Madonna of the Streets which showed Mary as a spiritual warrior holding the Christ Child.

Travis recalled the powerful image of this humble depiction: a mother defending her child with nothing but prayer and presence. It reminded him of the strong, courageous, poor in spirit but rich in faith Mary. Watching his grandfather's steadfast love through suffering

planted seeds that would bloom in Travis years later.

Like many young adults, Travis struggled during his college years. Influenced by secular philosophy and grieving the loss of his grandparents, he left the Church and explored a life without God.

## MARY, QUEEN OF HEAVEN AND OUR OWN PERSONAL MOTHER

It was there, in the silence of despair, that Mary reappeared—not with condemnation, but as a tender Mother. Travis began to ask new questions—not philosophical ones, but deeply human ones: What was it like to hold Eternity in your arms? To see the face of Truth itself, gazing back at you? These meditations reignited his faith and led him to rediscover Mary not only as Queen of Heaven, but as his own Mother.

His conversion reached its fullness when he professed into the Secular Franciscan Order six years ago. There, Travis encountered Mary more deeply through his fraternity, his formation, and his marriage. He spoke lovingly of his wife, Rachel, our vice-minister, who has become an icon of Mary's patience and sacrificial love in his daily life. "I have seen my Seraphic Mother in our regional minister, our local minister, our formation director," he said, "but I have seen her most poignantly in Rachel."

Travis closed his talk by inviting all present to entrust themselves more deeply to Mary, echoing the words Our Lady of Guadalupe spoke to St. Juan Diego:

“Am I not here, I, who am  
your Mother? Are you not  
under my shadow and my

See GATHERING,  
NEXT PAGE ➡



# GATHERING ++++++

➔ Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms?"

Conversation in the Spirit discussions followed Travis's presentation, and all members present talked about their relationship with Mary.

## A BIG WELCOME

The Padre Pio fraternity joyfully welcomed 15 aspirants at its gathering on Sunday, August 24. In a beautiful ceremony led by formation director Gladys Whitehouse, the following members were welcomed: **Jackie Centamore, Carla Forestiere, Michele Hicks, Vicki Jack, Beth Lyon, Lynn Meserole, Denise Mickalites, Monica Monahan, Rula Osta, Hui Sharp, Michael Sharp, Christine Skall, Doug Thoren, Dale Zagiba, and Lori Zagiba.** They also were united with their sponsors who volunteered to accompany them on the journey. Formators for this group are Lee Cunningham, OFS; Rachel Bongiorno, OFS; and Victoria Romero, OFS.



## - Ceremony of Welcoming -



THE PADRE PIO FRATERNITY JOYFULLY WELCOMED NEW ASPIRANTS AT IT'S GATHERING ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 24. 15 MEMBERS WERE WELCOMED IN A BEAUTIFUL CEREMONY LED BY FORMATION DIRECTOR GLADYS WHITEHOUSE.



# [ MEET A FELLOW FRANCISCAN ]

EACH MONTH WE GET TO KNOW ONE OF OUR FRATERNITY MEMBERS A LITTLE BETTER :)

## Eyram Giovanni-Ignacio Klu

**A soldier of Christ who wants to see God one day and longs for the beatific vision**

**1** In two minutes or less, tell us a little about your background (family, occupation, heritage, etc.).

My parents were both born in Togo, West Africa. My mother is a cradle Catholic from a Catholic family, and my father is a cradle Presbyterian and they immigrated to New Jersey where I was born in the early 90s. Both of them now attend West African charismatic church communities in Delaware & Philadelphia where I grew up and where they still live. I moved here to the Triangle in 2015 to attend Duke University. I graduated with my Bachelor's degree in International Comparative Studies and had the opportunity to do research in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, study abroad in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and have an Information Security internship in Accra, Ghana. I love learning languages and had the opportunity to take advanced classes in French, Spanish, and Portuguese. I now work full-time for Accenture as a Data & AI Security Consultant. I'm also a part-time Master of Arts in Liberal Studies candidate at Duke where I'm studying ethics, moral theology, human flourishing, and Catholic Social Teaching as it relates to the emerging technologies of the present Fourth Industrial Revolution such as Artificial Intelligence, brain computer interfaces, virtual reality & the metaverse, etc.

**2** Tell us a little about your faith and your relationship with God.

I've been quite a pious person since the age of five. My earliest memory of this was in the Presbyterian Church in which I was baptized in Pennsylvania. In Sunday School we were learning about how God is in Heaven when all of a sudden I started crying. My Sunday School teacher asked what was wrong, and all I said was "I just want to see God." I still do want to see God and I long for the beatific vision. Sometimes I struggle with consistent formal prayer, but I've loved reading

See KLU, NEXT PAGE ➡



Photo submitted by Eyram Klu

Eyram Klu and his wife, Sofia.



EYRAM GIOVANNY-IGNACIO KLU

**"I BELIEVE THAT I CAN OFFER FELLOWSHIP AND ONE-ON-ONE COMPANIONSHIP WITH OTHERS WHOSE HEARTS ARE RESTLESS AND MAY NOT YET KNOW THAT THEY WILL REMAIN HELPLESS UNTIL THEY REST IN GOD."**

**EYRAM KLU**  
CHILD OF GOD,  
LOVING HUSBAND



## KLU

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➔ Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE



Eyrum Klu engages with the Young Adult Franciscan Synod Panel.

about mystics like Thomas Merton, St. Teresa of Avila, and St. John of the Cross who have aided me to deepen my understanding and awareness of the many ways in which we can invite God's presence into any given moment of the day. I cherish intimate moments in mental prayer early in the morning as the sun rises, or in Eucharistic Adoration at Our Lady of Lourdes or wherever there is an Adoration Chapel. The Eucharist is what largely drew me to start exploring Catholicism in 2021 when my now wife, Sofia, shared with me a talk by Fr. Mike Schmitz called "The Hour That Will Change Your Life" at a FOCUS SEEK conference.

### 3 Why did you feel called to become a Secular Franciscan?

As I've progressed in formation each and every month, I feel more and more peace and consolation at the

prospect of being a disciple of Jesus Christ by following in the footsteps of St. Francis. As I partake in fraternity life with our Padre Pio community, Franciscan spirituality resonates with my soul in such a natural way. The more I read about Franciscan theology in formation, the more I see how hundreds of thousands of Secular Franciscans truly bring the Gospel to life, and life to Gospel. I am convinced of it being a beautiful path for me to live out the Christian journey and perhaps it could be the best path for me to become a saint in my walk towards eternity.

### 4 What stage are you at in your Franciscan journey? (Are you a visitor, orientee, inquirer, candidate or are you already professed and when?)

I became a Candidate in August 2024 and eagerly enjoy each and every gathering as we await profession.

### 5 What do you feel you gain from being a part of the Secular Franciscan community?

I gain such a warm, loving, and inclusive community of Franciscans who I learn from, and am challenged by, to grow in virtue as we fellowship together. Fulfilling the demands of discipleship is not something anyone was ever meant to do alone. I feel like the community aspect is integral to our Secular Franciscan charism and it encourages me daily.

### 6 What do you feel that you can offer to the Secular Franciscan community?

As I explore my charisms, I hope that I can offer it for the good of our fraternity and our broader community in the Triangle area. I suspect that I may have charisms of Knowledge, Encouragement, and Evangelism. I would love to join ministries that need those. Perhaps being a part of the faith formation team or via any other opportunities where I can share Franciscan joy, love, and fellowship outside our fraternity, even with people of other faiths.

### 7 What do you feel, as a Franciscan, that you can offer to others out there?

I believe that I can offer fellowship and one-on-one companionship with others whose hearts are restless and may not yet know that they will remain helpless until they rest in God. I have been in conversations with friends who have been interested in Christianity and I enjoy building relationships with them and sharing how Christ and his Gospel has changed my entire life for the better.

See KLU, PAGE 27 ➔



# [ PRAYERS & DEVOTIONS ]



## *The Pope's* PRAYER INTENTIONS

### FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ALL OF CREATION

Let us pray that,  
inspired by Saint Francis,  
we might experience our  
interdependence with all  
creatures who are loved by God  
and worthy of love and respect.

— SOURCE: USCCB.ORG

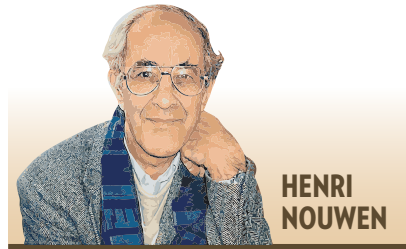
**BE CHEERFUL.** Jesus will  
take care of everything. Let  
us trust in Jesus and our  
heavenly Mother, and  
everything will  
work out.

AMEN

A Prayer of  
**St. Padre  
Pio**



## HOPE BUILT ON PROMISE



better or worse. His hope is  
built upon the promise that,  
whatever happens, God will  
stay with us at all times, in all  
places. God is the God of life.

*Henri M. Nouwen*

## DAILY MEDITATION

Optimism arranges reality  
in a way that enables us to say  
things will get better. Pessimism  
arranges the same reality so that  
we can say things will probably  
get worse. When it rains, the  
optimist says, "How wonderful!  
Things will grow." Seeing the  
same rain, the pessimist says,  
"Everything will drown."

Being neither an optimist  
nor a pessimist, Jesus speaks  
about hope that is not based  
on chances that things will get

**“ THEY ARE LIKE A MAN  
BUILDING A HOUSE,  
WHO DUG DOWN  
DEEP AND LAID THE  
FOUNDATION ON ROCK.  
WHEN A FLOOD CAME,  
THE TORRENT STRUCK  
THAT HOUSE BUT COULD  
NOT SHAKE IT, BECAUSE  
IT WAS WELL BUILT. ”**

— LUKE 6:48

**“ Dear God, I am so afraid to open my clenched fists!  
Who will I be when I have nothing left to hold on to?  
Who will I be when I stand before you with empty hands?  
Please help me to gradually open my hands and to discover  
that I am not what I own, but what you want to give me. ”**

— HENRI NOUWEN, *The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life*



# *Litany of The Most Precious Blood*

have mercy on us  
have mercy on us  
have mercy on us  
You have made us a  
kingdom to serve our God.

# The Anima Christi

Amen.



Artwork by Christine Skall



NEW MONTHLY  
SERIES!

## [ PRAYERS & DEVOTIONS cont. ]

### REFLECTIONS & PRAYERS from *Divine Intimacy*

[EDITOR'S NOTE. Baronius Press, the publisher of *Divine Intimacy: Meditations on the Interior Life for Every Day of the Liturgical Year*, has kindly given us permission to share some meditations from this beautiful book. I read this book daily and cannot express enough how it has impacted my spiritual journey in the most beautiful and deeply enriching way, and so I would love to share some of these meditations with you also. If you would like to purchase the book so that you can read it in its entirety it is available from [www.baronius.com/divine-intimacy.html](http://www.baronius.com/divine-intimacy.html).]

### The Life of *Love*

**PRESENCE OF GOD** - Grant, O Lord, that even while I am here on earth, I may love You as I shall love You in heaven.

#### MEDITATION

1. If it may be said that by faith "*eternal life begins in us*" (*St. Thomas, IIe II, q.4, a.1, co.*), the same may be said—and with greater reason—of charity, which will remain unchanged even in heaven. Eternal life will be essentially a life of love, of love which has reached its greatest height, for when we know God perfectly by the beatific vision, we shall finally be able to fulfill with absolute perfection the precept of loving God with all our strength. On this earth such perfection is possible only

See DIVINE INTIMACY, NEXT PAGE ➡



PSALM 23: THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD...

Artwork by Christine Skell



# DIVINE INTIMACY+++++

➡ Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

relatively; nevertheless, even now we possess the same charity with which we shall love God in heaven. Therefore, we can begin even now that life of love which will flower completely in eternity. Our love in heaven will have the characteristics of completeness and absolute continuity, with the impossibility of its ever failing. We cannot attain this while we are on earth, but we can strive for it by the exercise of a pure, intense love, a love that is, as far as possible, always in action. These, then, are the qualities our love for God should have: purity, intensity, continuity.

Our love for God will be pure when we love Him so much that we seek only His glory and the accomplishment of His will: *"Hallowed be Thy name. . . Thy will be done"* (Mt 6,9.10). This is the only real good that we, poor creatures, can wish for our God. All the glory we can possibly give Him consists in saying a wholehearted yes to His holy will, in rivalling the angels and blessed in heaven by carrying out His will here on earth with such great love and completeness: *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (ibid.). The purity of our love should consist in seeking God's glory alone, His will alone, completely forgetting oneself, in being ready to sacrifice every wish, desire, and interest for Him.

Therefore, even in the spiritual life, our first thought should be, not our own perfection, progress, and consolation, but always God's delight, good pleasure, and glory. It is thus that we will serve our own interests better, for he who gives himself to God, completely forgetting himself, draws down upon himself the fullness of divine love. What greater good could come to us than being loved by Infinite Love?



Artwork by Christine Skall

**"MY OCCUPATION IS TO GATHER FLOWERS, THE FLOWERS OF LOVE AND SACRIFICE, AND TO OFFER THEM TO YOU, MY GOD, TO GIVE YOU PLEASURE. I WISH TO LABOR FOR YOUR LOVE ALONE—WITH THE SOLE AIM OF PLEASING YOU, OF CONSOLING YOUR SACRED HEART, AND OF SAVING SOULS WHO WILL LOVE YOU THROUGH ETERNITY"**

ACT OF OBLATION,  
T.C.J. St. 13

2. But then it is necessary that our love for God be intense and vigorous, because in this way the inclination of our will toward Him will always grow stronger. *"Amormeus pondus meum,"* St. Augustine says, *"love is the weight which draws me, which draws my entire being, all my will, all my life, into God"*. And it is necessary that this weight increase, so as to draw us into God with an ever-increasing speed. St. John of the Cross says that one degree of love is sufficient for a soul to be in its center, which is God, but the more degrees of love it has, the deeper it goes into its center, and hence, *"the strongest love is the most unitive love"* (LF 1,13).

See DIVINE INTIMACY,  
NEXT PAGE ➡



# DIVINE INTIMACY+++++

➔ Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

Love becomes stronger and increases by exercise, provided the exercise is generous and intense, making use of all the powers of the soul. When we perform our actions, not carelessly or negligently, but with our whole heart, that is, with all the good will of which we are capable, our love immediately increases, and with every act there is a corresponding growth in charity. In this way our love will always continue to grow, it will become strong and mature, and will be able to draw us wholly into God. Let us try, then, to make as many acts of love as possible during the course of our day so that we will be able to live—as far as is attainable in this life—in continual, actual love. But there is one time in the day which is especially intended to make us more fervent in charity, and this is the time of prayer, prayer understood as an intimate encounter of our soul with God by love, as an intercourse of friendship between God and us. It is especially then that we must endeavor to recollect ourself; we should renew the resolution of our will to give ourself entirely to God, to seek His will always, and to fulfill His good pleasure above everything else. We should pray to find God, to remain near Him as friend with Friend. Let us ask Him humbly, but with gentle insistence, to teach us how to love Him as we will love Him one day in heaven. Just as human friendship is strengthened by the frequent meeting of friends, so divine friendship—charity—is strengthened in the same way; charity grows stronger in prayer, which is the friendly, loving meeting of the soul with God.

**LET US TRY, THEN, TO  
MAKE AS MANY ACTS  
OF LOVE AS POSSIBLE  
DURING THE COURSE  
OF OUR DAY SO THAT  
WE WILL BE ABLE TO  
LIVE—AS FAR AS IS  
ATTAINABLE IN THIS  
LIFE—IN CONTINUAL,  
ACTUAL LOVE.**



## COLLOQUY

*“O Lord, You teach me that without love even the most perfect gifts are as nothing, that charity is the most excellent way, for it leads directly to You. That is why I wish for no science but the science of love, and having given all the substance of my*

*house for love, I count it as nothing. I understand so clearly that love alone can make me pleasing in Your sight, that my sole ambition is to acquire it.*

*“My occupation is to gather flowers, the flowers of love and sacrifice, and to offer them to You, my God, to give You pleasure. I wish to labor for Your love alone—with the sole aim of pleasing You, of consoling Your Sacred Heart, and of saving souls who will love You through eternity” (T.C.J. St. 13 — Act of Oblation).*

*“O God, my love for You ought to be total, infinite in desire, because You will not give Yourself entirely to a soul unless it gives itself wholly to You. I must not cling to any attachment, nor admit even a single voluntary imperfection, nor refuse You anything. Grant that I may give myself to You in a continual, uninterrupted donation, moment by moment, seeking in all things Your greater glory, always trying to please You, always wanting Your will alone, doing each action with all my heart and with all my love.*

*“My love for You must be delicate. Help me to reach that exquisiteness and delicacy, that regard for details which You appreciate so much, which delights You.*

*“My love for You should be strong and generous, and prove itself in sacrifice, in seeking sacrifice in the offering and the smiling acceptance of suffering. O God, for love of You, I want to take advantage of the little opportunities so that I may be strong in the big ones” (Sr. Carmela of the Holy Spirit, O.C.D.).*



— SOURCE: FROM DIVINE INTIMACY: MEDITATIONS ON THE INTERIOR LIFE FOR EVERY DAY OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR, pp. 743-745. Translated by the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Boston from the original Italian edition INTIMITÀ DIVINA DEL P. GABRIELLE DI S. MARIA MADDALENA. © Monastero S. Giuseppe – Carmelitane Scalze. Published by Baronius Press, [www.baroniuspress.com](http://www.baroniuspress.com). Used with permission.



# [ PRAYERS & DEVOTIONS cont. ]

## THE POWERFUL Three Hail Marys DEVOTION

The Three Hail Marys devotion is a Catholic practice of praying three Hail Marys each morning and evening, often with an accompanying invocation, to honor Mary's privileges and ask for purity from mortal sin. This devotion, linked to saints such as St. Leonard of Port Maurice, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Gertrude the Great, and St. Mechtilde, offers special promises of a pure body and holy soul, protection from sin, and a good death for those who are faithful to it.



### HOW TO PRAY THE THREE HAIL MARYS

#### 1. INVOKE MARY'S PRIVILEGES:

Each of the three Hail Marys is said in honor of one of Mary's unique privileges, connected to the Holy Trinity.

#### 2. ADD THE INVOCATIONS:

After each Hail Mary, an aspiration is added.

**MORNING:** *"O my Mother, preserve me this day from mortal sin".*

**EVENING:** *"O my Mother, preserve me this night from mortal sin".*

#### 3. CONCLUDE WITH PRAYER:

After the three Hail Marys, a final prayer, such as *"By thy pure and immaculate conception, Oh, Mary! make my body pure, and my soul holy,"* can be added.

### SIGNIFICANCES & PROMISES

#### HONORING MARY:

The devotion is a way to praise and consecrate one's soul, body, and heart to Mary, honoring her as the Daughter of the Eternal Father, Mother of the Son of God, and Spouse of the Holy Ghost.

#### PROTECTION FROM SIN:

A key purpose is to gain protection from mortal sin, with particular emphasis on maintaining purity of mind, heart, and body.

#### PROMISES AND INDULGENCES:

**GOOD DEATH:** St. Mechtilde received a promise that a faithful soul would receive a beautiful apparition from the Blessed Virgin Mary at the hour of death.

**SALVATION:** St. Leonard of Port Maurice promised eternal

salvation to those who remained faithful to this daily practice.

**INDULGENCES:** Pope Leo XIII and St. Pius X granted indulgences to those who devoutly practice this devotion.

#### KEY FIGURES & ORIGINS:

**ST. MECHTILDE:** This practice was revealed to her, including the promise of a good death.

**ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT:** She also received revelations about the devotion.

**ST. LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE:** A great promoter of the practice, who promised eternal salvation to the faithful.

**ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI:** A strong supporter who recommended its use and even imposed it as a penance.





## [ BOOK STUDY ]

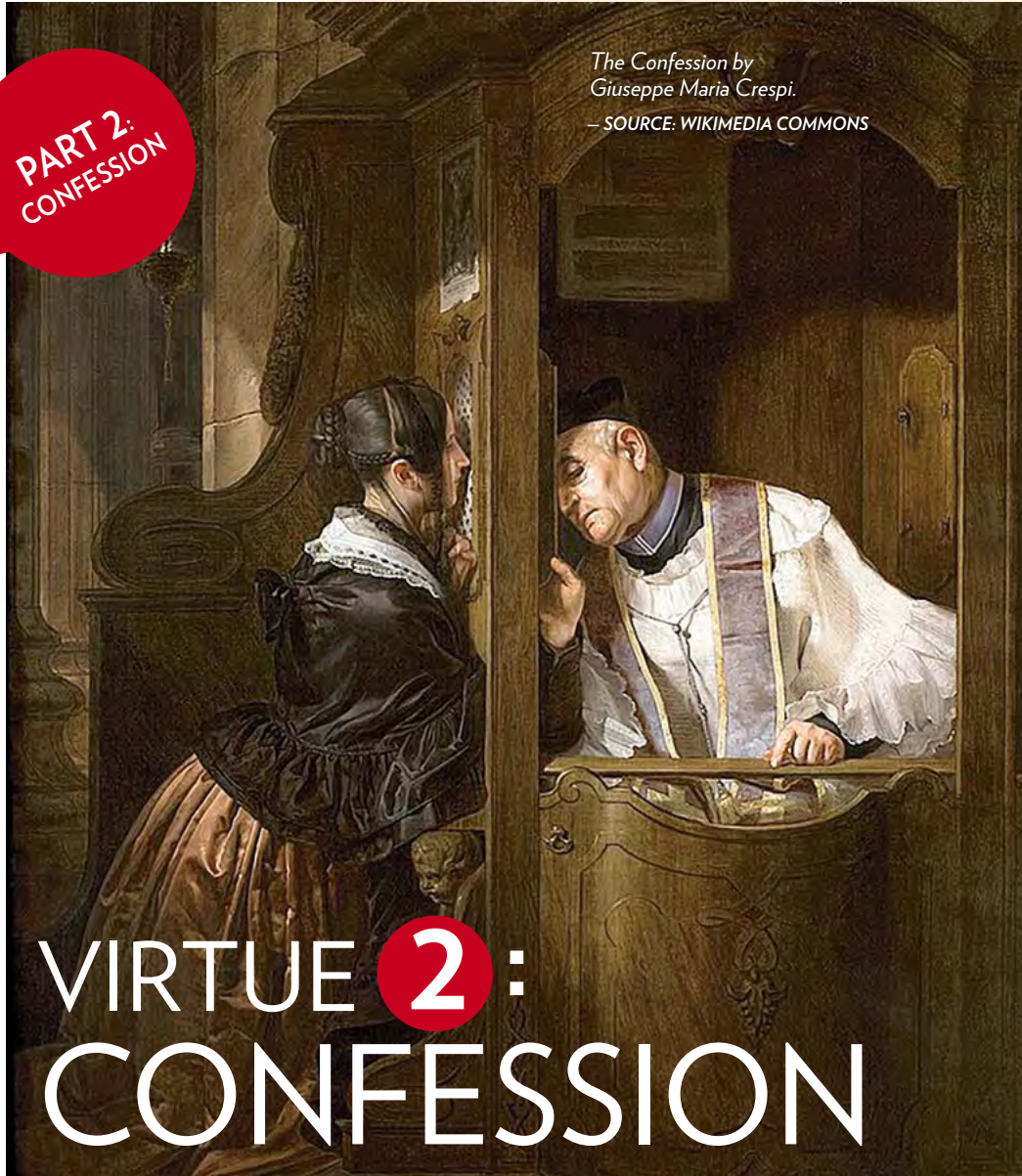
FRANCISCAN  
VIRTUES  
THROUGH  
THE YEAR52 Steps to Conversion  
from St. Francis of Assisi

**[EDITOR'S NOTE.** "Confraternity of Penitents", the publisher of "Franciscan Virtues Through The Year", has kindly given us permission to "republish" this book in our newsletter. We are publishing "one virtue" (one chapter) a month in each newsletter until we have completed the book. If you missed Part One please feel free to go back to the Fraternity's August Newsletter so that you can catch up. If you would like to purchase the book so that you can read it in its entirety it is available from Amazon.com and franciscanthirdorderpenitents.com.]

PART 2:  
CONFESSIONVIRTUE **2**:  
CONFESSION

*The Confession by  
Giuseppe Maria Crespi.*

— SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

REGARDING  
CONFESSION...

**SCRIPTURE:** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."  
(1 John 1:9)

## WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS

Let all my blessed brothers, both clerics and lay, confess their sins to priests of our religion. If they cannot, let them confess to other discerning and Catholic priests, knowing with certainty that, when they have received penance and absolution from any Catholic priest, they are without doubt absolved from

their sins, provided they have humbly and faithfully fulfilled the penance imposed on them.  
(*The Earlier Rule, Chapter XX*)

INCIDENT FROM THE  
LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS

One day, although still sick from a quartan fever, he had the people of Assisi called

See **CONFESSION, NEXT PAGE** ➡



## [ BOOK STUDY cont. ]

➔ Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

VIRTUE **2**  
CONFESSION Cont.

to the piazza for a sermon. When he had finished preaching, he requested that no one leave until he returned.... Taking off his tunic, blessed Francis ordered Brother Peter to lead him naked with a rope tied around his neck in front of the people. He ordered another brother to take a bowl full of ashes and, mounting the place from where he had preached, to throw them and sprinkle them on his head.... In this way he came back in front of the people naked, to the place where he had preached, and said: "You believe me to be a holy man, as do others who, following my example, leave the world and enter the religion and life of the brothers. But I confess to God and to you that during my illness I ate meat and broth flavored with meat." Almost all of the people began to weep out of piety and compassion for



him, especially since it was wintertime and was very cold and he had not yet recovered from the quartan fever. They struck their breasts, accusing themselves. "This holy man," they said, "whose life we know, accuses himself with such shame over a just and manifest necessity. Yet because of excessive abstinence

and the severity with which he treats his body from the moment of his conversion to Christ, we see him living in flesh that is almost dead. What shall we do, wretches that we are, we who all our life have lived, and wish to live, according to the will and desires of the flesh?". (*The Assisi Compilation*, Section 80).

**CONFESSION IS  
A SACRAMENT AS  
WELL AS A VIRTUE.**

In this reflection, we are discussing confession as a virtue rather than a Sacrament. Sacramental confession is made to a priest who gives absolution for sins and assigns a penance for them. The virtue of confession urges us to confess to others, possibly often.

**Do you remember your first confession?** It may not have been in church in the confessional. You may have had to confess to stealing a cookie or breaking a toy when you were just a youngster. Confession is often a humiliating experience. We have to admit to someone else that we did something wrong, when more than anything we want to believe that we are perfect, and we want to bring others to that same

See **CONFESSION**,  
**NEXT PAGE ➔**









# [ REMEMBER YOUR MAIN PURPOSE IN THIS LIFE ]

## St. Francis Quote...

“Keep a clear eye toward life's end. Do not forget your purpose and destiny as God's creature. What you are in his sight is what you are and nothing more. Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take nothing that you have received...but only what you have given; a full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice, and courage.”

Artwork by Christine Skall



# KLU ++++++

➤ Continued from PAGE 16

## 8 We already know you love Saint Francis. Do you have another favourite Saint? Why does that Saint appeal to you?

The saint that I feel I deeply relate to, and identify with as a Franciscan of African descent, is St. Benedict the Moor who beared many microaggressions and challenges for his black identity in 16th century Italy with humility, patience, and grace and eventually became a Franciscan Friar. He so inspired his fraternity with his holiness that they elected him as the novice master and guardian of their friary, and after he served his term, he asked if he could happily return to being a simple cook. I am inspired by his humility and ask for his intercession on my journey often. You can read more about him here: <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-benedict-the-african/>

## 9 If you would like to, please name some other favourite Saints.

Some of my other favorite saints are St. Augustine (my unofficial Confirmation saint), St. Sharbel Maklouf, St. Martin de Porres, St. Moses the Black, St. Lawrence of Brindisi (my birthday's feast day), Bl. Niels Stensen, Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman, Servant of God Dorothy Day, Servant of God Julius Nyerere, Servants of God Cyprian and Daphrose Rugumba, and Blessed Bartolo Longo (who will be canonized by Pope Leo XIV this fall).

## 10 Share a favourite quotation from one of the Saints that has meant a lot to you.

"Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence."  
- St. Peter (1 Pet. 3:15).



# EVENTS

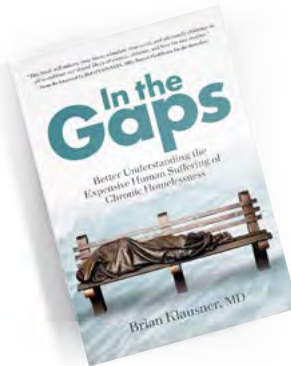
➤ Continued from PAGE 11

bring food items, help to serve and converse with the outreach center's participants. This ministry is coordinated by Fraternity member Ellen Ferrone. UPCOMING DATES: **Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 23, Dec. 27** ➤ Oak City Outreach Center, 215 S Person St., Raleigh, NC 27601. 919-847-8205.

STARTS  
SEP.  
16➔

**BOOK CLUB** Padre Pio Fraternity will read and discuss "In the Gaps" by Dr. Brian Klausner via Zoom on Tuesday nights at 7pm. The Zoom sessions will once again be led by Mike Evangelista, OFS. Contact Theresa Flynn, OFS, for more information at [theresa.flynn41@yahoo.com](mailto:theresa.flynn41@yahoo.com). UPCOMING DATES: **Sept. 16, Oct. 14, Nov. 18.**

➤ Meetings are via Zoom.



SEP.  
21-29

### NOVENA FOR MIGRANTS

Sponsored by the JPIC Committee, this is a call to prayer for migrants, acknowledging

Jesus's own experience as a refugee who fled to Egypt with Mary and Joseph, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide and open the hearts of people to see and respond to the needs of migrants. Contact Marie Bianca for more information at [mbbsfo@gmail.com](mailto:mbbsfo@gmail.com). UPCOMING DATES: **Sept. 21-29.** ➤ Meetings are via Zoom.

OCT.  
3

**TRANSITUS** Hosted by the friars at Immaculate Conception Church in Durham, Transitus refers to the celebration of St. Francis of Assisi's passage from earthly life to eternal

life, observed by Franciscans on the evening of October 3rd, the vigil of his feast day. The word "transitus" is Latin for "passage" or "crossing". We will provide refreshments and assist in any way we can. ➤ **Immaculate Conception Church, 810 W Chapel Hill Street, Durham, NC 27701, 919-682-3449**

DEC.  
6

### ADVENT DAY-LONG RETREAT

Fr. Tim Kulbicki, OFM Conv., pastor of the UNC-Chapel Hill Newman Center, will be presenting on the Incarnation. Don't

miss this special time together with fellow Franciscans. ➤ **Newman Catholic Student Center, 218 Pittsboro St, Chapel Hill, NC 27516, 919-929-3730**



EACH ONE HAS  
A MISSION TO  
FULFILL, A MISSION  
OF LOVE. AT THE  
HOUR OF DEATH  
WHEN WE COME  
FACE TO FACE  
WITH GOD, WE  
ARE GOING TO  
BE JUDGED ON  
LOVE; NOT HOW  
MUCH WE HAVE  
DONE, BUT HOW  
MUCH LOVE WE  
HAVE PUT INTO  
OUR ACTIONS.

— Mother  
Teresa  
of Calcutta





## [ WHO'S WHO ]

GET TO KNOW WHO'S WHO  
IN OUR FRATERNITY.  
EACH AND EVERY MEMBER IS  
AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR  
"FRATERNITY UNIT" AS A WHOLE :)

### FRATERNITY COUNCIL

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Sharon Winzeler, OFS

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#### SUNSHINE

Laurie Wilburn, OFS

WEBSITE: OFSCentralNC.org

FACEBOOK: Padre Pio Fraternity  
Secular Franciscan Order of  
Central North Carolina



### St. Francis Quote

“If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men.”

## [ JOIN US ]

We welcome those who would like to learn more about the Secular Franciscans. Join us for our monthly gatherings on the fourth Sunday of each month, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

### LOCATION:

Clare Hall at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church,  
11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, North Carolina.

DO YOU WANT TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN FRATERNITY LIFE?  
**Your Fraternity Council is organizing mini committees based on the Four Pillars!** Sign up today and have your ideas be heard! Contact Sharon or Rachel for more information. [swinzeler@gmail.com](mailto:swinzeler@gmail.com) or [rchlrbnsn@gmail.com](mailto:rchlrbnsn@gmail.com)



## ATTENTION!

Is there something you would like to have shared with our Fraternity? Send your articles, photographs and non-copyrighted content to have it featured in our monthly newsletter. **Email it to me! [talyiana@gmail.com](mailto:talyiana@gmail.com)** Any and all content must be submitted by the 15th of each month at the latest, to be included in the next newsletter.