



Monthly NEWSLETTER

Secular Franciscan Order of Central North Carolina 

PADRE PIO FRATERNITY ofscentralinc.org

JANUARY 1, 2026

LOCAL NEWS
starts on
PAGE 5 →

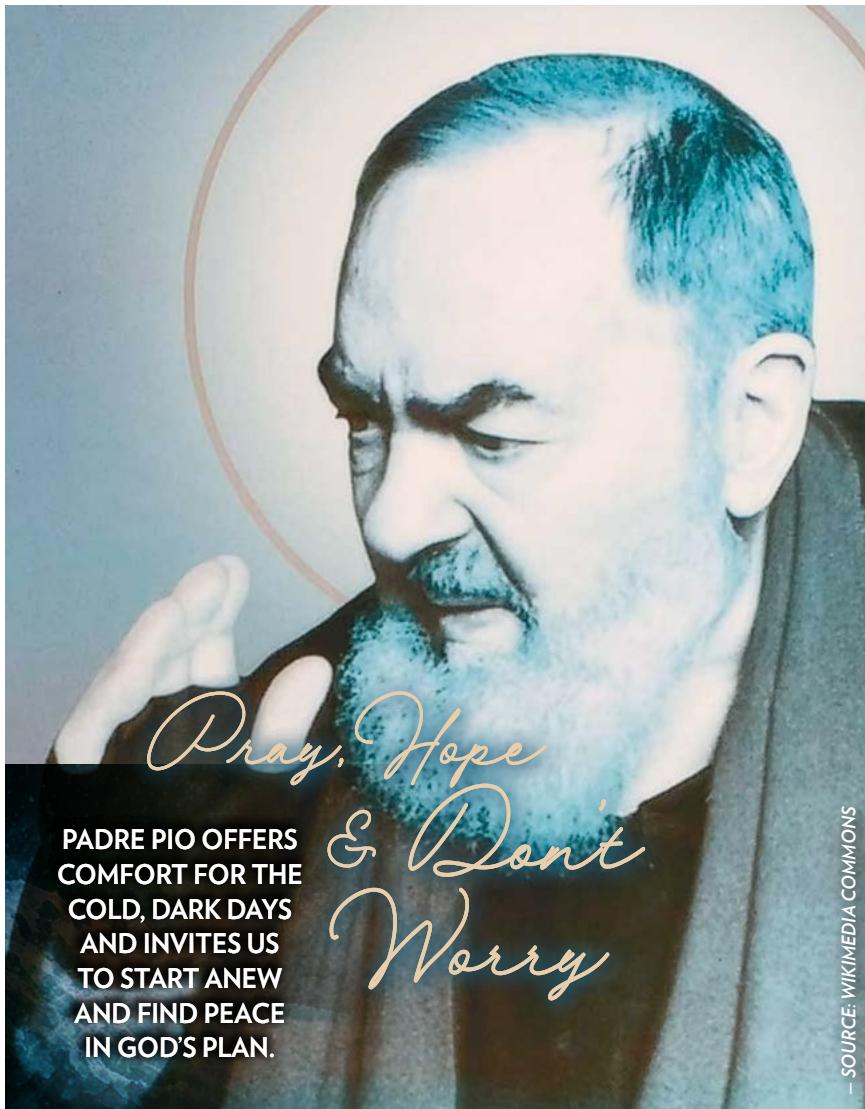
— *A Snapshot from the Life of Padre Pio* —

FINDING PEACE IN GOD

St. Padre Pio is often called the “Saint of January” for Good Reason

While St. Padre Pio's official feast day is September 23, he is often called the “Saint of January” or frequently invoked as the Patron Saint of the “January Blues” and he offers timeless wisdom and spiritual encouragement for the start of a new year.

In some circles, particularly in England, Padre Pio has become the unofficial “patron saint of the January blues” because his famous motto, “Pray, hope, and don’t worry,” is seen as a perfect antidote to the dreary post-holiday season, with Catholics invoking him for strength during those difficult winter days. His message of faith, hope and perseverance helps people navigate the



See PEACE IN GOD, PAGE 4 ➤

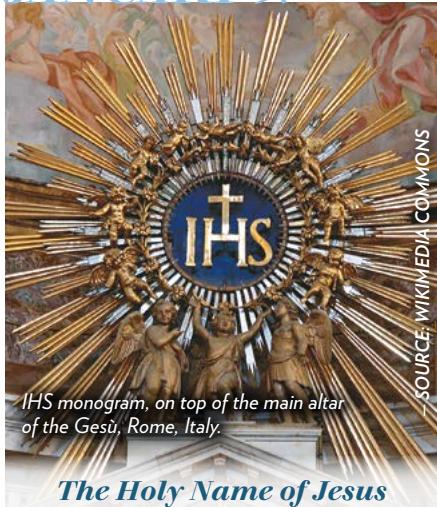
— OUR HEAVENLY FAMILY: THE SAINTS —

Saint of the Day // JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				MARY, MOTHER OF GOD	SAIN T BASIL THE GREAT	MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS
4 SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON	5 SAINT JOHN NEUMANN	6 SAINT ANDRÉ BESETTE	7 SAINT RAYMOND OF PEÑAFORT	8 SAINT ANGELA OF FOLIGNO	9 SAINT ADRIAN OF CANTERBURY	10 SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA
11 BLESSED WILLIAM CARTER	12 SAINT MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS	13 SAINT HILARY OF POITIERS	14 SAINT GREGORY NAZIANZEN	15 SAINT DEVASAHAYAM PILLAI	16 SAINT BERARD AND COMPANIONS	17 SAINT ANTHONY OF EGYPT
18 SAINT CHARLES OF SEZZE	19 SAINT FABIAN	20 SAINT SEBASTIAN	21 SAINT AGNES	22 SAINT VINCENT OF ZARAGOSSA	23 SAINT MARIANNE COPE	24 SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES
25 CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL	26 SAINTS TIMOTHY AND TITUS	27 SAINT ANGELA MERICI	28 SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS	29 SERVANT OF GOD BROTHER JUNIPER	30 BLESS ED MARY ANGELA TRUSZKOWSKA	31 SAINT JOHN BOSCO

— SOURCE: FRANCISCANMEDIA.ORG

JANUARY 3:



REFLECTION

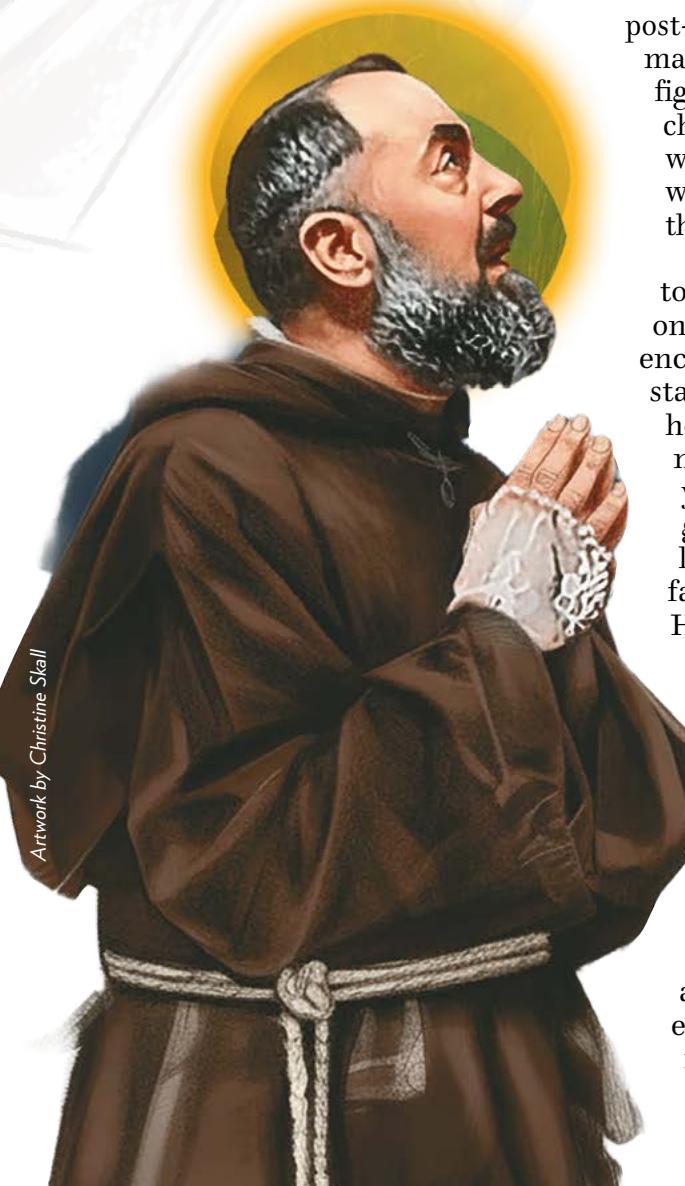
Everything about Our Divine Lord is holy, including His Name. It was the Archangel Gabriel who first spoke the name of Jesus to His mother, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus" (Luke 1:31). The Archangel was only a messenger, so the name of Jesus was given to Him by the Father in Heaven. There is great power in the spoken name of Jesus. Repeating His name prayerfully or speaking it aloud brings Him close and gives you strength, provided you recite His name in faith. The name of Jesus casts out fear, arouses trust, and unites your heart to His. Sadly, the Most Holy Name of Jesus is so holy that the evil one often tempts people to invoke it as a curse when angry, without even considering what they are doing. Take time to close your eyes and prayerfully repeat His name over and over. As you go about your day, anytime you feel anxious or fearful, speak the name of Jesus. Know and believe that the divine name of our Lord brings Him close to you and bestows His grace in abundance. As we celebrate this holy memorial today, ponder the prayer below that is attributed to Saint Bernardine of Sienna, the Franciscan who spoke so fervently of Jesus' name.

PRAYER: *Jesus, Name full of glory, grace, love, and strength! You are the refuge of those who repent, our banner of warfare in this life, the medicine of souls, the comfort of those who mourn, the delight of those who believe, the light of those who preach the true faith, the wages of those who toil, the healing of the sick. To You our devotion aspires; by You our prayers are received; we delight in contemplating You. O Name of Jesus, You are the glory of all the saints for eternity. Amen.*

— SOURCE: *Saints and Feasts of the Liturgical Year*

PEACE IN GOD

► *Continued from PAGE 1*



START EACH DAY
BY DEDICATING
IT TO GOD
AND PLACING
WORRIES IN
HIS HANDS, AS
PADRE PIO DID.

post-holiday slump and makes him a popular figure for January's challenges, which is why he's associated with stress relief and the "January blues".

Padre Pio's connection to the New Year centers on spiritual renewal, encouraging believers to start fresh with prayer, hope, and diligence, making the coming year more fruitful in good works than the last, often invoking his famous mantra "Pray, Hope, and Don't Worry" to face challenges with faith and trust in God's eternal presence. He saw January, with its quiet cold, as a time for inner spiritual growth, preparing souls for the new life in Christ, and his teachings emphasize constant reliance on God through the passing years toward eternity.

KEY THEMES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Padre Pio constantly reminds us to trust in God in place everything into His Hands, always.

■ SPIRITUAL RENEWAL:

Padre Pio urged his spiritual children to aim for a more spiritually fruitful year, redoubling efforts to please God daily.

■ PRAY, HOPE & DON'T WORRY:

This powerful phrase from

Padre Pio offers comfort for the cold, dark days and the anti-climax after Christmas. This mantra is central to starting anew, combating the "January Blues" and finding peace in God's plan.

■ OVERCOMING TRIALS AND SUFFERING:

Padre Pio himself endured immense suffering, including the stigmata and spiritual trials, making his message of trust in God resonant during tough times. He taught that trusting in God's everlasting presence and facing present difficulties with courage leads to eternal salvation.

■ GROWTH IN THE QUIET:

The stillness of January is seen as a time for quiet, internal growth, much like the earth preparing for spring, a concept Padre Pio's life embodies.

■ ETERNITY IN MIND:

Padre Pio constantly reminded people that the years pass quickly, urging them to prepare for the joyful transit to eternity.

PRACTICES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Padre Pio urges us to always strive to maintain inner peace.

■ DEDICATE THE DAY:

Start each day by dedicating it to God and placing worries in His hands, as Padre Pio did.

■ CULTIVATE INNER PEACE:

Reflect on the previous day with gratitude and place anxieties with God before sleep, fostering inner peace.

See PEACE IN GOD, NEXT PAGE ►

PEACE IN GOD

► *Continued from
PREVIOUS PAGE*

■ COMMIT TO GOOD WORKS:

Make resolutions to serve God with greater diligence, making each new year more productive in holiness.

■ COMMIT TO PRAYING DAILY:

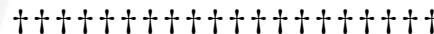
St. Padre Pio emphasized daily prayer as essential, calling it the “best weapon” and key to God’s heart, urging a life filled with prayer, hope, and trust, not worry, and integrating it through daily Mass, the Rosary (a powerful weapon against evil), mental prayer, spiritual reading, and examining conscience, all meant to keep God central in every moment, even amid daily struggles. A common prayer for the season is “Stay with me, Lord,” which Padre Pio used after Communion to ask for Christ’s light in the “darkness” of winter and life’s challenges.

SIGNIFICANT PERSONAL MILESTONES IN JANUARY

Several pivotal moments in Padre Pio’s spiritual journey occurred in January. On January 6, 1903, he entered the Capuchin novitiate, and on January 22, he officially took the habit and the name “Pio”.

PATRONAGES

- He is officially the patron saint of adolescents, civil defense volunteers, stress relief, and his hometown, Pietrelcina, Italy.
- He is unofficially the patron saint for the “January blues” originated from the Catholic Enquiry Office (CEO) in London, which promoted him for this role to combat winter depression.



ST. PADRE PIO
EMPHASIZED
DAILY PRAYER
AS ESSENTIAL,
CALLING IT THE
“BEST WEAPON”
AND KEY TO
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FILLED WITH
PRAYER, HOPE,
AND TRUST, NOT
WORRY, AND
INTEGRATING
IT THROUGH
DAILY MASS, THE
ROSARY, PRAYER
& SPIRITUAL
READING.

*Pray. Hope
& Don't
Worry*

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO PONDER, AND SPIRITUAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. How might we, or ‘I, myself’ apply these lessons from Padre Pio to my own personal life?
2. Do I see anything lacking in my personal life as I read this advice from Padre Pio?
3. What did Padre Pio do that I should be doing, or making more a part of my everyday life?
4. Do I see in myself the depth of faith that I need so that I can follow and trust in God’s guidance as Padre Pio

did? In other words, is there anything in my past, and my memory, that creates a stumbling or hindrance to following whatever The Lord might say to me?

5. Do I believe — and go through my day — knowing, and appreciating, that God is right here with me? When do I seem to lose, or forget, that ‘knowing’ and awareness of God’s presence?
6. Am I aware of, and thankful for, the blessings that I have throughout the day? 



Portrait of Padre Pio by
Solomenco Bogdan (May, 2010)

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



JAN.
4

EPIPHANY PARTY

The Epiphany Party has been a long-time yearly tradition in our fraternity and will be held **Jan. 4** at Ben & Gladys Whitehouse's home. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share. It's an open house that lasts about 2 hours, though no one needs to stay the entire time. Thanks, Ben and Gladys!

► 5600 N. Hawthorne Way,
Raleigh, NC 27613.

ONGOING
JAN.
24→

OAK CITY CARES

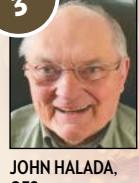
The Padre Pio Fraternity contributes to, and helps to serve, the Saturday mid-day meal for hundreds of clients of Oak City Outreach in the downtown Raleigh area **every 4th Saturday of each month**. Fraternity members may sign up to bring food items, help to serve and converse with the outreach

center's participants. This ministry is coordinated by Fraternity member Ellen Ferrone. UPCOMING DATES: **Jan. 24, Feb. 28, Mar. 28, Apr. 25, May 23, Jun. 27, Jul. 25, Aug. 22, Sep. 26, Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 26.**
► Oak City Outreach Center, 215 S Person St., Raleigh, NC 27601. 919-847-8205.

See EVENTS,
NEXT PAGE ►►

Happy
BIRTHDAY

JAN.
3



JOHN HALADA,
OFS

JAN.
14



DEBRA MARUSAK

JAN.
18



MAUREEN
MCFADDEN, OFS

STAY WITH ME, LORD,
FOR IT IS YOU ALONE I
LOOK FOR, YOUR LOVE,
YOUR GRACE, YOUR WILL,
YOUR HEART, YOUR SPIRIT,
BECAUSE I LOVE YOU AND
ASK NO OTHER REWARD
BUT TO LOVE YOU MORE
AND MORE. WITH A FIRM
LOVE, I WILL LOVE YOU
WITH ALL MY HEART
WHILE ON EARTH AND
CONTINUE TO LOVE YOU
PERFECTLY DURING ALL
ETERNITY. **AMEN.**

Daily Prayer of
**St. Padre
Pio**



EVENTS

► *Continued from
PREVIOUS PAGE*

ONGOING
JAN.
25→

FRATERNITY GATHERINGS

These are the upcoming regular monthly Padre Pio Fraternity gatherings on the **4th Sunday of each month**. Note that there will not be a meeting in December because it would be on the week leading up to Christmas. UPCOMING GATHERING DATES: **Jan. 25, Feb. 22, March 22, April 26, May 17, June 28, July 26, Aug. 23, Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 22.** ► **St. Francis of Assisi Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613. www.stfrancisraleigh.org. 919-847-8205.**

MAY
8-10

RETREAT AT ST. FRANCIS SPRINGS

Join us at this beautiful quiet center where you can spend some quality time with The Lord and fellow Franciscans from **May 8-10.** This will be a great time for spiritual renewal and the retreat will be led by Fr. Steve Kluge, OFM. Registration begins in January. ► **477 Grogan Rd, Stoneville, NC 27048. 336-573-3751.**

JUN.
20

PADRE PIO PERMANENT PROFESSION

Our candidates will profess at a Mass celebrated by Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM, at **11 am on Sat., June 20, at St. Francis of Assisi. Please mark your calendars now. This will serve as our monthly meeting, so there will be no gathering in June.** ► **St. Francis of Assisi Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613. www.stfrancisraleigh.org. 919-847-8205.**

JUL.
29→

2026 NATIONAL QUINQUENNIAL

This is a National Congress when Secular Franciscans gather to celebrate our shared calling with prayer, formation, and fellowship and will be held **July 29-Aug. 2 in Lexington, KY.** There is an Early Bird discount available until Dec. 31. Find information on the three keynote speakers, how to register, and more at <https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/21st-quinquennial-congress-q2026>. ► **Marriott Griffin Gate Golf Resort & Spa, 1800 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY, 40511 US.**

SEP.
11-13

ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING

A time to gather together all the Secular Franciscans of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region for our Annual Regional Gathering (ARG). This is also a time for prayer, a time for fellowship, a time to learn, a time to share, and a time for joy. Because of the date of the national Quinquennial, our Annual Regional Gathering (ARG) will be Sept. 11-13. Darleen Pryds, PhD will be a speaker at both the National Quinquennial and the ARG. She has a lovely article on living the Canticle of the Creatures that we encourage you to read at <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/st-anthony-messenger/living-the-canticle-of-the-creatures> ► **Ridgecrest Conference Center, Black Mountain, NC, 1 Ridgecrest Dr, Black Mountain, NC 28711. 828-669-8022.**



PEOPLE ARE OFTEN UNREASONABLE AND SELF-CENTERED. **FORGIVE THEM ANYWAY.**

IF YOU ARE KIND, PEOPLE MAY ACCUSE YOU OF ULTERIOR MOTIVES. **BE KIND ANYWAY.**

IF YOU ARE HONEST, PEOPLE MAY CHEAT YOU. **BE HONEST ANYWAY.**

IF YOU FIND HAPPINESS, PEOPLE MAY BE JEALOUS. **BE HAPPY ANYWAY.**

THE GOOD YOU DO TODAY MAY BE FORGOTTEN TOMORROW. **DO GOOD. GIVE THE WORLD THE BEST YOU HAVE, AND IT MAY NEVER BE ENOUGH. GIVE YOUR BEST ANYWAY.**

FOR YOU SEE, **IN THE END, IT IS BETWEEN YOU AND GOD.** IT WAS NEVER BETWEEN YOU AND THEM ANYWAY.

— Mother
Teresa
of Calcutta



[PADRE PIO FRATERNITY IN THE NEWS]

Keeping Medicaid Strong for North Carolina Families

At a press conference on Dec. 10, with North Carolina Pediatric Society's President Dr. Theresa McCarthy Flynn standing in support, Governor Stein announced he was suspending the recently enacted Medicaid rate cuts. Dr. Flynn was quoted as saying, *"On behalf of the 2,300 members of the North Carolina Pediatric Society, I want to express our sincere gratitude to Governor Stein for the decision to temporarily lift the Medicaid rate cuts. This action is critical for pediatricians across our state. These cuts posed serious challenges, threatening the ability of many practices to keep their doors open and continue serving their patients. We appreciate the Governor and all policymakers who are committed to keeping Medicaid strong for North Carolina families. Today's step is an important safeguard for children's health, and we look forward to working collaboratively on a long-term solution—one that ensures stable and adequate funding for the current and future fiscal years. Together, we can build a future where every child in North Carolina has access to the care they need to grow up healthy and thrive."*

NCPeds would like to thank the Governor for suspending the Medicaid rate



Photo Submitted

Fraternity member and pediatrician Theresa Flynn, OFS, right, with the NC Governor Josh Stein to preserve Medicaid for children.

cuts, and would also like to thank all the legislators and other policymakers who have been working hard on this issue. However, the race isn't yet over, and a measure to increase appropriations is still needed. Keeping rates intact is a huge step forward to keep practices whole during the interim. Work is still needed to prevent deeper cuts later, but for today let's celebrate! Congratulations! 

“WE APPRECIATE THE GOVERNOR AND ALL POLICYMAKERS WHO ARE COMMITTED TO KEEPING MEDICAID STRONG FOR NORTH CAROLINA FAMILIES. TODAY'S STEP IS AN IMPORTANT SAFEGUARD FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH.”

— DR. THERESA FLYNN

FRANCISCAN
SIGHTINGS

[PADRE PIO FRATERNITY IN THE NEWS]

Expressings thanks for our many blessings as 2025 comes to a close



CELEBRATING A MILESTONE WITH A DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST
 Ellen Ferrone, OFS was with Ida Irwin on Thursday, Dec. 11, celebrating her 91st birthday. Ida is currently living at Live Well Assisted Living in Chapel Hill, NC. Ellen brought cookies, the staff brought balloons and for dinner, there was pizza and cupcakes. Ida professed as a Secular Franciscan October 9, 1955. We are blessed to have Ida as a witness to living a full life in the footsteps of Francis and Clare.

BIDDING FAREWELL

Secular Franciscans and others bid farewell to Fr. Jim Sabek, OFM, at a reception on Dec. 14. Fr. Jim has shared his friendship and knowledge with us in the nine years he served in Raleigh. He will be teaching in San Diego at the Franciscan School of Theology. Pictured here with Michelle Hicks, aspirant.



[PRAYERS & DEVOTIONS]



The Pope's PRAYER INTENTIONS

FOR PRAYER WITH THE WORD OF GOD

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us to build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

— SOURCE: USCCB.ORG

“ The earth could exist more easily without the sun than without the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. ”

A Quote from
St. Padre Pio

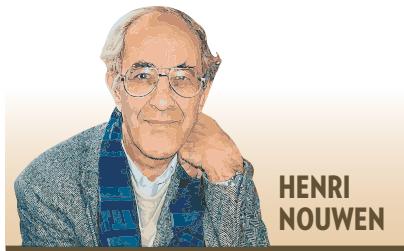


— HENRI NOUWEN SPIRITUALITY —



Artwork by Christine Skall

OUR TRUE IDENTITY



HENRI
NOUWEN

DAILY MEDITATION

Our identity is in the One who loves us. This saves us from our false self, which is anxiously dependent on others' opinions and leads us to sell our souls to the world and to the Evil One who rules the world. The spiritual task is to say that a self defined by other is illusion.

Henri J. M. Nouwen

— SOURCE: THE ROAD TO PEACE,
by Henri Nouwen

“ SEE WHAT
GREAT LOVE
THE FATHER
HAS LAVISHED
ON US, THAT
WE SHOULD
BE CALLED
CHILDREN
OF GOD! AND
THAT IS WHAT
WE ARE! ”

— 1 JOHN 3:1

“ What makes us human is not our mind
BUT OUR HEART,
Not our ability to think but our ability
TO LOVE. ”

— HENRI NOUWEN

[PRAYERS & DEVOTIONS cont.]

— LITANY —

Litany of The Most Precious Blood

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

God our Father in heaven
God the Son, Redeemer of the world
God the Holy Spirit
Holy Trinity, one God
Blood of Christ, only Son of the Father
Blood of Christ, incarnate Word
Blood of Christ, of the new and eternal covenant
Blood of Christ, that spilled to the ground
Blood of Christ, that flowed at the scourging
Blood of Christ, dripping from the thorns
Blood of Christ, shed on the cross
Blood of Christ, the price of our redemption
Blood of Christ, our only claim to pardon
Blood of Christ, our blessing cup
Blood of Christ, in which we are washed
Blood of Christ, torrent of mercy
Blood of Christ, that overcomes evil
Blood of Christ, strength of the martyrs
Blood of Christ, endurance of the saints
Blood of Christ, that makes the barren fruitful
Blood of Christ, protection of the threatened
Blood of Christ, comfort of the weary
Blood of Christ, solace of the mourner
Blood of Christ, hope of the repentant
Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying
Blood of Christ, our peace and refreshment
Blood of Christ, our pledge of life
Blood of Christ, by which we pass to glory
Blood of Christ, most worthy of honor

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world
Lord, you redeemed us by your blood.

Let us pray.

O God, who by the Precious Blood of your Only Begotten Son
have redeemed the whole world,
preserve in us the work of your mercy,
so that, ever honoring the mystery of our salvation,
we may merit to obtain its fruits.
Through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

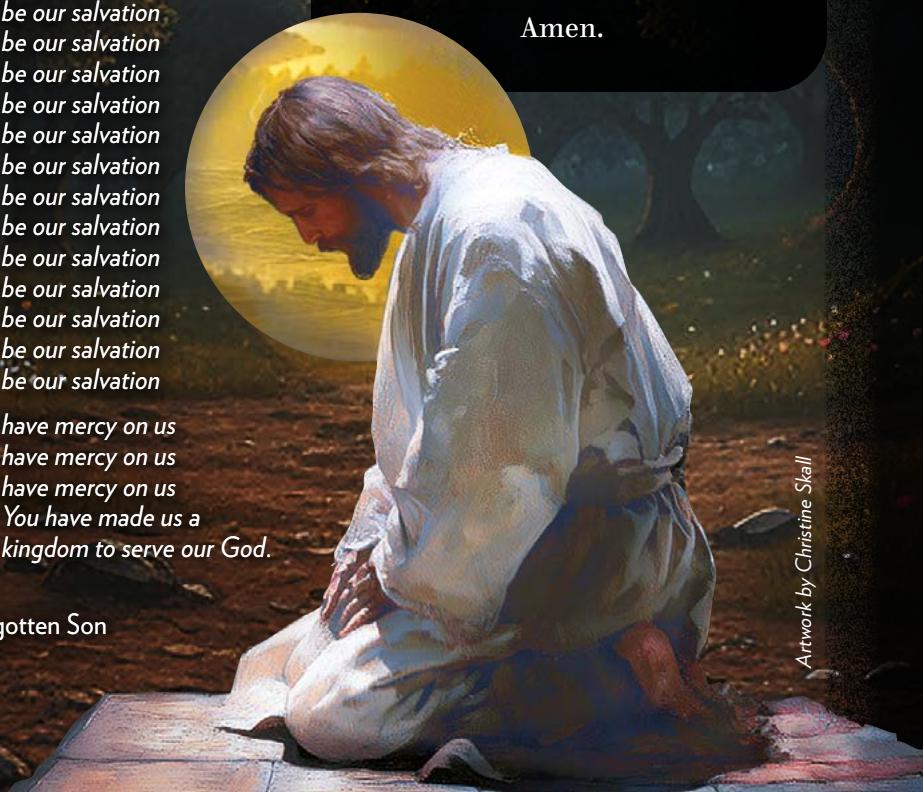
— SOURCE: USCCB.ORG

*Praying the Anima Christi after Holy Communion grants a seven-year indulgence, and a plenary indulgence can be gained once a month if the prayer is said daily for a month under the usual conditions. Without Holy Communion, there is a partial indulgence of 300 days for saying the prayer. The indulgence is granted for praying the prayer after receiving Communion.

*The Anima Christi**

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side
of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ,
strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within Your wounds hide me.
Suffer me not to be
separated from you.
From the evil one defend me.
In the hour of my
death, call me.
And bid me come to You,
That with all Your saints,
I may praise You
forever and ever.
Amen.

Artwork by Christine Skell



SPECIAL
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.]

Good Use of Time

PRESENCE OF GOD - *On the last day of the year, I recollect myself in the presence of The Child Jesus, to examine in the light of eternity the value of time.*

MEDITATION

1. Time passes and does not return. God has assigned to each of us a definite time in which to fulfill His divine plan for our soul; we have only this time and shall have no more. Time ill spent is lost forever. Our life is made up of this uninterrupted, continual flow of time, which never returns. In eternity, on the contrary, time will be no more; we shall be established forever in the degree

See DIVINE INTIMACY, NEXT PAGE ➡



DIVINE INTIMACY

► Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

In order that the merit of our good works be granted immediately, it is necessary that these works be done with all the love possible...



Artwork by Christine Skall

of love which we have reached now, in time. If we have attained a high degree of love, we shall be fixed forever in that degree of love and glory; if we possess only a slight degree, that is all we shall have throughout eternity. No further progress will be possible when time has ended. "Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men" (Gal 6,10). "We must give every moment its full amount of love, and make each passing moment eternal, by giving it value for eternity" (Sr. Carmela of the Holy Spirit, O.C.D.).¹ This is the best way to

THEREFORE, WHILST WE HAVE TIME, LET US WORK GOOD TO ALL MEN. WE MUST GIVE EVERY MOMENT ITS FULL AMOUNT OF LOVE, AND MAKE EACH PASSING MOMENT ETERNAL, BY GIVING IT VALUE FOR ETERNITY.

use the time given us by God. Charity allows us to adhere to God's will with submission and love and thus at the close of life we shall have realized God's plan for our soul; we shall have reached the degree of love which God expects from each one of us and with which we shall love and glorify Him for all eternity.

2. The growth of charity depends upon meritorious acts, that is, good works done under

See DIVINE INTIMACY,
NEXT PAGE ►

DIVINE INTIMACY

► Continued from **PREVIOUS PAGE**

the influence of charity. Every good act merits an increase of charity, which may be given to the soul at once or withheld until the end of life, according to whether the act had been performed with all the love of which the soul was capable, or whether, on the contrary, it was performed with less vigor, generosity, and carefulness than was possible at that moment. In the first case, the increase of charity comes like interest which is immediately accrued to the capital, and which then bears interest together with it. In the second case, it is like interest which is kept separate from the capital and hence does not increase with it, even though it remains the property of the one who has acquired it. In order that the merit of our good works, that is, the increase of charity which we have merited by them, be granted immediately, it is necessary that these works be done with all the love possible, that is, with all the good will and generosity of which the soul is capable. Then it is as if the soul opens to receive the increase of love it has merited; and this is added at once to the capital of charity already possessed, immediately increasing its degree and intensity.

We have only the short day of this earthly life in which to grow in love, and if we wish to derive from it the greatest possible profit, we must overcome our natural inertia and carry out our good works "with our whole heart." Then love will increase immeasurably and we shall be able to say to Our Lord like St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus: "Your love has grown with me and now it is an abyss, the depth of which I am unable to sound" (St. 12). We must, then, make haste while we still have time, for "the night cometh when no man can work" (Jn 9,4).

"WE HAVE ONLY THE SHORT DAY OF THIS EARTHLY LIFE IN WHICH TO GROW IN LOVE, AND IF WE WISH TO DERIVE FROM IT THE GREATEST POSSIBLE PROFIT, WE MUST OVERCOME OUR NATURAL INERTIA AND CARRY OUT OUR GOOD WORKS WITH OUR WHOLE HEART."

COLLOQUY

O Lord, as I look back on the year just passed, a year given me by Your divine Providence in which to increase my love of You, I can only grieve over myself and say to You: "How little I have loved You, my God! How badly I have spent my time!"

"How late have my desires become enkindled, and how early, Lord, did You go in search of me, calling me to spend myself wholly in Your service! Did You perchance, Lord, forsake the wretched or turn from the poor beggar who sought to approach You? Can it be, Lord, that there is any limit to Your wonders or to Your mighty works?"

O my God and my Mercy! Now will You be able to show Your mercies in Your handmaiden. How powerful You are, great God! Now it will become clear, Lord, if my soul, looking upon the time it has lost, is right in its belief that You, in a moment, can turn its loss to gain. I seem to be talking foolishly, for it is usual to say that time lost can never be recovered.

"Blessed be my God! O Lord, I recognize Your great power.

If You are mighty, as indeed You are, what is impossible for You who can do all things?

"Well do You know, my God, that in the midst of all my miseries I have never ceased to recognize Your great power and mercy. May it prove of avail to me that I have not offended You in this. Restore the time I have lost, my God, by granting me Your grace both in the present and in the future, that I may appear before You wearing the wedding garment, for You can do this if You so will" (T.J. Exc, 4).

On my part, O Lord, I can think of no better way to make up for the time I have lost than to try with all my might to increase my love. Yes, my love will grow if, for Your sake, I fulfill all my duties and perform all my good works "with all my heart" and "with all my good will." Alas!

I am so weak, so careless, so indolent! I am inclined to flee from exerting myself; I try to avoid making sacrifices. My nature always seeks what is easiest, what is least tiring, and soon falls into negligence and laziness. Help me, O Lord, and strengthen my love by Your almighty power. What I do for You is so little; grant, O my God, that I may at least do it with all the love possible.



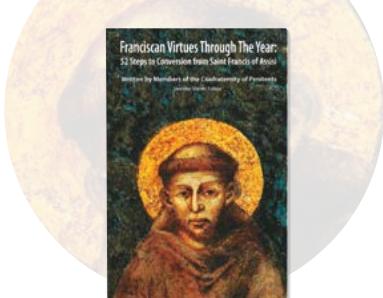
1. Sr. Carmela of the Holy Spirit, a Discalced Carmelite Nun who died July 23, 1949, was a soul of an exceptional interior life, some of whose writings were published by FATHER GABRIEL OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN, O.C.D. toward the end of 1950 in his *Revista di vita spirituale* (See Nos. 1 and 2). In 1954 her life was published together with more of her writings and some notes of direction from Father Gabriel, who had been her spiritual director in Carmel. Cf. Sr. Carmela of the Holy Spirit, Carmel of St. Joseph, Rome.

— SOURCE: FROM DIVINE INTIMACY: MEDITATIONS ON THE INTERIOR LIFE FOR EVERY DAY OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR, pp. 100-103. Translated by the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Boston from the original Italian edition INTIMITÀ DIVINA DEL P. GABRIELLE DIS. MARIA MADDALENA. © Monastero S. Giuseppe — Carmelitane Scalze. Published by Baronius Press, www.baroniuspress.com. Used with permission.

[BOOK STUDY]

FRANCISCAN
VIRTUES
THROUGH
THE YEAR52 Steps to Conversion
from St. Francis of AssisiPART 6:
DISCERNMENT

[EDITOR'S NOTE.] "Confraternity of Penitents", the publisher of "Franciscan Virtues Through The Year", has kindly given us permission to "repubish" 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.]

REGARDING
DISCERNMENT...

SCRIPTURE: "Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?" (*1 Kings 3:9*)

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS

And when God gave me brothers, no one showed me what I should do, but the Most High revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the holy gospel. (Testament)

INCIDENT FROM THE
LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS

The saint [Francis] told him [Bernard]: "*We will go to the church early in*

the morning and, through the book of the Gospels, we will learn how the Lord instructed his disciples."

Rising at daybreak, then, together with another man named Peter, who also wanted to become a brother,

See DISCERNMENT, NEXT PAGE ➡



Artwork by Christine Skall

[BOOK STUDY cont.]

► Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

VIRTUE 6
DISCERNMENT Cont.

they went to the church of San Nicolo next to the piazza of the city of Assisi. They entered for prayer, but, because they were simple, they did not know how to find the passage in the gospel about renunciation. They prayed devoutly that the Lord would show them His Will on opening the book the first time.

Once they had finished prayer, blessed Francis took the closed book and, kneeling before the altar, opened it. At its first opening, the Lord's counsel confronted them: *If you wish to be perfect, go, sell everything you possess and give to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven.*

Blessed Francis was overjoyed when he read this passage and thanked God. But since he was a true worshiper of the Trinity, he desired it to be confirmed by a threefold affirmation. He opened the book a second and a third time. When he opened it up

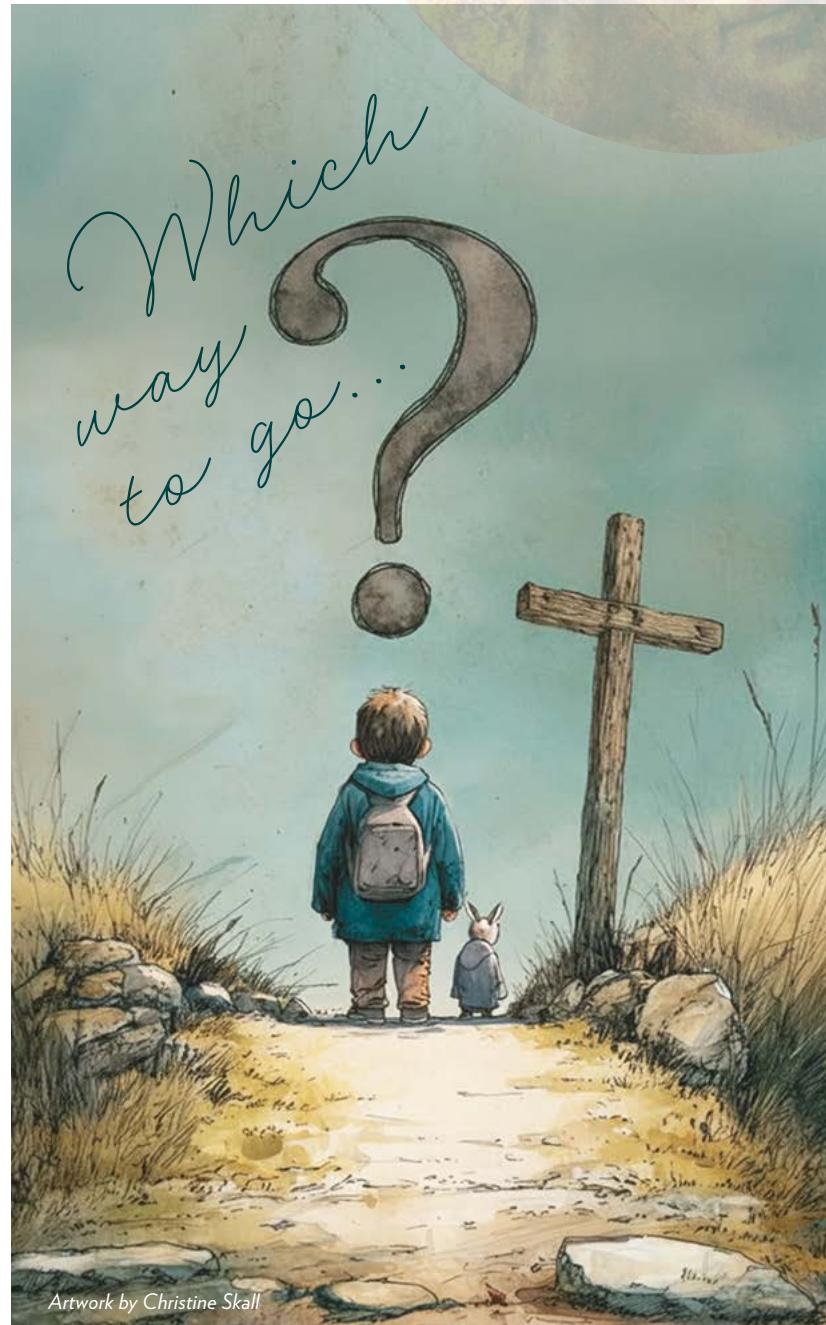
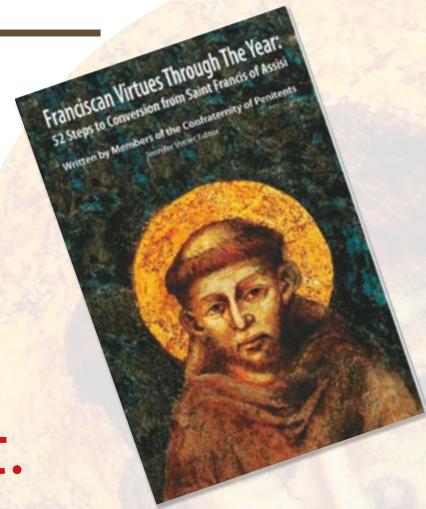
the second time he saw: *Take nothing for your journey, etc.*, and at the third opening: *If any man wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, etc.*

Each time he opened the book, blessed Francis thanked God for confirming his plan and the desire he had conceived earlier: After the third divine confirmation was pointed out and explained, he said to those men, Bernard and Peter: *"Brothers, this is our life and rule and that of all who will want to join our company. Go, therefore, and fulfill what you have heard."* (*The Legend of the Three Companions, Section VIII*)

**DISCERNMENT IS
THE VIRTUE THAT
HELPS US TO KNOW
THE BEST COURSE
OF ACTION**

DISCERNMENT is the virtue that helps us to know the best course of action

See **DISCERNMENT,
NEXT PAGE ►**



Artwork by Christine Skall

[BOOK STUDY cont.]

DISCERNMENT

► *Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE*

and to understand the truth and falsity in a situation. St. Francis used one method of discernment as he was determining how to live a life of penance and conversion. Note that his discernment involved both his own desires and God's will, which Francis discerned through prayer and through Scripture.

When discerning anything, the best place to begin is with prayer. Ask God to show you the right way, the right decision, the perfect action, the truth of the situation. Consulting Scripture may help you make a decision and can give insight. Speaking to others who would have the knowledge and insight to advise you is an important part of discernment. Writing down the pros and cons of each alternative can help you visually determine what might be the best course of action. Writing can also help you determine where the truth lies in a certain situation. In moral and theological situations, consulting the teachings of the Church will help you to know which decisions and courses of action are morally and theologically correct. After doing these things, you must make a decision and take action as the men did who first followed Francis. Discernment without action is useless.

Can we ever be positive that we have discerned

accurately? Sometimes we cannot be certain. However, if we have asked God for His direction and have tried to prudently follow where He is leading, then we need to trust our decision.

In time we may have to discern again, but life in this world is one of continual discernment and refinement of action until we enter into eternity with God.

YOUR PERSONAL EXERCISE:

† Spend a minimum of five minutes meditating on the Virtue of **Discernment**. Do not write anything during this time. Merely begin your time by praying, *“Lord, help me to understand the Virtue of Discernment and where I need it in my life.”*

† At the end of your meditation time, ask yourself: *Do I have a discerning nature? How do I discern? Am I impulsive? If so, how can I control my impulsiveness? How does discernment fit into the spiritual life? What can I do to foster better discernment? What do I need to discern at this time? What techniques can I use in my discernment?*

† Find another section in Scripture which illustrates the Virtue of Discernment.

† Find a statement of Jesus or an incident in His life that deals with the Virtue of Discernment. Write these into your journal.

† If you are a member

of a Religious Order, find one place in your Rule or Constitutions which calls for the Virtue of Discernment. Explain why you chose this section.

† Practice the Virtue of Discernment this week. If you are not discerning any major decisions or actions, then select smaller decisions to discern such as what to eat, what to wear, or what to do for recreation. Have you ever discerned these before or did you simply act impulsively? Pay attention to any changes in your attitude or response to these decisions as you take time to discern. Record in your journal any memorable insights or happenings..

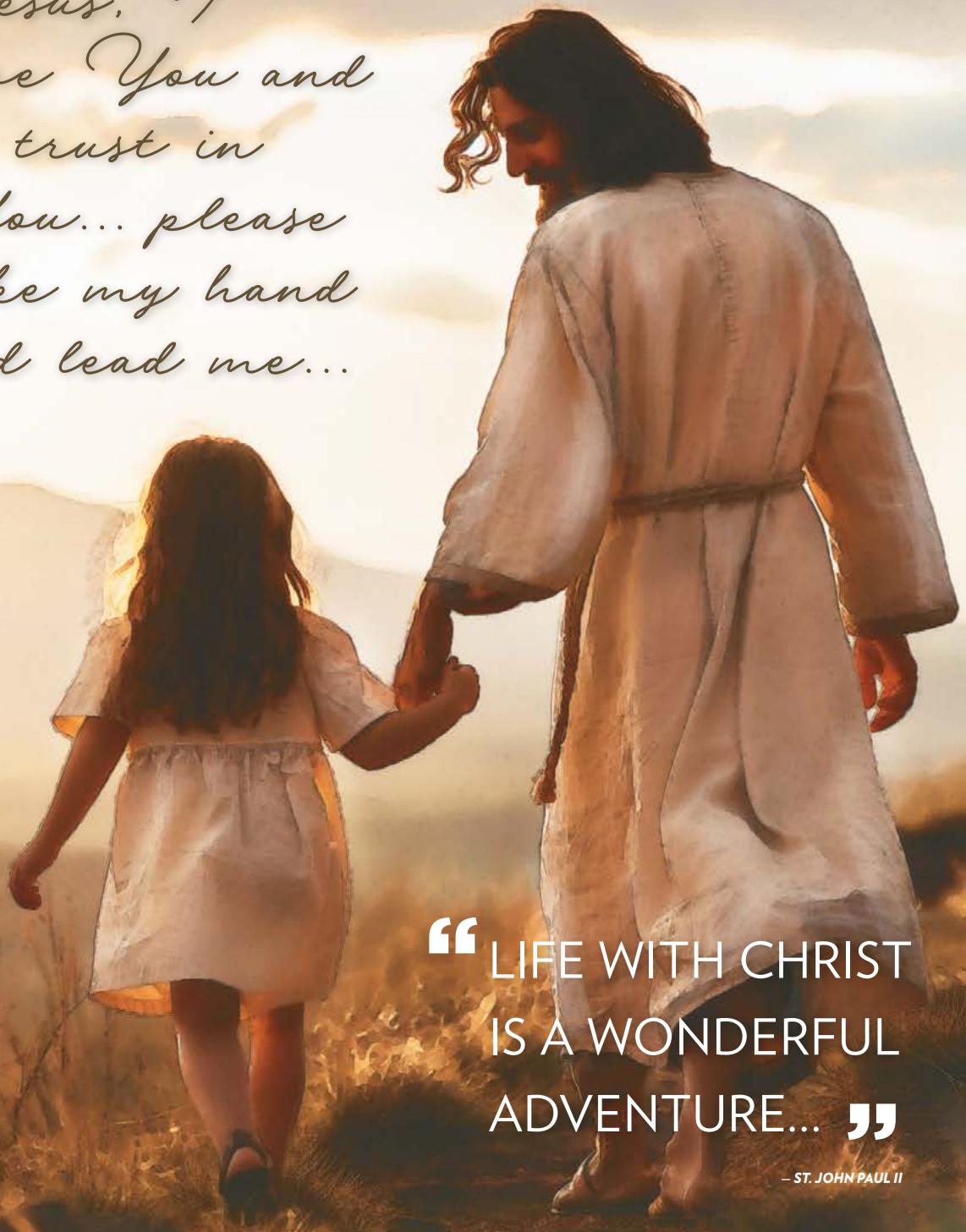
† Each evening, examine the day for the opportunities you had to show discernment. Pray, *“Lord, help me to recognize the opportunities for discernment in my life. Grant me the grace to slow down and to evaluate and pray before acting or deciding. Guide me to people who can help me discern. Help me always to seek Your guidance as I discern, because I want to follow Your Will, not my own. Amen.”*

† At the end of the week, record in your journal what you have learned from this exercise. 

— SOURCE: “FRANCISCAN VIRTUES THROUGH THE YEAR” written by Members of the Confraternity of Penitents

[COMPLETE TRUST IN GOD...]

Jesus, I
love You and
I trust in
You... please
take my hand
and lead me...



“ LIFE WITH CHRIST
IS A WONDERFUL
ADVENTURE... ”

— ST. JOHN PAUL II

[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 :)

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St. Francis Quote

“There is one thing in which we may glory: it is in our infirmities, it is in carrying day by day the Holy Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

[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 or 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
Any and all content must be submitted by the 15th of each month at the latest, to be included in the next newsletter.