



LOCAL NEWS
starts on
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Monthly NEWSLETTER

Secular Franciscan Order of Central North Carolina 

PADRE PIO FRATERNITY ofscentralinc.org FEBRUARY 1, 2026

— *A Snapshot from the Wisdom of St. Francis & Other Saints* —

CONFESION: OUR GIFT FROM GOD

Confession is a Sacrament with Many Graces that Restores Our Relationship with Our Lord

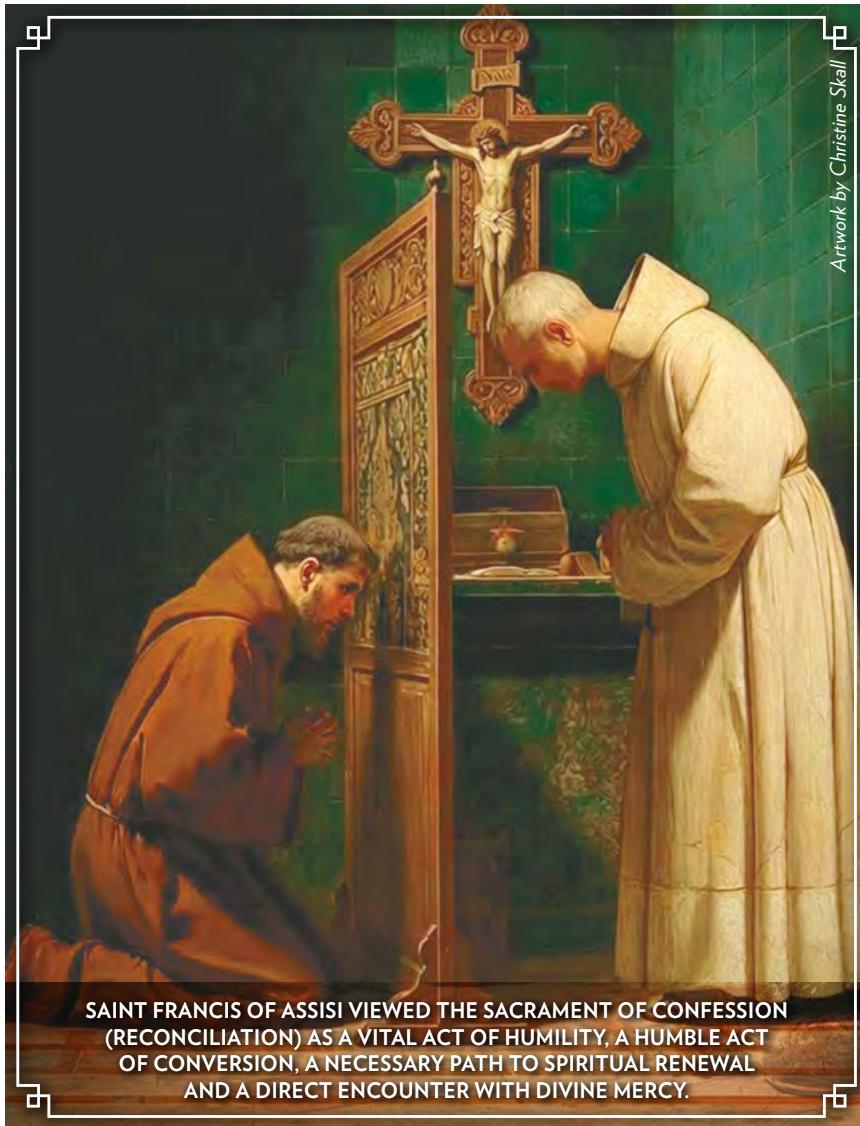
SCRIPTURE: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*
(1 John 1:9)

St. Francis exhorted, "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)

Saint Francis of Assisi viewed the sacrament of Confession (Reconciliation)

See CONFESSION, PAGE 8 ➔



— OUR HEAVENLY FAMILY: THE SAINTS —

Saint of the Day // FEBRUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 SAINT ANSGAR	2 PRESENTATION OF THE LORD	3 SAINT BLAISE	4 SAINT JOSEPH OF LEONISSA	5 SAINT AGATHA	6 SAINT PAUL MIKI AND COMPANIONS	7 SAINT COLETTE
8 SAINT JOSEPHINE BAKHITA	9 SAINT JEROME EMILIANI	10 SAINT SCHOLASTICA	11 OUR LADY OF LOURDES	12 SAINT APOLLONIA	13 SAINT GILES MARY OF SAINT JOSEPH	14 SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS
15 SAINT CLAUDE DE LA COLOMBIÈRE	16 SAINT GILBERT OF SEMPRINGHAM	17 SEVEN FOUNDERS OF THE SERVITE ORDER	18 BLESSED JOHN OF FIESOLE	19 SAINT CONRAD OF PIACENZA	20 SAINTS JACINTA AND FRANCISCO MARTO	21 SAINT PETER DAMIAN
22 CHAIR OF SAINT PETER	23 SAINT POLYCARP	24 BLESSED LUKE BELLUDI	25 BLESSED SEBASTIAN OF APARICIO	26 SAINT MARIA BERTILLA BOSCARDIN	27 SAINT GABRIEL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS	28 BLESSED DANIEL BROTTIER

— SOURCE: FRANCISCANMEDIA.ORG

FEBRUARY 11.

MARIAN FEAST DAY



REFLECTION

Lourdes has become a place of pilgrimage and healing, but even more of faith. Church authorities have recognized over 60 miraculous cures, although there have probably been many more. To people of faith this is not surprising. It is a continuation of Jesus' healing miracles—now performed at the intercession of his mother. Some would say that the greater miracles are hidden. Many who visit Lourdes return home with renewed faith and a readiness to serve God in their needy brothers and sisters. There still may be people who doubt the apparitions of Lourdes. Perhaps the best that can be said to them are the words that introduce the film "The Song of Bernadette": *"For those who believe in God, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe, no explanation is possible."*

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES FOR HEALING: *O ever-Immaculate Virgin, Mother of Mercy, health of the sick, refuge of sinners, comforter of the afflicted, you know my wants, my troubles, my sufferings; look with mercy on me. By appearing in the Grotto of Lourdes, you were pleased to make it a privileged sanctuary, whence you dispense your favours; and already many sufferers have obtained the cure of their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal. I come, therefore, with complete confidence to implore your maternal intercession. Obtain, O loving Mother, the grant of my requests (mention your petition). Through gratitude for your favours, I will endeavour to imitate your virtues, that I may one day share your glory, and bless you in eternity. AMEN*

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The grotto where St Bernadette's visions took place is very simple and stark. Above the main recess is the niche where the apparitions took place and Fabisch's 1864 statue of Our Lady of Lourdes now stands.

Our Lady of Lourdes

— SOURCE: FRANCISCANMEDIA.ORG

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

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. This will be a great time for spiritual renewal.

SOURCE: <https://www.stfrancis.today> Used with permission.

ONGOING
FEB.
3→

POPE LEO'S APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION DILEXI TE

Two study groups will discuss Pope Leo's Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* on Zoom in February, and you are invited to join one or both. Each study group has different content and meets at different times. The first comes from Monica Kleimeyer, coordinator of the DOR NC Catholics Caring for Our Common Home. It will be a three-week study of *Dilexi Te*, followed by a group activity benefiting the poor in the fourth week. **This one begins Tuesday, Feb. 3. You will meet from 6-7pm by Zoom for discussion on Feb. 3, 10, and 17.** During the fourth week, there will be a group activity benefiting

the poor. NC Catholics Caring for our Common Home has developed this study using materials from the USCCB and the Vatican's Dicastery for Integral Human Development. You can sign up for this event here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSejpD9wU7-N3ckr-gt1QPUqDHy7wEhs2Jlevrj5R7062Vuj5w/viewform>.

The second one is offered by our fraternity through our JPIC committee. Marie Bianca and Theresa Flynn will co-lead the discussion. **It will begin at 7:30pm on Sunday, Feb. 22.** You can look at the reflection guide they will use at <https://www.networkadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Dilexi-Te-Reflection-Guide.pdf>. ► The study group meetings are held via Zoom.

ONGOING
FEB.
22→

PADRE PIO 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:** 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.

See EVENTS
NEXT PAGE ►►

Happy BIRTHDAY

FEB.
2



JOAN MONTI, OFS

FEB.
4



RACHEL BONGIORNO, OFS

FEB.
4



RULA OSTA

FEB.
11



MICHAEL HANCOCK, OFS

FEB.
18



MONICA MONAHAN

FEB.
18



MARIE BIANCA, OFS

FEB.
21



NKEM OKEREKE, OFS

FEB.
28



LAURIE WILBURN, OFS

PRAY, HOPE &
DON'T WORRY.
—St. Padre Pio



EVENTS

► *Continued from
PREVIOUS PAGE*

FEB.
27

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Padre Pio fraternity will lead the Stations of The Cross at St. Francis of Assisi during Lent at **6pm on Friday**.

Feb. 27. IMPORTANT FACT: A plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful who piously meditate on the Passion and Death of Jesus while moving between 14 legitimately erected Stations of the Cross. This act can be performed individually or publicly, requires at least some vocal prayers, and can be done any day, with special focus on Fridays in Lent! ► **St. Francis of Assisi Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613. www.stfrancisraleigh.org. 919-847-8205.**

ONGOING
FEB.
28→

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:** 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.**

MAR.
4

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

The Padre Pio fraternity will lead Liturgy of The Hours at St. Francis of Assisi during Lent at **6:30pm on Wednesday, Mar. 4**. Join your fellow Franciscans for this very special time of prayer to Our Blessed Lord. ► **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. Please sign up before our meeting on Feb. 22 if you would like to attend. We will ask for 50% payment by Feb. 22 and the remainder by April 15. Per-person cost for the three days is \$340/single and \$200 for a shared double room. St. Francis Springs recently added \$30/night for shared rooms. (Cost for the weekend for a couple is \$400.) To sign up, go to [SignUpGenius](http://SignUpGenius.com). Cancel by Feb. 22. The retreat begins with dinner on Friday night and ends with brunch on Sunday morning. Scholarship money is available through our endowment fund. Please contact any council member for more information. ► **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.**



PEACE BEGINS WITH A SMILE

— Mother
Teresa
of Calcutta



FRANCISCAN
SIGHTINGS

[PADRE PIO FRATERNITY IN THE NEWS]

It's 'snow' surprise that the driver is on a mission for St. Francis!



A FUN DRIVE IN THE SNOW
Fr. Hugh Macsherry gets to drive a snow machine during his January OFM visitation trip Fairbanks, Alaska. We think he brought the latest weather back with him :)

[MEET A FELLOW FRANCISCAN]

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

Michele Hicks

God has always been close to her heart

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

I am a proud Midwesterner originally from St. Louis, Missouri. I have an older brother and a younger brother. After college I decided to take a “short” break from Missouri, and I moved to the area to attend graduate school at North Carolina Central University (NCCU). At the end of my studies, I met my husband, Dan Pratt, a native North Carolinian. We have one adult daughter, Gwen. I am an educator, and after twenty-three years, I began teaching adolescent immigrants. In my free time, I enjoy following the St. Louis Cardinals (baseball team), sports, watching birds, and reading.

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

Faith is important to me. From an early age, God has been close to my heart, and I knew He was my friend. I felt that Sunday School was a place for me to explore my relationship with God. I grew up as a Protestant; however, in college, I converted to Catholicism. My faith was strengthened as I began praying more consistently and inviting God into my journey. When I think of God, I think of the

gospel song lyrics, “Down through the years, God has been good to me.” Even during tumultuous times, God has helped me navigate many of life’s challenges.

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

I felt called to become a Secular Franciscan as I love nature and I am also aware of the marginalized in our society. After taking the “Just Faith” course several years ago, my awareness increased regarding our brothers and sisters who live on the fringes of society and are “invisible”. I have been feeling the call to simplify in my practices and consumption.

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

In August, I was welcomed into the ‘Inquirer’ stage of my Franciscan journey.

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

As I interact with the members of the Secular Franciscan community, I feel warmth and peace. Additionally, I am compelled

Michele Hicks always has such a beautiful smile :)

by the community to spread the warmth, peace, and God’s message to those I encounter.

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

I can offer my encouragement and faith to the community. I am open to sharing in other ways, as the Holy Spirit guides me.

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

As I consider ways to extend services to others, I can offer empathy, support, and

See MICHELE, NEXT PAGE ➡

MICHELE

► Continued from **PREVIOUS PAGE**



Michele with her husband, Dan Pratt, celebrating the NC State Women's Basketball ACC Championships for 2020, 2021, and 2022.



Michele Hicks with St. Michael at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe, Orlando Florida.

hospitality. I hope to do so while including aspects of Francis' life.

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

St. Michael, my patron saint, is a favorite of mine. He appeals to me for conquering evil. St. Michael is a protector of the faithful and a spiritual warrior; he is also a defender of justice.

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

Other favorite saints include St. Benedict the Black, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Pope John Paul II, St. Martin de Porres, St. Mother Teresa, and Sister Thea Bowman (on the path for sainthood).

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

"He must become greater; I must become less."

— ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

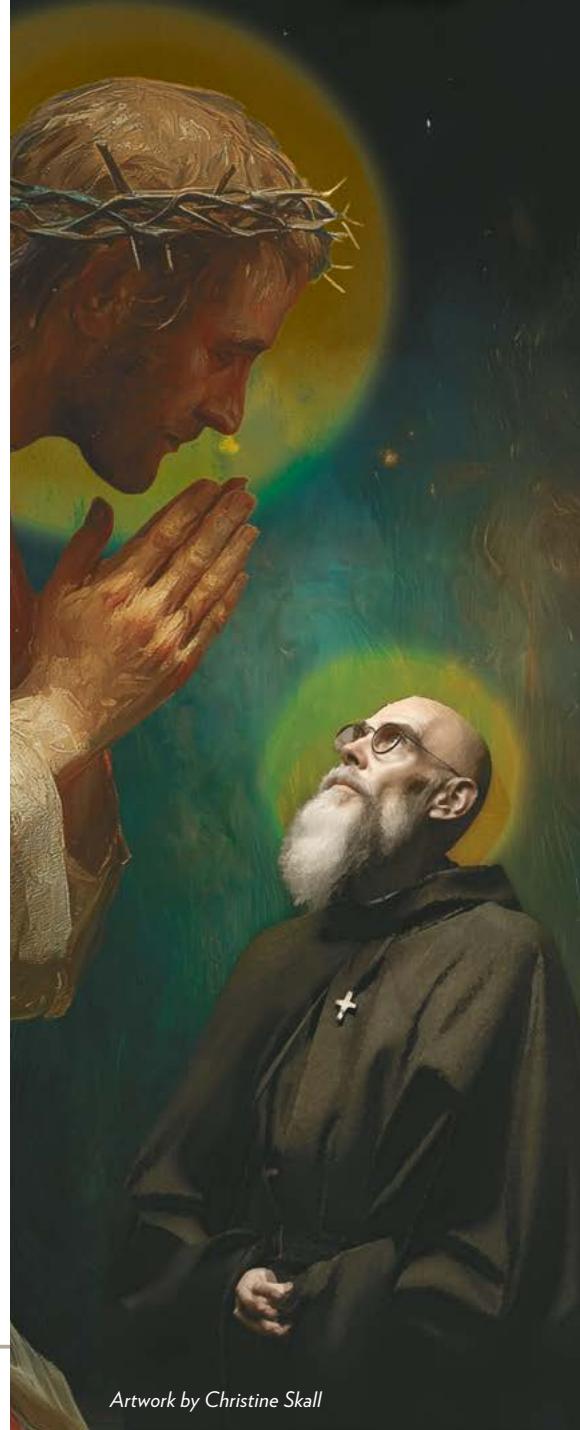
“ FROM AN EARLY AGE, GOD HAS BEEN CLOSE TO MY HEART, AND I KNEW HE WAS MY FRIEND. ”

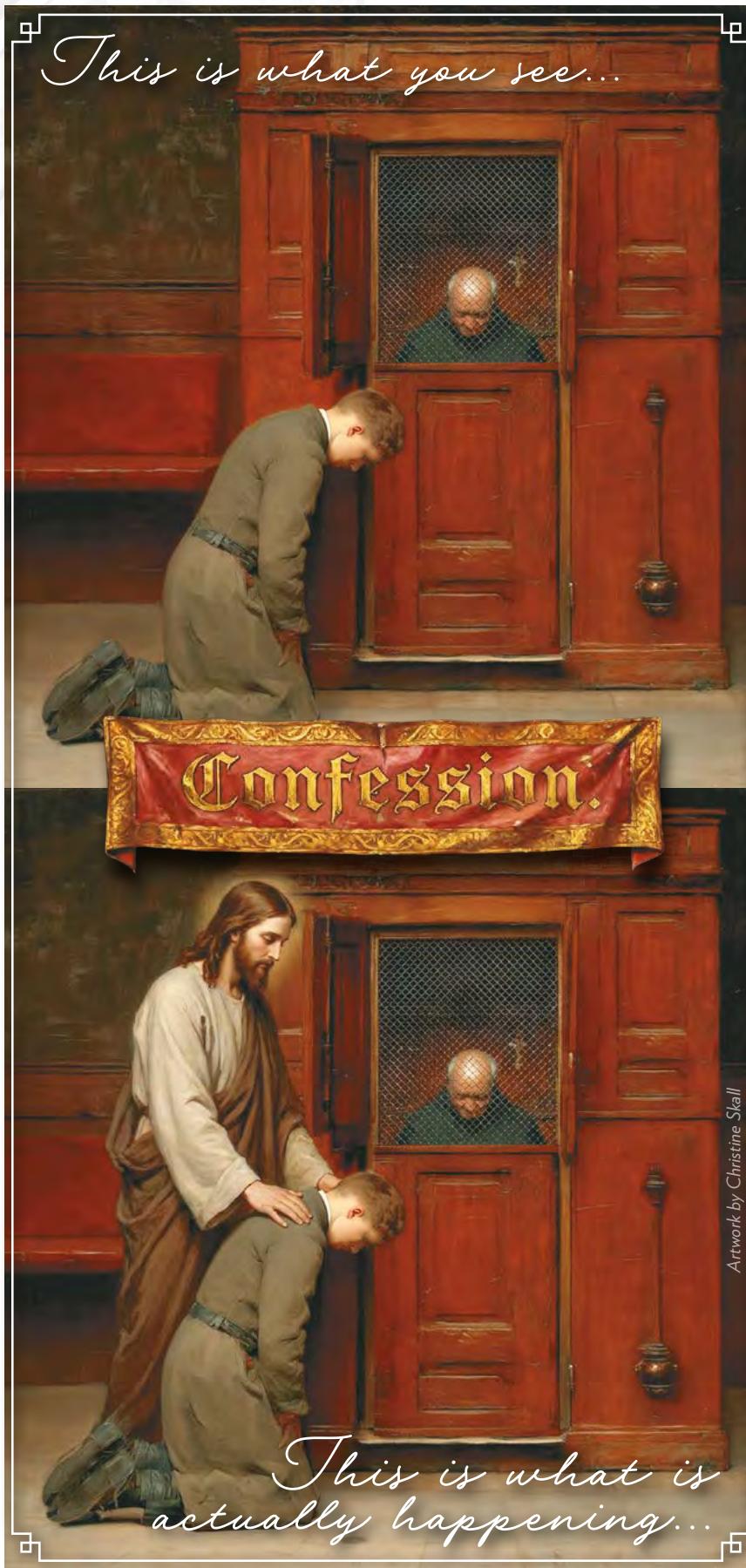
MICHELE HICKS
WIFE, MOM, EDUCATOR,
LOVING CHILD OF GOD



BE A CATHOLIC:
WHEN YOU KNEEL
BEFORE AN ALTAR, DO
IT IN SUCH A WAY THAT
OTHERS MAY BE ABLE
TO RECOGNIZE THAT
YOU KNOW BEFORE
WHOM YOU KNEEL.

— *St. Maximilian Kolbe*





CONFESsion

► Continued from **PAGE 1**

as a vital act of humility, a humble act of conversion, a necessary path to spiritual renewal and a direct encounter with Divine mercy. He famously taught that *“nothing should be so repulsive to the servant of God but sin”* and urged followers to approach confession with confidence and a humble spirit. He urged frequent, sincere confession to remove the *“burden”* of sin, viewing it as a way to *“wash clean”* the soul. For Francis, the confessor (the priest) is a vessel for God’s grace, making confession a source of profound peace.

Confession (or the Sacrament of Reconciliation) is primarily chosen to receive God’s forgiveness, experience spiritual healing, and reconcile with the Church. It provides tangible assurance of mercy, relieves guilt, helps overcome vice, and grants grace to live a holier life. It is considered a *“gift”* from Our Blessed Lord.

See CONFESsion, NEXT PAGE ►

“ HAVE MERCY
ON ME, O LORD,
FOR I HAVE CRIED
OUT TO THEE
ALL THE DAY. ”

PSALM 86:3

CONFSSION

► Continued from
PREVIOUS PAGE

ST. FRANCIS'S CORE TEACHINGS ON CONFSSION

■ THE BURDEN OF SIN ►

St. Francis warned that unrepented mortal sin causes the soul to suffer greatly at death, describing it as the *“Devil tearing his soul from his body”* with extreme anguish. *“Nothing should be so repulsive to the servant of God but sin,”* Francis asserted, encouraging believers to approach the confessional with confidence and trust. St. Francis also exhorted that while sin should be repulsive, the act of confession should be done with *“confidence but in the spirit of humility”*.

■ HEARTFELT CONTRITION ►

Francis believed in true sorrow for sins, not just outward ritual, defining penance as a fundamental *“change of heart”* or conversion.

■ HUMILITY OVER PRIDE ►

He taught that pride keeps the soul in misery, while confession allows for the *“fount of mercy”* to flow.

■ THE PRIEST AS MEDIATOR ►

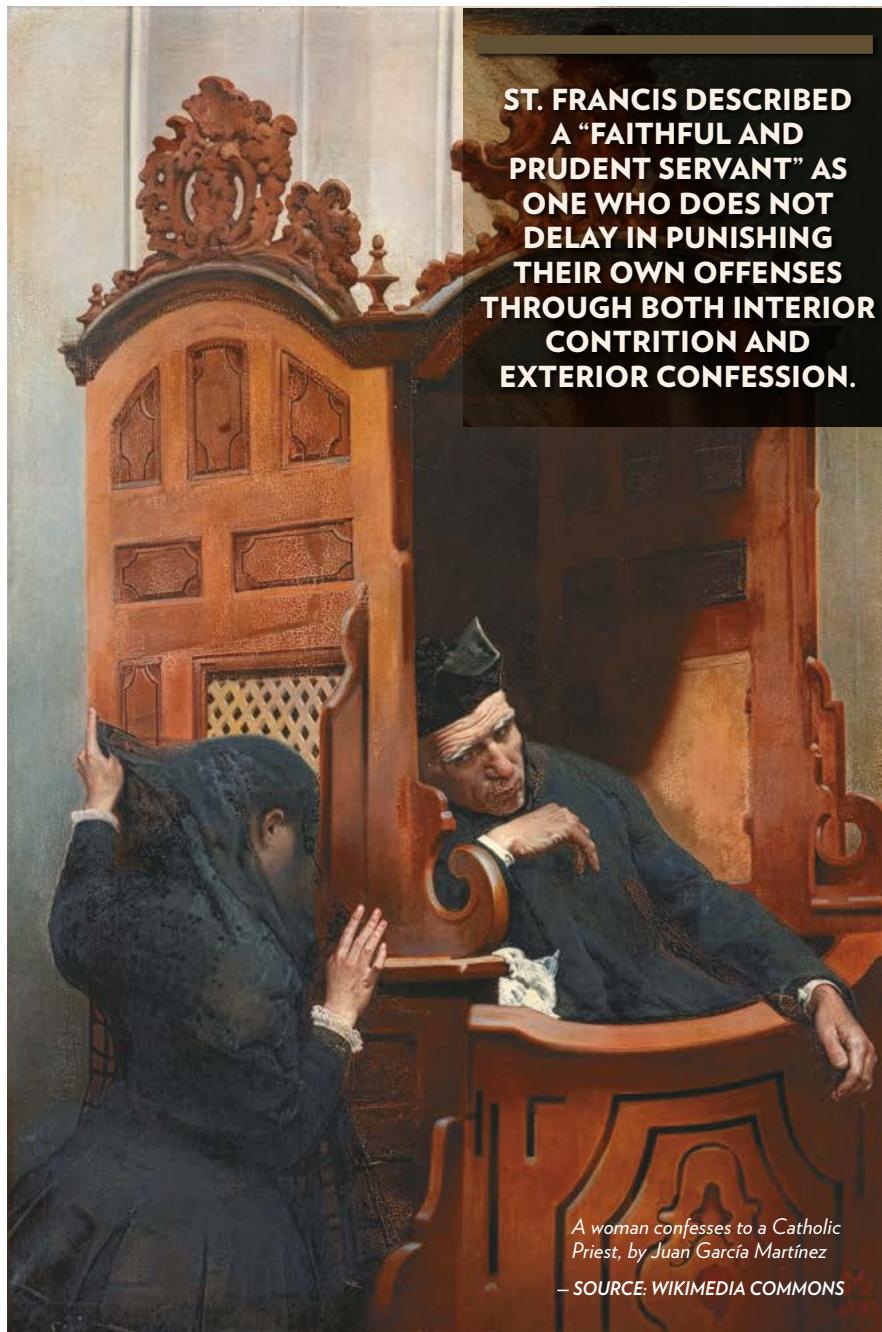
He emphasized that, **regardless of the priest’s personal holiness, the sinner is confessing to God.**

■ PARDON TO BE PARDONED ►

His famous *“Prayer of St. Francis”* echoes the core of reconciliation: *“It is in pardoning that we are pardoned”*.

■ IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE ►

A *“faithful and prudent servant”* does not delay in atoning for offenses through confession, he taught.



ST. FRANCIS DESCRIBED A “FAITHFUL AND PRUDENT SERVANT” AS ONE WHO DOES NOT DELAY IN PUNISHING THEIR OWN OFFENSES THROUGH BOTH INTERIOR CONTRITION AND EXTERIOR CONFESSION.

A woman confesses to a Catholic Priest, by Juan García Martínez

— SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

■ THE THREE PILLARS OF PENANCE ►

In his early writings and Admonitions, he defined true penance through three steps: **inward contrition, outward confession, and works of satisfaction** (actions taken to make amends).

■ HUMBLE OBEDIENCE ►

He described a *“faithful and prudent servant”* as one who

does not delay in punishing their own offenses through both interior contrition and exterior confession.

■ JOY AND PEACE ►

Rather than a fearful experience, Franciscan tradition views confession as a joyful encounter with the *“Merciful Jesus”*.

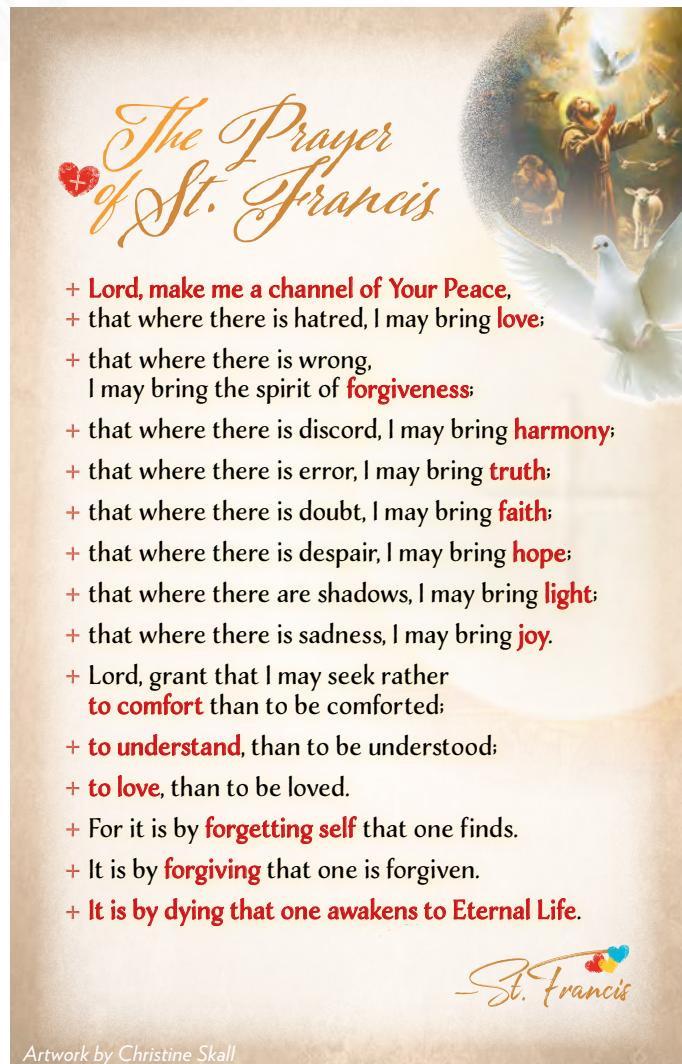
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CONFSSION

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■ THE PARDON OF ASSISI ►

The Pardon of Assisi is also known as the **Portiuncula Indulgence**. Francis was deeply committed to making God's mercy accessible to everyone. In 1216, he requested a unique and special plenary indulgence from the Pope—now known as the Pardon of Assisi—which grants full forgiveness of temporal punishment for those who visit any Franciscan church, Catholic parish church, or cathedral from noon on August 1st until midnight on August 2nd, provided they are truly contrite and have gone to confession. This Pardon of Assisi is available annually and requires sacramental confession (within eight days before or after), the reception of Holy Communion, prayers for the Pope (pray for the Holy Father's intentions), prayers of faith (recite the Our Father and the Apostles' Creed, or another profession of faith), detachment from sin (be free from any attachment to sin) and offers a profound spiritual renewal and mercy.



The famous Prayer of St. Francis echoes the core of reconciliation: "It is in pardoning that we are pardoned".

CONFSSION IS A SACRAMENT WITH MANY GRACES

The Sacrament of Confession (Reconciliation) is a profound source of grace in the Catholic faith, offering forgiveness, healing, and spiritual strength. It reconciles sinners with God, restores sanctifying grace, and

empowers the faithful to overcome sin, grow in virtue, and find peace.

■ KEY GRACES & BENEFITS OF CONFESSION ►

FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION:

The primary grace is the absolution of sins, which heals the

CONFSSION RECONCILES SINNERS WITH GOD, RESTORES SANCTIFYING GRACE, AND EMPOWERS THE FAITHFUL TO OVERCOME SIN, GROW IN VIRTUE, AND FIND PEACE

damage caused by sin and restores the relationship with God.

SANCTIFYING GRACE: Confession increases sanctifying grace—the life of God in the soul—through the merits of Christ.

STRENGTH AGAINST TEMPTATION: It provides specific sacramental grace to resist future temptations and avoid relapse.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH: Regular confession fosters humility, self-knowledge, and conscience purification.

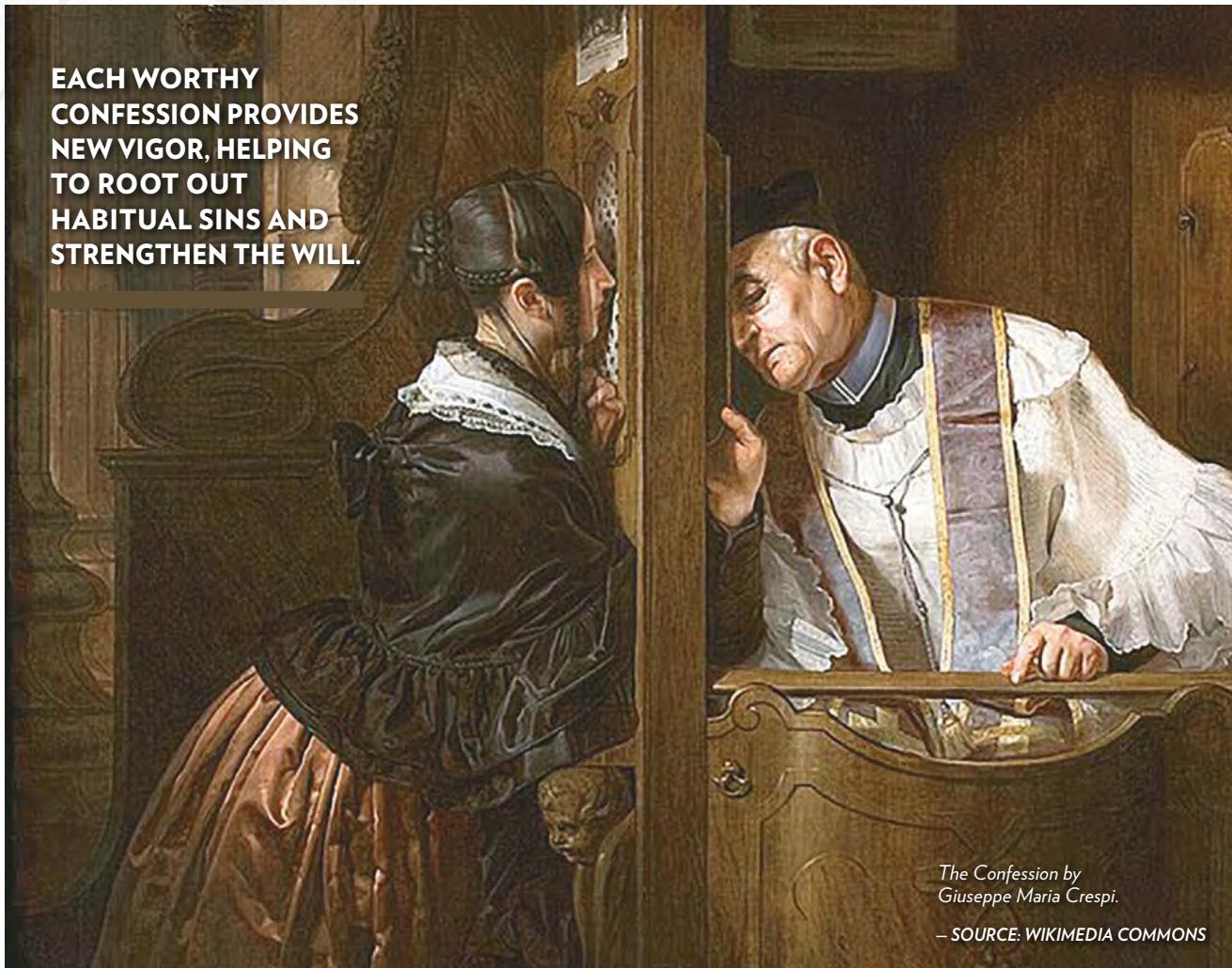
HEALING OF SOUL: It acts as a "tonic for the soul," offering peace, removing guilt, and replacing it with God's mercy.

See CONFSSION, NEXT PAGE ►

CONFESION

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**EACH WORTHY
CONFESION PROVIDES
NEW VIGOR, HELPING
TO ROOT OUT
HABITUAL SINS AND
STRENGTHEN THE WILL.**



The Confession by
Giuseppe Maria Crespi.

— SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

■ THE ROLE OF FREQUENT CONFESION ►

REGULAR FREQUENCY LEADS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

While required for mortal sins, frequent confession (e.g., monthly) is highly recommended by saints and the Church for spiritual growth and to address venial sins.

INCREASED GRACE:

Each worthy confession provides new vigor, helping to root out habitual sins and strengthen the will.

Confession is not just about guilt, but an encounter with Christ's mercy, allowing

individuals to, as St. John Paul II noted, have their shame absorbed by God's love.

Sin grows if we nurture it but grace grows if we surrender to God. Sin quickly grows if we do not stop it in its tracks early enough and repent to God. When we repent to God, we can make a brand new fresh start.

WHAT TO DO TO PREPARE AND WHAT TO EXPECT

Sacramental confession is made to a priest who gives absolution for sins and assigns a penance for

them. 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 belief. Confession is an important sacrament that helps us to reconcile with God when we have sinned and it also a great way to recognise that we are far from perfect and that we need to seek God's mercy.

The toddler who steals

See CONFESION, NEXT PAGE ►

CONFESSION

► Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

cookies or breaks a toy has been caught in the act of doing something wrong, but many times we can do wrong secretly. When we sin in secret, no one knows but God. And He ALWAYS knows. We confess these things to the priest in the privacy of the confessional. The confession is strictly confidential and what is shared within the confessional can never be shared elsewhere.

The Catholic process of confession/reconciliation is a sacrament of healing involving examination of conscience, contrition, verbal confession of sins to a priest, penance, and absolution. It reconciles the penitent with God and the Church, offering forgiveness and grace through four (4) essential actions: **Contrition, Confession, Penance, and Absolution.**

■ KEY COMPONENTS & PROCESS OF CONFESSION ➔ PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION AND EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE:

Before you step into confession make sure to spend some time preparing. Pray to the Holy Spirit and ask Him for guidance to help you prepare. Reviewing one's life and actions in light of the Ten Commandments and moral teachings of the Church can help you to identify your sins.

An example of a great resource for a detailed examination of conscience can be found at <https://bulldogcatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/a-detailed-catholic-examination-of-conscience-2nd-ed-updated.pdf>

CONTRITION:

True, sincere sorrow for offenses against God, combined with a firm resolve not to sin again.

CONFESSION:

Verbally stating sins to a priest, typically starting with *"Bless me,*



Confession at St. Andrews, a Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

— SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Father, for I have sinned," and specifying the types and frequency of sin.

PENANCE (SATISFACTION):

Actions or prayers assigned by the priest to show sorrow and start repairing the damage caused by sin.

ABSOLUTION:

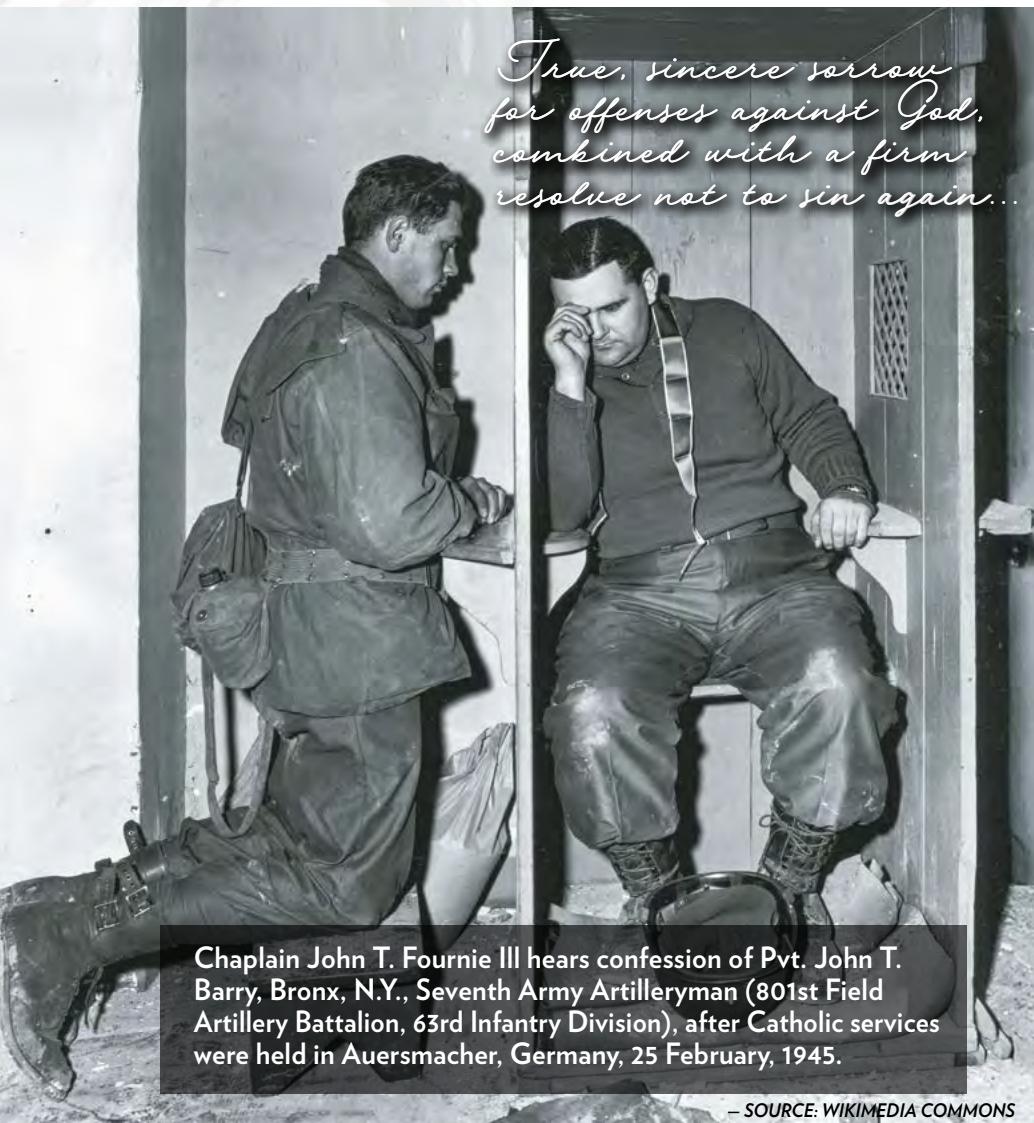
The priest, acting in the person of Christ, pronounces God's forgiveness and reconciles the penitent to the Church.

BEFORE YOU STEP INTO CONFESSION MAKE SURE TO SPEND SOME TIME PREPARING. PRAY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ASK HIM FOR GUIDANCE.

See CONFESSION, NEXT PAGE ➔

CONFESION

► Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE



■ STEPS IN THE CONFESSIONAL ►

1 GREETING:

The priest greets the penitent, who makes the Sign of the Cross.

2 CONFESSION:

The penitent confesses sins and mentions when they last went to confession. *"Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been xx days/weeks/months since my last confession and these are my sins... [state your*

sins including type and frequency]."

3 ADVICE AND PENAENCE:

The priest may offer advice and assigns a penance."

4 ACT OF CONTRITION:

The penitent prays a prayer expressing sorrow, such as *"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee. And I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell but, most of all, because they offend Thee, my God*

Who are all good and deserving of all my love. And I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen."

5 ABSOLUTION:

The priest extends his hands and prays the prayer of absolution.

6 DISMISSAL:

The priest says, *"Go in peace,"* and the penitent responds, *"Thanks be to God."*

The process may take place face-to-face or anonymously behind a screen. The sacrament removes the guilt of sin and restores a state of grace, allowing for spiritual healing and a fresh start.

Spend a few moments of your time in silence in with Our Blessed Lord by praying, *"Lord, help me to understand the Sacrament of Confession and why I need it in my life."*

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF CONFESION IN PREPARING OUR SOULS FOR THE WORTHY RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Receiving Holy Communion in a worthy state is paramount because **it is a direct encounter with the living God—body, blood, soul, and divinity.** Being in a state of grace (free from mortal sin) and having proper interior disposition ensures fruitful reception, fostering union with Christ, increasing sanctifying grace, and protecting the soul from further sin.

See CONFESION, NEXT PAGE ►

CONFSSION

► Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

■ IMPORTANCE OF A WORTHY STATE ►

REVERENCE FOR THE EUCHARIST:

Because the Eucharist is not a mere symbol but truly Jesus Christ, receiving in a state of sin is a serious offense against his holiness

AVOIDANCE OF SPIRITUAL HARM:

Scripture warns that receiving unworthily is a sin against the Body and Blood of the Lord (*1 Cor 11:27-29*), potentially leading to spiritual damage rather than grace.

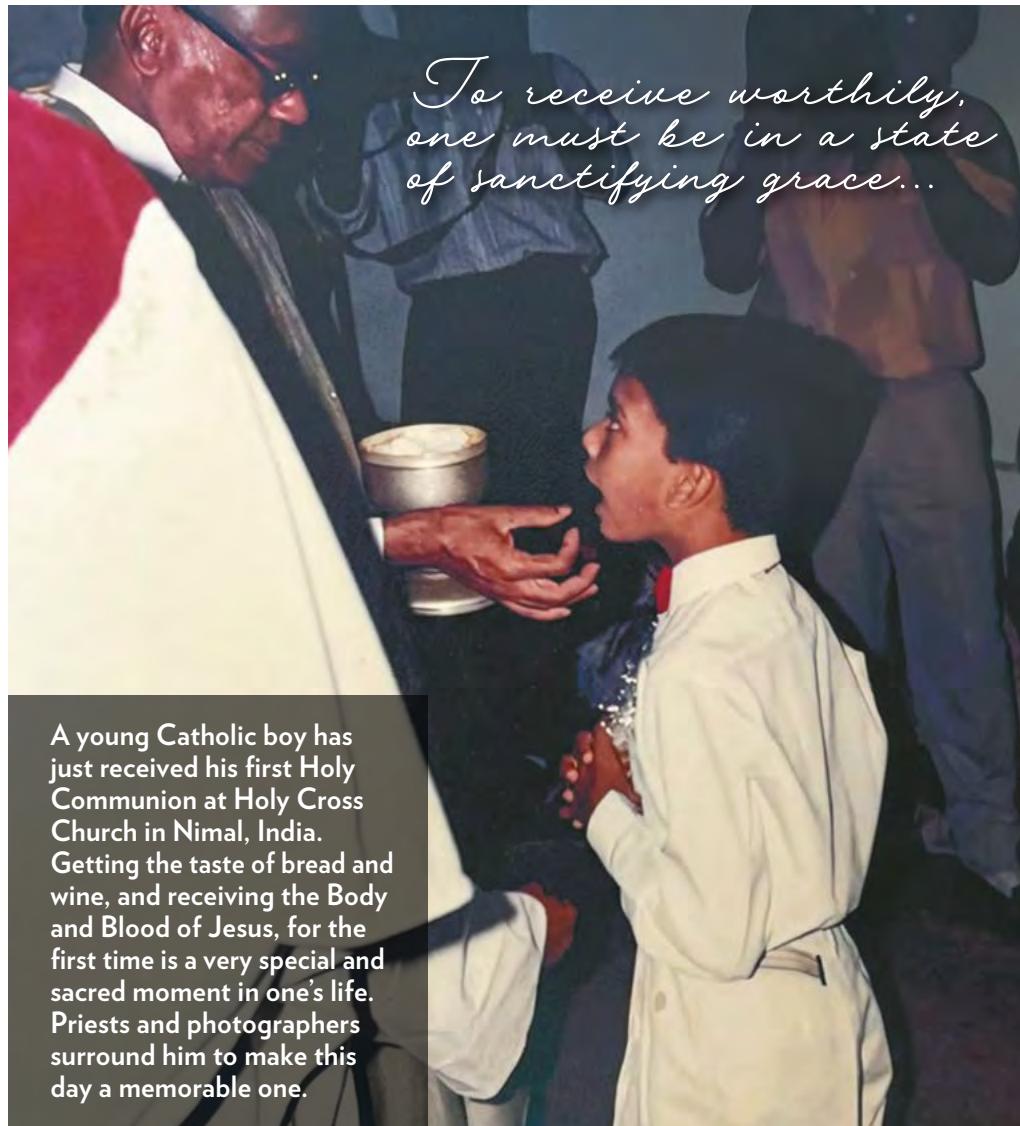
REQUIREMENT OF GRACE:

To receive worthily, one must be in a state of sanctifying grace, meaning not conscious of any unconfessed mortal sin. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a necessary part of the preparation to receive worthily: If you are aware of mortal sin, or have anything weighing on your conscience, you must go to confession before receiving communion.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU GO TO CONFSSION?

The Church requires Confession ****at least once a year**** for serious (mortal) sins (*Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] 1457; Code of Canon Law, Canon 989*). If there are no mortal sins, there's no strict obligation for annual Confession, though it's still tied to preparation for worthy reception of the Eucharist.

Even though there are no strict regulations for the frequency of Confession,



A young Catholic boy has just received his first Holy Communion at Holy Cross Church in Nimal, India. Getting the taste of bread and wine, and receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus, for the first time is a very special and sacred moment in one's life. Priests and photographers surround him to make this day a memorable one.

the Church ****strongly encourages**** and recommends more frequent Confession, even for venial (everyday) sins. CCC 1458 states: *"Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church. Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit."*

Popes and Church documents have repeatedly promoted frequent Confession (often monthly or even weekly for those seeking spiritual growth):

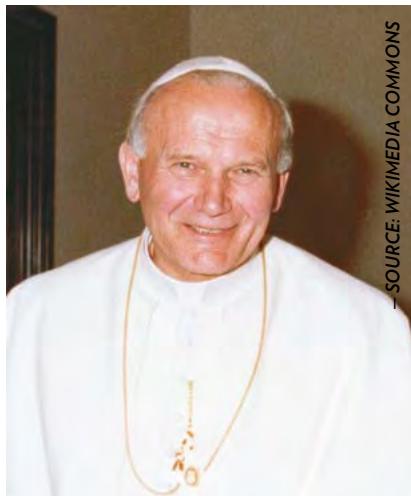
- **Pius XII** described it as inspired by the Holy Spirit and of great value.
- **Paul VI** called frequent Confession **"of great value."**

See CONFSSION, NEXT PAGE ►

CONFESSIO

► Continued from **PREVIOUS PAGE**

- **John Paul II** emphasized the importance of Confession for venial sins in ***Reconciliatio et Paenitentia***.¹



SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

John Paul II emphasized the importance of Confession for venial sins.

- **Pope Francis** said that he attended Confession every two weeks and encouraged making confession readily available as an “*encounter of love*” and a way to multiply “*hotbeds of mercy*.”

Over the years some Catholics have unfortunately downplayed the tremendous importance of Confession and suggested to others that going frequently to Confession “*wastes priests’ time*” or unnecessarily blocks others from attending due to longer lines outside the confessional but this idea is definitely not supported by Church teaching. Priests are ordained precisely to administer sacraments like this, and the sacrament provides grace not just for forgiveness but for ongoing conversion and holiness. Practical concerns (like long

lines) can indeed exist in busy parishes, but the solution is usually to add more times at your local parish for hearing confession, or more priests hearing confessions, or better scheduling. Parishioners are encouraged to make appointments for Confession if they cannot attend at the regular times. The most important thing is that penitents should never be discouraged from receiving this wonderful, and very important, sacrament.

With that said, scrupulosity (obsessively confessing minor things repeatedly), or coming excessively without real contrition or amendment is indeed discouraged. But on the whole, the most important thing to do is to attend Confession when you feel the need for God’s mercy and your conscience is weighing on you. The Church views the sacrament as a gift to be used generously for spiritual benefit, not primarily as a time-management issue for clergy.

The sacrament is meant to bring peace and growth—don’t let discouragement keep you from it when your

**IT IS MOST
IMPORTANT TO
ATTEND CONFESSION
WHENEVER YOU
FEEL THE NEED FOR
GOD’S MERCY AND
YOUR CONSCIENCE IS
WEIGHING ON YOU**

conscience calls you there.

A great video to watch on the importance of frequent confession is one titled [Why Frequent Confession Brings Unfathomable Grace | St. Francis de Sales & God’s Infinite Mercy](#) (click the link above to view.)

KEY INSIGHTS FROM FR. RAOUL PLUS ON CONFESSION

Fr. Raoul Plus, S.J., was a prolific 20th-century Catholic author who wrote extensively on the spiritual life, including the practical and transformative power of the Sacrament of Confession.

Fr. Plus emphasized that confession is not just a ritual but a vital tool for spiritual growth and virtue. His teachings often highlight:

- **FREQUENT CONFESSION:** He encouraged regular use of the sacrament to cleanse the “*spiritual house*” of the soul, much like routine cleaning prevents the buildup of “*spiritual dust*” or venial sins.
- **A “POCKET GUIDE” TO RECONCILIATION:** His specific works, such as the “*Catechism for Making a Good Confession*” or the pocket guide included in editions of “*How to Pray Always*”, offer structured methods for a thorough examination of conscience.
- **OVERCOMING RELUCTANCE:** Fr. Plus addressed common psychological barriers to confession, teaching that the “*humiliation*” of

See CONFESION, NEXT PAGE ►

CONFESSIO|||||N

► Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

admitting sins is a divine path to becoming more humble, patient, and conformed to Christ.

■ **FOCUS ON REPARATION:** He taught that every vocation involves reparation for sin, and confession is the primary starting point for this restoration.

SAINT TERESA OF AVILA'S TEACHING ON CONFESSION

St. Teresa of Avila considered frequent confession essential for spiritual life, viewing it as a way to cleanse the soul's "mirror" and sustain deep union with God. She emphasized beginning again after each confession, treating it as a vital, loving encounter with Jesus to remove obstacles to holiness.

Key aspects of St. Teresa's teaching on confession include:

- **NECESSITY OF FREQUENT CONFESSION:** Even without mortal sin, she advocated for frequent confession of venial sins to maintain a "bright" soul and avoid tepidity.
- **BEGIN AGAIN:** She encouraged others to treat each confession as a fresh start, focusing on moving forward in grace rather than dwelling on past failings.
- **HONEST SELF-EXAMINATION:** She urged avoiding the "unreasonable love of flesh and blood" (excuses) and making a full, integral confession of all known sins.
- **THE CONFESSOR'S ROLE:** She advised seeking learned, holy confessors to guide the soul, recognizing

that a poor confessor can lead a soul astray.

■ **PREPARATION FOR PRAYER:** She viewed the sacrament as a firm foundation for the spiritual life and deeper prayer, noting that without this, the "building" of the soul will falter.

After experiencing a near-death experience, she strongly warned against delaying confession, as it leaves the soul vulnerable.

SAINT FRANCES DE SALES TEACHING ON CONFESSION

Drawing always on the eternal mercy of God, St. Francis de Sales shared that even if we have no mortal sins we should still go to confession because it's a great grace even though the venial sins could be forgiven outside of the Confessional.

Confession is not just for mortal sins—it is a fountain of grace that cleanses even venial sins, strengthens our souls, and draws us closer to Christ.

FREQUENT CONFESSION:

- Releases us from the chains of sin and resentment
 - Strengthens us with grace to avoid future faults
 - Deepens humility, obedience, simplicity, and love
 - Brings healing to the root of our spiritual struggles
 - Brings unfathomable graces
- As the Divine Physician, Christ Himself waits in the confessional—not merely a priest, but Our Lord in

See CONFESION, NEXT PAGE ►

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF FREQUENT CONFESSION

Father Donald Calloway emphasizes the importance and necessity of confession, noting that "only those who know that they have a spiritual mother go to frequent confession" and that it is a place to receive a "free spiritual diaper change". He also states, "The truth hurts when we are sinners and when we acknowledge we are not surrendering to the truth," highlighting the humbling nature of admitting one's sins to Jesus through the priest.



FR. DONALD CALLOWAY, MIC

KEY ASPECTS OF FATHER CALLOWAY'S VIEWS ON CONFESSION:

SPIRITUAL MOTHERHOOD:

Calloway connects a relationship with the Virgin Mary to a desire for frequent confession, suggesting that devotion to Mary fosters a closer relationship with the Church and its Sacraments.

HUMILITY & TRUTH: He points out that the truth revealed in confession can be difficult and humbling, requiring a surrender to God's truth.

JESUS IN THE PRIEST: He stresses that in confession, Jesus Himself is present through the person of the priest, waiting to offer mercy and compassion to those who confess their sins.

A PLACE OF HEALING:

Confession is described as a way to receive spiritual healing and to unburden oneself from sin.

THE "DIAPER CHANGE": The imagery of a "free spiritual diaper change" highlights the cleansing and restorative nature of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which Calloway associates with a connection to Our Lady.

CONFSSION

► *Continued from
PREVIOUS PAGE*

person, ready to absolve, heal, and restore.

St. Francis de Sales emphasized confession as a vital “*sacrament of mercy*” and a powerful, indispensable tool for spiritual growth, recommending frequent—even weekly—confession to purify the soul.

He taught that it brings peace, strengthens against future sin, and allows for the reception of grace to overcome faults.

Key aspects of St. Francis de Sales’ teaching on confession:

■ **PURPOSE BEYOND FORGIVENESS:**

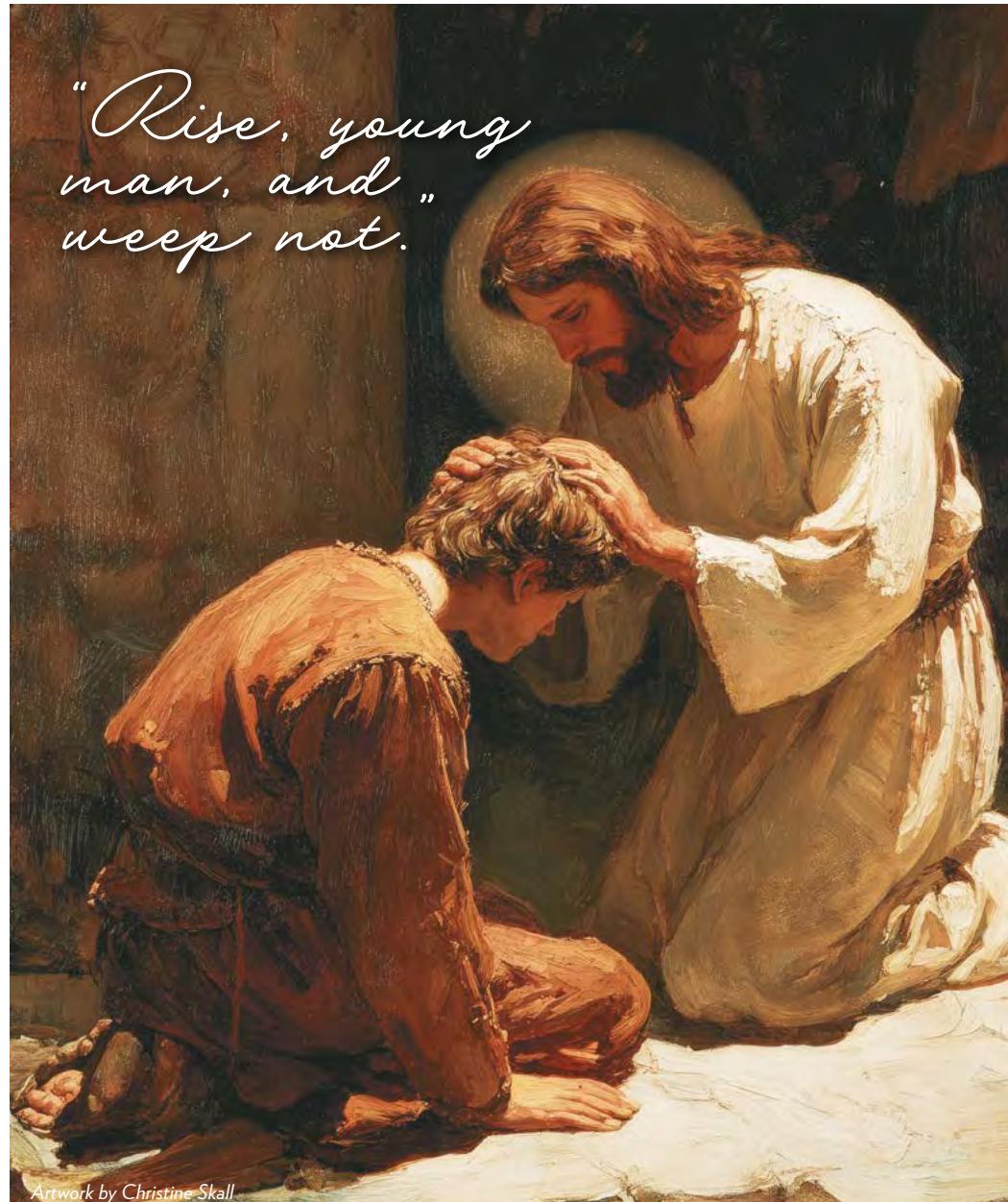
While forgiving sins, confession also provides “*great strength to help you in avoiding them henceforth*”.

■ **FREQUENCY:** He encourages regular, frequent confession (weekly if possible) even if only venial sins are confessed, to maintain a clean heart.

■ **PREPARATION:** Beforehand, one should examine their conscience thoroughly, focusing on faults, but not be scrupulous or over-anxious about remembering every tiny, unintentional imperfection.

■ **MANNER OF CONFESSION:** Confessions should be made with humility and simplicity, starting with the most difficult sins.

■ **HEARTFELT SORROW:** A sincere resolution to amend one’s life is essential; merely confessing out of habit without the intent to change is a misuse of the sacrament.



Artwork by Christine Skall

■ **GENERAL CONFESSION:** He recommends a general confession for those entering a new state of life, such as marriage or ordination, or if a past confession was invalid.

■ **SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE:** He advises sticking with the same confessor to allow them to understand your soul’s direction, thus helping them to provide better guidance.

St. Francis de Sales believed that “*confession and penance*

render a man infinitely more honorable than sin renders him blamable”.

“Rise, young man, young woman, and weep not”

May these words of Christ inspire us to run frequently to the mercy of God, so that we may live in His grace.



1. *Reconciliatio et paenitentia* (English: *Reconciliation and Penance*) is an apostolic exhortation by Pope John Paul II, delivered on 2 December 1984 in Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome, which grew out of the Sixth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops held in 1983.^[1] The fourth of John Paul II’s apostolic exhortations, it presents Jesus as the Reconciler of a shattered world.

[PRAYERS & DEVOTIONS]



The Pope's PRAYER INTENTIONS

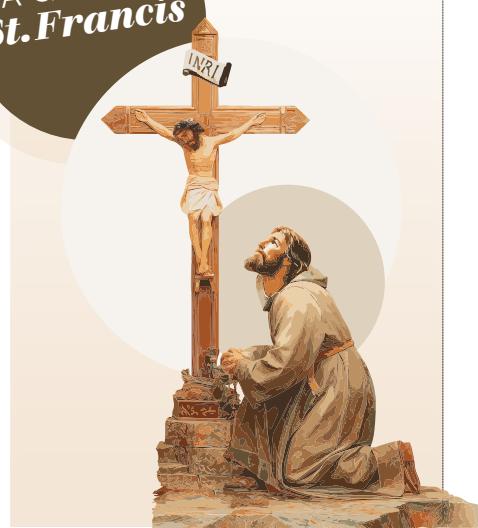
FOR CHILDREN WITH INCURABLE DISEASES

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

— SOURCE: USCCB.ORG

“While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart.”

A Quote from
St. Francis

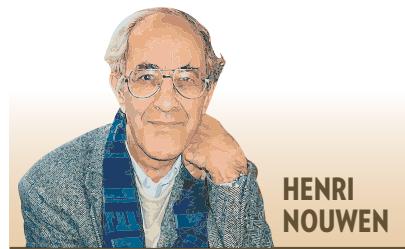


— HENRI NOUWEN SPIRITUALITY —



Artwork by Christine Skall

LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF LOVE



HENRI NOUWEN

DAILY MEDITATION

As a reaction to a very aggressive, manipulative, and often degrading type of evangelization, we sometimes have become hesitant to make our own religious convictions known, thereby losing our

sense of witness. Although at times it seems better to deepen our own commitments than to evangelize others, it belongs to the core of Christian spirituality to reach out to the other with good news, and to speak without embarrassment about what we *“have heard and ... seen with our own eyes.... Watched and touched with our hands”* (1 John 1:1)

— SOURCE: REACHING OUT: THE THREE MOVEMENTS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE,
by Henri Nouwen

“WE DECLARE TO YOU WHAT WAS FROM THE BEGINNING, WHAT WE HAVE HEARD, WHAT WE HAVE SEEN WITH OUR EYES, WHAT WE HAVE LOOKED AT AND TOUCHED WITH OUR HANDS, CONCERNING THE WORD OF LIFE—THIS LIFE WAS REVEALED, AND WE HAVE SEEN IT AND TESTIFY TO IT AND DECLARE TO YOU THE ETERNAL LIFE THAT WAS WITH THE FATHER AND WAS REVEALED TO US—WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD WE ALSO DECLARE TO YOU SO THAT YOU ALSO MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US, AND TRULY OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER AND WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.”

— 1 JOHN 1:1-3

[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.

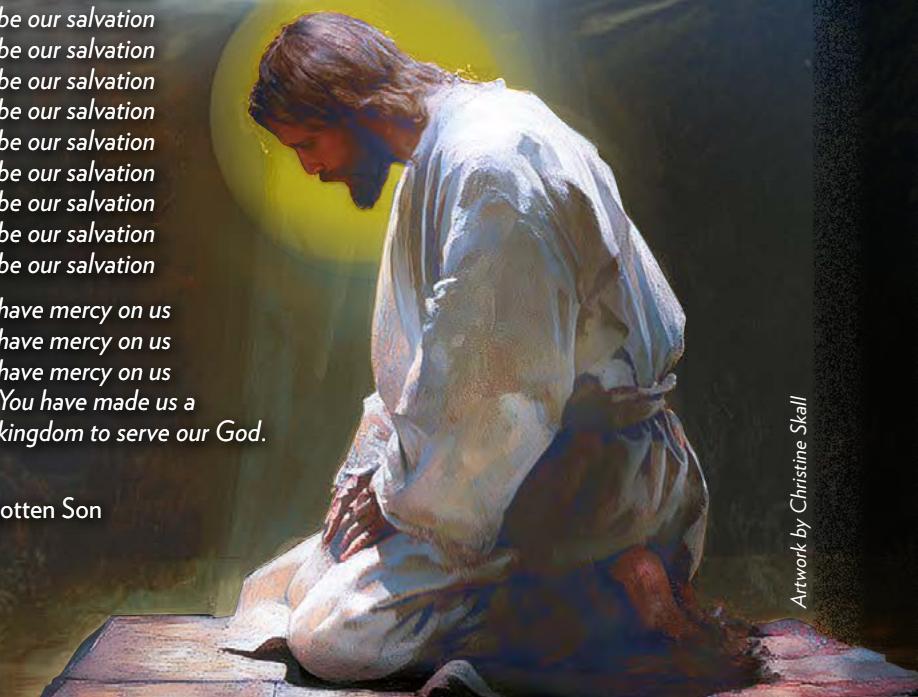
From the evil one defend me.

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 Skall

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.]

*Jesus
our
All*

PRESENCE OF GOD - *O Jesus, my God and my Redeemer, make me understand that You are my All and that in You I may find all that my soul needs.*

MEDITATION

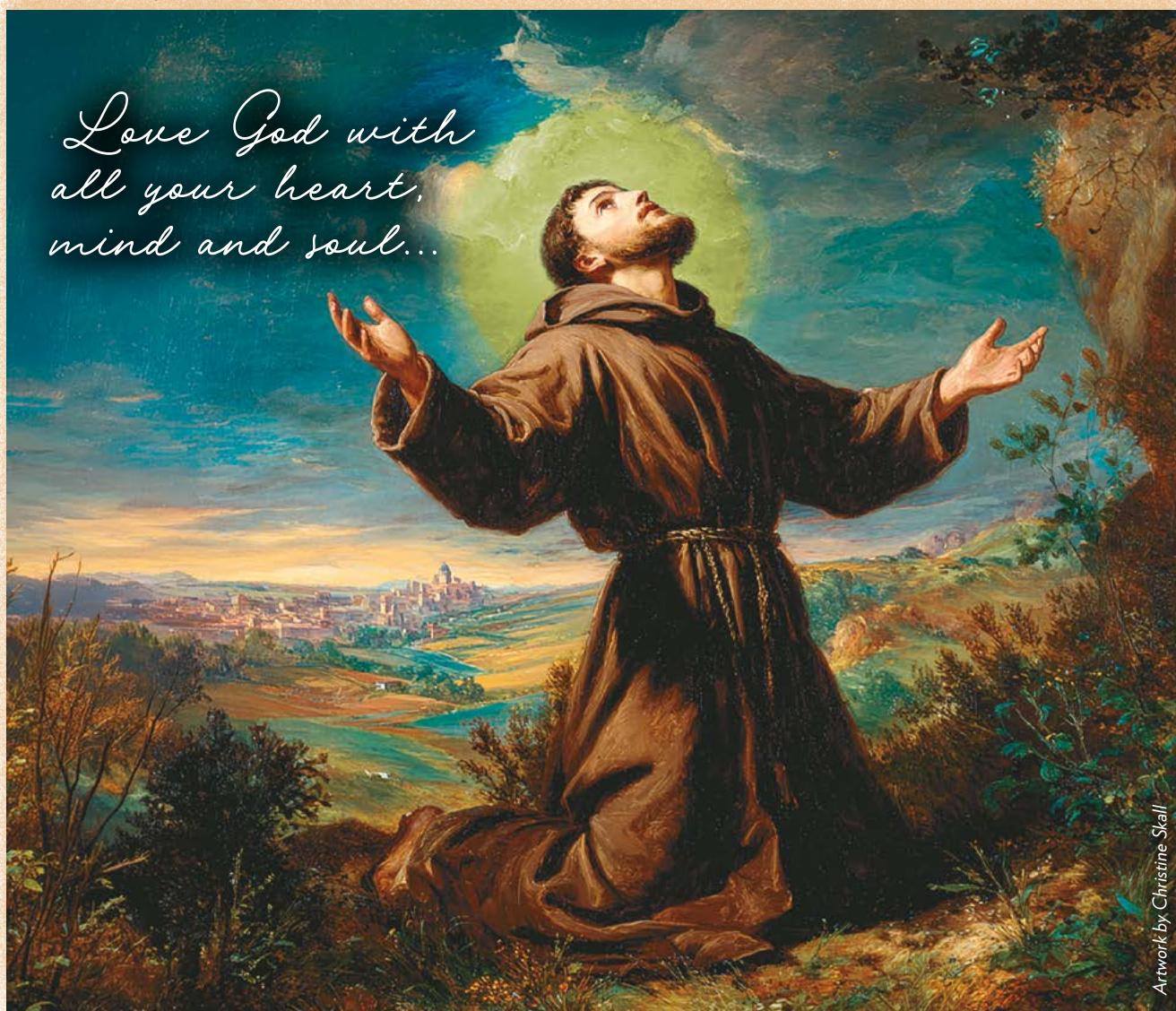
1. Jesus is both true God and true Man. As Man, He is our Way: He came to take us by the hand and lead us back to our Father's house. He is the source of our life because He merited grace for us and still continues to dispense it to us; He is the Master who shows us the way to go to God, the Model who, by His example, teaches us how we should live as children of God.

See DIVINE INTIMACY, NEXT PAGE ➡



DIVINE INTIMACY

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Having merited our participation in the divine life, which He as the Word possesses in its full plenitude, Jesus has made us worthy to be readmitted to the intimacy of the family of God. In His last prayer, as if summing up His work as Redeemer, Jesus said to the Father, “*And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one, as We also are one*” (Jn 17, 22). Yes, He has given us His grace, His Spirit, and has thus made us sharers in the glory of His divine Sonship, true children of God and temples of the Holy

Jesus is both true God and true Man. As Man, He is our Way: He came to take us by the hand and lead us back to our Father's house. He is the source of our life ...He is the Master who shows us the way to go to God, the Model who, by His example, teaches us how we should live as children of God.

Spirit. In Jesus, the one perfect Mediator between God and man, we find everything we need for our sanctification and our life of union with the Triune God.

We belong to Christ, we live in Him, “*who, of God is made unto us wisdom and justice, and sanctification, and redemption*” (1 Cor 1,30).

2. As God, Jesus is our End: He is the Incarnate Word and, as the Word, He is in all things

See DIVINE INTIMACY,
NEXT PAGE ►

DIVINE INTIMACY

► Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit He is our Beginning, the Creator of everything in the natural and supernatural order. He is also our last end, the End toward which we must move in this life with faith, love, generosity, and perseverance, in expectation of the joy of eternal union with Him and the Father and the Holy Spirit in heaven. Jesus, as Man, merited grace for us; as the Word He bestows it upon us. He creates it in union with the other two Persons of the Blessed Trinity. If, as Man, Jesus merited the coming of the Holy Spirit, as the Word, He, together with the Father, is continually sending the Spirit into our souls, because the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him as well as from the Father.

In Jesus, therefore, we find our Mediator and our God. When as Mediator He guides us, He is also drawing us to Himself as God; and when we are united to Him as Man we are also united to Him as the Word of God.

Whether we fix our gaze on the humanity of Jesus or on His divinity, we shall always behold Him in the Word. To go to Jesus is to go to the Word; and to go to the Word, to the Son, is to go also to the Father, to the Trinity.

That is why St. Teresa of Jesus insists so strongly that we must never separate ourselves from Christ: "It is by this door [Jesus] that we must enter.... Let us seek no other way: that way alone is safe. It is through this Lord of ours that all blessings come" (Life, 22). St. Paul says the same: "And you are filled in Him" with all good things; "Christ is all, and in all" (Col 2,10 – 3,11).

"ST. TERESA OF JESUS INSISTS SO STRONGLY THAT WE MUST NEVER SEPARATE OURSELVES FROM CHRIST."



COLLOQUY

O Jesus, my God and my All! You are everything to me, and I want to belong entirely to You, consecrating my whole self to Your love and service.

"Now do I see, my Spouse, that You are mine; I cannot deny it. For my sake You came into the world; for my sake You suffered such great trials; for my sake You endured to be scourged; for my sake You have remained with us in the Most Holy Sacrament.... I have seen clearly that it is by this door that we must enter if we wish Your sovereign Majesty to show us great secrets. He who loses You will be unable to find his way."

"What am I, Lord, without You? And what am I worth if I am not near You? If once I stray from Your Majesty, where shall I find myself?"

"Blessed is he who loves You in truth and has You always at his side. What more do we need than to have at our side so good a Friend who will never leave us? O my Lord, my mercy and my good, what more do I want in this life than to be so near You that there is no division between You and me? In such company what can become difficult? What can one not undertake for You, with You so near? Never, with Your help and favor, will I turn my back on You."

"What can I do for my Spouse? How can I be Yours, my God? What can a person do for You who has contrived such evil things as I? I can only lose the favors You have granted me. From such a one what services could be hoped for? And even if, by Your favor, I should accomplish something, consider how little a miserable worm can do. How can a powerful God have need of it? Only love allows us to think that this true Lover needs us."

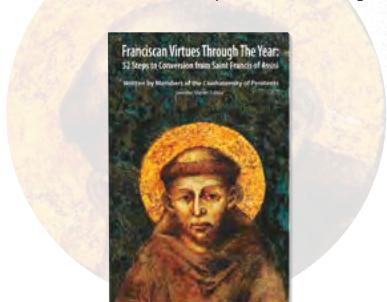
"But if You come to me, Lord, can I doubt that I can render You great services? From this moment, Lord, I will forget myself and look solely at the ways in which I can serve You; I will have no will but Yours. But my will is powerless, my God; it is You that are powerful. All I can do is to resolve to serve You, and this resolve I make and will henceforth carry into action" (cf. T.J. Con, 4 – Life, 22 -Int C VI, 7).

— SOURCE: FROM DIVINE INTIMACY: MEDITATIONS ON THE INTERIOR LIFE FOR EVERY DAY OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR, pp. 183-186. Translated by the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Boston from the original Italian edition INTIMITÀ DIVINA DEL P. GABRIELLE DIS S. 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 7:
EAGERNESS

[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
EAGERNESS...

SCRIPTURE: "That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea; and when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message

very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so." (*Acts 17:10-11*)

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS

Make many copies of the other letter I am sending you, in which it is written that the praises of God be proclaimed among the peoples and in the piazzas, to give to mayors, consuls and rulers, and



Artwork by Christine Skall

7

VIRTUE
EAGERNESS

distribute them with great zeal to those to whom they should be given. (The Second Letter to the Custodians)

INCIDENT FROM THE LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS

A little later, hurrying to Morocco to preach the faith of Christ to Miramamolin

See EAGERNESS, NEXT PAGE ➡

[BOOK STUDY cont.]

► Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

VIRTUE **7**
EAGERNESS Cont.

and his court, several times he rushed on so impetuously that, intoxicated by the Spirit, he left his traveling companion behind, racing ahead all by himself. He reached Spain in a fever of eagerness, but because the Lord, who for the sake of the salvation of many others ordained otherwise, afflicted him with serious ailments so that he returned to Italy.

(The Life of Saint Francis by Julian of Speyer, Chapter VII)

EAGERNESS TRULY IS A VIRTUE

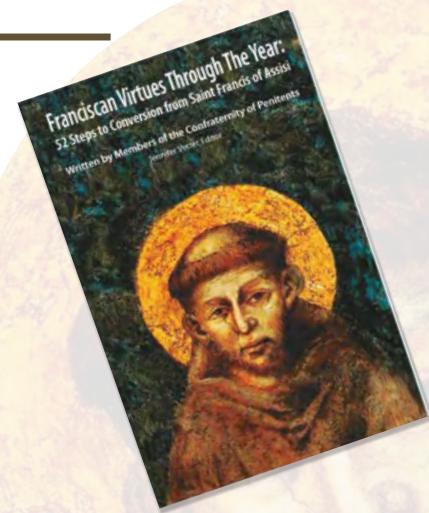
MOST PEOPLE WOULD not think of eagerness and virtue in relationship to each other, but eagerness truly is a virtue. Think of asking your children to perform a task. If they eagerly go about it, doesn't that delight you? When you have something to do, or somewhere to go, or someone to meet, your attitude is critical. If you

are eager to do, or to go, or to meet, that eagerness and excitement will influence the people around you and make them also eager and excited. Eagerness makes difficult things easy and brings joy to those experiencing eagerness through the eager person.

People who are eager want to do something very badly. They are highly interested and have a keen expectancy regarding the task at hand. Eagerness makes everything easier to handle and to do. Only a despondent person would not want to be around an eager person. People who are eager bring out the best in us because we are drawn along by their enthusiasm. Oh, that all Christians might be eager to spread the faith!

St. Francis was extremely eager to follow Christ and to

See EAGERNESS,
NEXT PAGE ►



Artwork by Christine Skall

[BOOK STUDY cont.]

DISCERNMENT

► *Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE*

help others to do the same. Did you know that we do not have any recorded sermons of St. Francis? We only have a few letters that he wrote, his Rule and Testament, and some prayers and Canticles. Even though we do not know what he actually said, we do know that he captivated audiences and sparked conversion in many people who heard him speak. It may be that his manner of speaking and exhorting the people was so zealous and eager that people remembered his tone and emotions rather than his actual words. Perhaps his eagerness spawned conversion in those who heard him. If this poor little man was so enthusiastic upon following Jesus in total poverty and simplicity, would not I, who have more things and less humility, not want to do the same?

YOUR PERSONAL EXERCISE:

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

† At the end of your meditation time, ask yourself: *“Would people call me eager to follow Jesus and to do His will? Am I eager about anything? If so, what is it? If I do not see myself as an eager person, what adjective*

would describe me and my attitude? Do I consider this to be a positive adjective or not? What do I need to be more eager about? How can I foster eagerness in this area? Do I think that praying for an eager attitude will benefit me? Why or why not?”

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

† Find a statement of Jesus or an incident in His life that deals with the Virtue of Eagerness. 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 Eagerness. Explain why you chose this section.

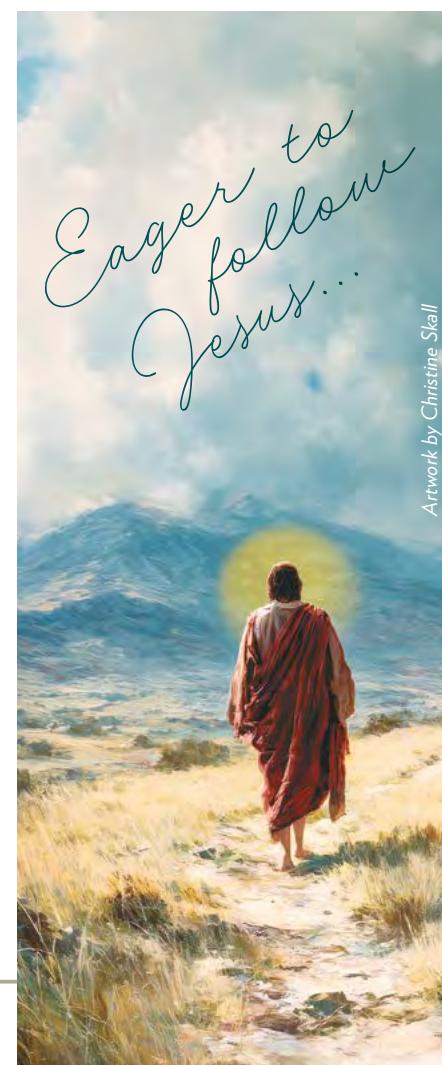
† Practice the Virtue of Eagerness this week. Pick one thing, person, or duty that you are not particularly eager about. Take some time reflecting on how you can become more eager. If you are not really eager, practice doing what you would do if you were actually eager. See how your attitude is affected by an actual or pretended eagerness. How are those around you affected? Did your attitude actually become more eager after a week of this exercise? Record in your journal any memorable insights or happenings.

† Each evening, examine the day for the opportunities you had to practice eagerness. Pray, *“Lord, I could use more eagerness in my life in many*

areas. Increase my enthusiasm for doing things Your way, for doing things that need to be done, for meeting people who do not particularly excite me. Lord, help me to see my life through Your eyes, for You have eagerly made me and You eagerly call me to holiness. Help me to be eager for You. 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

[COMPLETE TRUST IN GOD...]

*Keep looking up...
He loves you more
than you could
ever imagine...*

**“ NEVER DOUBT THIS [GOD’S LOVE],
WHATEVER MAY HAPPEN TO YOU
IN LIFE. AT EVERY MOMENT, YOU
ARE INFINITELY LOVED... ”**

— 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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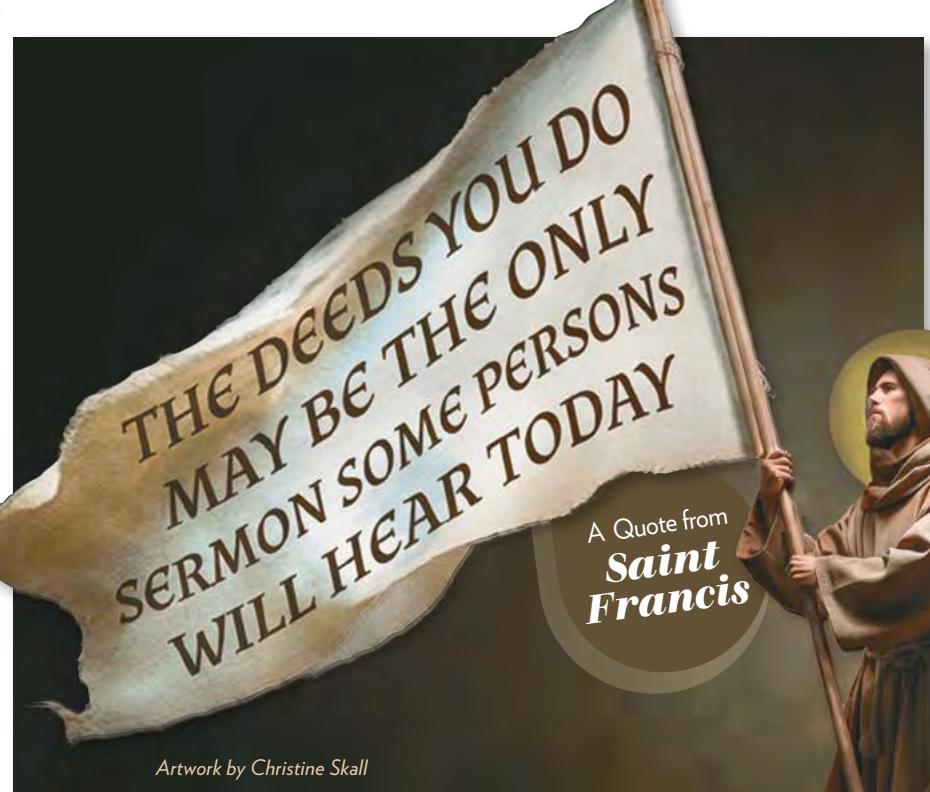
Laurie Wilburn, OFS

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FACEBOOK: Padre Pio Fraternity

Secular Franciscan Order of

Central North Carolina



A Quote from
Saint Francis

[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.