

FMA

FOCUS

JUNE 2011 / VOL 44, NO 4

Franciscan Mission Associates
Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10551

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



Virtue: Renewal

This year Easter's 50 days and related Feasts echo God's call to Renewal all through the summer incubating days of June.

Listen for that 'call' every Sunday, including Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (June 26).

As the Corpus Christi Gospel is proclaimed, listen for Our Lord's definition of Renewal: *"I am the living bread. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."*

Renewal involves our acceptance of God's gift – our "Yes" to living daily as members of Christ's Mystical Body on earth.

No easy task, unless we recall that God sent us the Holy Spirit, to dwell with us, to support and guide us, until we too are called home to God. ■

Fitness - The Spiritual Kind



Ask the expert, right? That's what most of us do when a clear need stares back at us, sometimes from a mirror, and we acknowledge that we really don't "know it all." The wise man or woman then consults an "expert," preferably someone experienced. And most especially so when we seek spiritual guidance and direction.

We all experience that little *inner voice* that keeps after us about growing in matters of the spiritual life – that ever-unfinished symphony of our coming closer to God in this world, on our journey home to eternity.

For most of us, there are two hurdles or questions. First will I **hear** that voice, urging me to grow closer to God? And second, what can I – what **will I** – do about it?

At this junction, a false humility is no help. As in: “Who am I, to think that God may want **me** to do something out of the ordinary?”

If we listen, our Guardian Angel will have a ready response:

“Who are YOU?... Oh, just someone the Lord God called into being, out of nothing, for one; and then graced YOU with Baptism into the very Body of Christ!”

And there it is, the moment of truth about the great destiny the Lord holds out to us.

In St. John’s Gospel, comprising “The Last Discourse” (Chapters 14-17), Jesus speaks with enduring love to his Apostles.

And they respond. Whether as individuals (Peter, Thomas, Philip, Jude), or in small groups, they speak up with question after question.

Clearly they know and cherish their spiritual director – He whom they know is their Messiah and Lord.

Yet, at the same time, their state of denial magnifies their own very human fear and panic – as Jesus tells them that his “time” has come.

Before leaving the Holy Meal, Jesus prays to the Father. “... *These men have known that you sent me. To them, I have revealed your name, and*

I will continue to reveal it, so that your love for me may live in them, and I may live in them.” (John 17: 25-26)

It is a promise, scholars tell us, that the Holy Spirit will continue Jesus’ teaching mission – with his Apostles, then and in the future.

As to the expert you can consult for spiritual guidance, your pastor is a good starting point. Though he may be the only priest in the parish these days, he will tell you whether or not he is available. He can also refer you to other credentialed spiritual directors. They may be priests, vowed religious (sisters and brothers), as well as laymen and women.

Just ask for spiritual direction, the Holy Spirit will take care of the rest.



REMEMBRANCE

You can continue to carry on your own good work for the missions and the people they serve by remembering them in your will. To do so, simply make a bequest of whatever you wish to: FRANCISCAN MISSION ASSOCIATES, Mount Vernon, NY 10551. If you wish additional information about how to do this, please feel free to contact:

**Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 4112,
Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**



FMA Focus, official organ of Franciscan Mission Associates, is published quarterly in February, June, September and November.

FMA Focus is a member of the Catholic Press Association, the National Catholic Development Conference, Inc., the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and of the Direct Marketing Association.

Please address all correspondence to Father Robert, O.F.M., at P.O. Box 598, Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10551. Please send changes of address six weeks in advance; if possible include your mailing label, and give both old and new address.

The 'universal' St. Francis

It was Brother Masseo (of Marignano) who caught up with St. Francis and wondered aloud about this and likely many other questions: "Why (are they) after you?"

According to writings from that time, Brother Masseo asked the same question, twice more, and likely in a loud voice.

The Friars had been staying at St. Mary's of the Portiuncula, and Francis had just returned from solitary time in the surrounding woods. It is easy to imagine a gentle smile welling up across his face as this great ascetic and mystic – who lived the Gospel every day – gently asked his colleague: "What do you mean?"

"I mean," Brother Masseo fired away: "Why does all the world seem to be running after you? And everyone seems to want to see you and hear you and obey you?"

He continued to pepper his inquiry with specifics: "You are not a handsome man; you do not have great learning or wisdom. You are not a nobleman. So why," he cried again, "is all the world running after you?"

It is said that St. Francis offered two explanations. He believed God found no one else who could be a "more miserable sinner" than himself; hence, God called Francis and poured out "the light of grace" where

it was most needed. And secondly, Francis believed that God had chosen him to "do this marvelous work."

Namely: **Living** the Gospel.

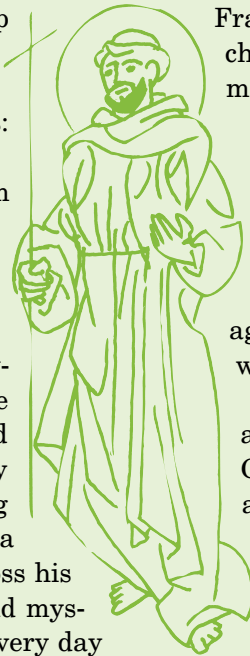
With God's grace, Francis began to understand that the Gospel preached by God's Son was a way of life for people from every culture, every age group, anywhere in the world.

Indeed, this unique witness and challenge of "living" the Gospel, at first thought to be an eccentricity, soon attracted people from all walks of life.

Today, there are about half a million "Franciscans" – men and women worldwide, living with vows and promises. Others are secular Franciscans, married and single, engaged in all kinds of occupations. There are "Franciscans" in other Christian faiths, living either religious or secular lives, who see St. Francis as a role model.

There are even those who may call themselves 'unbelievers' – yet they cite St. Francis, and the life he chose to live, as their inspiration and guide.

Pray to St. Francis; ask him to help you find what God asks of you in living your Christian life. Then, ask this great saint's help in saying "yes" to God, the first step in finding the means and grace to fulfill your destiny. ■



BLESSED JUNIPERO SERRA, O.F.M. – MISSIONER

Looking into summer's star-filled night sky, many young people can't help but think about their nation's astronauts. And a good number of them may hope to join the ranks of those citizens of two worlds: their home on earth, and the world of space and challenges "out there."

Looking into just such a star-filled sky, but back, over some 300 years, a young Franciscan, the Spanish Friar from Mallorca, Fr. Junipero Serra, was already bidding good-bye to the world he had always known.

In August of 1749, this distinguished professor of theology and famed preacher in his homeland would set sail for "the New World." It was an arduous and often dangerous journey over a vast ocean still not fully explored.

He knew that in realizing the mission-calling of his Franciscan vocation, he might never again see the shoreline that so quickly faded from view.

Arriving in present day Mexico in 1749, Fr. Junipero Serra would work there for two decades. Then God would call him to move north, permanently, to what was then called "Upper California." This was the New World that would one day claim him as its own.

There, in just 15 years, Fr. Junipero established nine of the 21 Franciscan missions along that rich and varied

Pacific Coast. He baptized 6,000 Native Americans, and confirmed another 5,000.

All told, Fr. Junipero Serra preached the Gospel for 35 years along the Pacific Coast. He was the very definition of the word, missionary. While respected for his knowledge and saintly priestly ministry, Fr. Junipero lived nonetheless as a "stranger." For some would always find him – and his motives – "suspect."

Among them were men of his own European culture, then serving in commercial and governmental enterprises. Part of Friar Junipero's job was reminding them too that many exploration goals (e.g., "fortune hunting" at any cost) were not in sync with Gospel values.

In recognition of his contributions to what is now California, his likeness is among heroes represented in the Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Pray for Blessed Junipero Serra's intercession for today's missionaries. Ask his intercessory prayer for those priests, religious and laity throughout the world who dedicate their lives to the service of God and God's people. Like Fr. Junipero, some preach the Gospel in life-threatening situations. And like Fr. Junipero, they are blessed to find in their mission work so many people hungry for God's gifts of faith and enduring love. ■

ST. ANTHONY'S BREAD

Offerings in honor of St. Anthony, either in petition for a favor sought, or in thanksgiving for a favor received, are used to assist the poor. Thus, they have received the name, St. Anthony's Bread. Such offerings are also used to help educate priests and religious.

Father Robert will gladly send you a leaflet explaining the origin and purpose of this devout practice, now centuries old. Please write:

**St. Anthony's Bread, Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 4113, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

PAPAL VISIT TO MADRID FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY 2011

From all over the world, thousands of Catholic young adults, from 16 year olds to those in their early 30's, will converge on Madrid (Spain), August 16-21.

The occasion: World Youth Day 2011, an intensive week of daily worship, catechesis, renewal and fellowship. Accompanied by their bishops, and convened by the Bishop of Rome, Pope Benedict XVI, they will witness to the vitality of Catholic Faith, today and tomorrow.

Pope Benedict XVI announced the theme for the 2011 Youth Day some three years ago: "Rooted and Built Up in Jesus Christ, Firm in the Faith" (Colossians 2:7).

He also asked prayerful preparation for 2011 through local and national World Youth gatherings in 2009 and 2010, each year centered on related themes: "We have set our hope on the Living God" (from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy) and, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17)

At the heart of the World Youth Day themes: A Catholic's faith is based on the experience of building and nurturing a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ, a true friendship that is rooted in prayer and encounters the Lord in the Gospels and Sacraments, most especially in Holy Eucharist.

For it is in the Holy Eucharist, Pope Benedict emphasizes, that

young people find the Lord is "present and close to us," the Savior and friend who "even becomes food for our journey."

World Youth Day participants, together with their bishops, will welcome the Pope on August 18. Thereafter, they will endeavor to keep pace, as Pope Benedict XVI teaches, hears their concerns, blesses, and finally commissions these young people as modern day apostles.

He will urge these young adults to preach the Gospel in the only way evangelization has ever been effective – by living the Gospel as members of Christ's Mystical Body on earth.

Try to pray daily this summer for the success of this joyful World Youth Day 2011.

Among notes of interest: Credited with founding World Catholic Youth Day, the late and newly beatified Blessed Pope John Paul II was named one of the official patrons for the 2011 World Youth Day. The latter, growing out of Pope John Paul II's call to Catholic Youth worldwide to meet and pray with him in Rome, marking the closing of the Holy Year (1984), and again, in 1985, observing the UN's International Year of Youth. ■

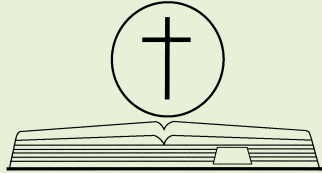
**Visit us on the web
franciscanmissionassoc.org**

DON'T FORGET SUNDAY MASS

For Catholic families, sacramental life, centered around weekly Sunday Liturgy, fuels our daily lives, year-round, including in summer.

It is Sunday Mass that nurtures us with the presence of the Lord God, in his Holy Word, and the 'breaking of the bread' – the Holy Eucharist. An Easter Moment, empowering men, women and children to live with Christ, to do God's will every day of their lives. Hence, Sunday Mass remains the most important 'must do' in our lives, even when we're on vacation.

Getting to Mass during vacation may require planning ahead: finding local parishes serving beach, mountain or city vacation destinations. Parishes or chapels in vacation areas, just as at home, may depend on the ministry of a single priest, one who celebrates at more than one site each Sunday. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy reminds us that Sunday Mass is an enrichment and gift in our lives, an apostolic tradition "taking its origin from the very day of



Christ's resurrection."

It states further: "On Sunday, the Christian faithful ought to gather together, so that by listening to the word of God and sharing in the Eucharist, they may recall the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus." Moreover, in the Holy Mass, we together "give thanks to God" for his gift to us of a "new birth with a lively

hope" born of Christ's Resurrection.

"The Lord's day is therefore the first and greatest festival, one to be set before the loving devotion of the faithful and impressed upon it, so that it may be also a day of joy and of freedom from work."

If children or grandchildren complain that they "don't get anything out of Mass," we may want to remind them that what they bring with them to Mass will make a great difference.

To that end, some families spend a little time during the week praying with one or two of the Readings for the coming Sunday. This can give the children time to ask questions and to prepare for God's great gifts on Sunday, even while on vacation. ■

VOCATIONS

Please pray for the young people at home and in the missions who are ready and eager to dedicate their lives to God and the spiritual welfare of His people.

Often all they really need is the special courage to hear God's call and to answer him. Please join us in daily prayer for God's grace in providing devoted brothers, sisters, priests, and religious for Christ's work in today's world.

For further information please write

Franciscan Mission Associates, P.O. Box 598, Dept. 4114, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

Director's Letter

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

FRANCISCAN FRIARS/P.O. BOX 598/MOUNT VERNON, N.Y. 10551-0598

TEL. AREA CODE: 914 664-5604



Dear Friend,

Losing a cherished object can be, at times, devastating. In a recent news story a stolen chalice, an ordination gift, was returned after more than 50 years to a retired priest. The reunion joy was heightened when the gilded silver chalice arrived in perfect condition.

Think of something you could not bear to lose. Now stretch your mind and think about how lost you would be without God. When we stray from the Lord, in thought or deed, He is lost without us; and we without Him. But Jesus gave us a map back to Him: prayer. Through the sacraments and the intercession of St. Anthony, who's feast day we celebrate this month, we have a spiritual GPS that leads us back.

During this feast month I invite you to send us your petitions and intentions for the Special Novena of Masses that will be offered in honor of St. Anthony - June fifth through June 21. Whether it is a small item or a serious concern, St. Anthony is equally ready to offer aid and renewed hope.

Have a blessed summer,

Fr. Robert, OFM
Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

P.S. It is with great joy and gratitude we at Franciscan Mission Associates celebrate our 50th anniversary. For more than a half a century, thanks to the generosity of our benefactors, FMA has been spiritually and financially supporting missionaries particularly in the Franciscan Missions of Central America, but also in the inner cities of the United States and Canada as well as every continent in the world.

FATHER FLAVIAN'S LESSON OF LOVE: IT ALL STARTED WITH OLDER PEOPLE

Father Flavian decided to go to the missions over 40 years ago because, as he says, "I was raised poor. I've been poor all my life. And those are the people I wanted to help."

"That's how I have spent my life. All I know is the missions."

Today, Father heads an organization called Agape, in El Salvador. Agape does everything from provide weekly allotments of food to 3000 poor families, to operating to highly regarded high schools that transform the lives of very poor children, to vocational training programs, clinics – even several businesses whose profits are all devoted to supporting this growing organization while providing local people with jobs.

But, as Father Flavian will tell you, it all began with the elderly.

When he first came to El Salvador, he noticed that one of the young people's favorite activities was to throw rocks at old people. And these were not just any old people, they were the many elderly – "ancianos" in Spanish – who have no homes, and no means of support. They live on the streets, homeless, begging for their daily bread.

Father Flavian decided to ask the young people why they were doing this terrible thing. They told them that they threw the rocks because then the old people would get mad and yell at them, and this helped them pass the time.

Father Flavian answered them, saying: "These old people are God's children too. We should help them." And so began Agape (which means "charitable love" in Ancient Greek, the language of the Gospels.)

In the beginning, Father Flavian and his volunteers would cook meals on the



streets to give to homeless, elderly people because he had no place else to work. Then, when he attempted to raise money to build a shelter so that some of these elderly people could actually sleep in a bed, the mayor of the town offered to build the shelter for him.

One thing led to another, and soon, Agape was feeding more and more homeless “ancianos.” Finally, when one of them died, Father Flavian arranged for that person to be buried. Many of the homeless elderly people accompanied him to the burial.

As they buried their departed comrade, many of these homeless, elderly people began to weep. At first, Father Flavian thought they were weeping because of the sadness of death. However, as one elderly woman told him, they were really weeping with joy. They knew that they would not, as she put it, be left to die like a dog in this world because Father Flavian would take care of them.

(Think of that! How many of us have ever worried that no one would bury us?)

That was many years ago. Agape takes care of thousands and thousands of children each year now – from tiny infants

– to youth – to grown adults – and, yes, the homeless elderly of El Salvador. In fact, the organization has received international recognition for its many works of mercy.

But, as Father Flavian is the first to point out, none of what his organization has accomplished would have been possible without the help of the Franciscan Mission Associates. ■



GIVING GOD'S COMFORT TO THE VERY VULNERABLE

Fr. Guy, O.F.M.

Recently, I went to the baby hospital in San Salvador. It is a hospital in bloom. A very poor mother I knew had a six-year-old daughter who was dying from a very deadly virus Guillain-Barré. It paralyzes the nerves and muscles starting at the feet and working its way up to the arms, lungs and finally the throat. The person suffocates and then passes away.

They had this poor girl in intensive care. Because I knew the mother I went to the hospital. The sickness had crippled the little girl's legs and her arms. Thank God the doctors got some very expensive injections, the only medicine that could save her. Each injection cost \$600 a piece. They needed six injections.

In the meantime another mother, very, very poor also had a daughter in the same place and with the same sickness. She

was crying, expecting that her daughter would die. I gave hope and comfort to both mothers.

We got the head doctor of the hospital to help, but we too had to put in our share. I helped to pay for some of the expense with the money you, and other benefactors send me to help the poor sick people of San Salvador.

Thank God the injections were effective. They stopped the sickness and slowly but surely the little girls were saved and back to normal. Now they, and their parents are home. While I can offer God's love and comfort they also need physical therapy and more medicine.

Thank God for generous people like our benefactors. Because of your giving we are able to help so many sick children. God Bless. ■



Words Worth Noting



Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.

Mark Twain

Everything has its wonders even darkness and silence, and I learn, whatever state I may be in, therein to be content.

Helen Keller

When love and skill work together expect a masterpiece.

John Ruskin

A man does not have to be an angel to be a saint.

Albert Schweitzer

Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any end may reveal a totally new landscape.

C.S. Lewis

It takes a lot of courage to show your dreams to someone else.

Erma Bombeck

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good.

Samuel Johnson

Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all.

Sam Ewing

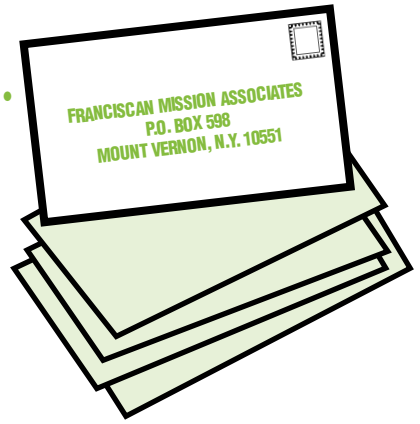
Anytime you see a turtle up on top of a fence post, you know he has had some help.

Alex Haley

I think we consider too much the good luck of the early bird and not enough the bad luck of the early worm.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father,

Thank you so much for the quick response and the literature that you sent me. I am so grateful for hearing this voice so far away. God bless you all and I will say a prayer of thanks and a prayer for your mission. I pray to St. Jude so often and it seems he often hears this poor and broken soul's petition for help. Thank you all and God bless you for the work you do.

Thankfully yours,
J.S.
Fort Stockton, TX

Dear Franciscan Mission Associates,

Please accept this \$10.00 in hopes it can help those who need help. I donate this in the name of our Heavenly Father God and our savior Lord Jesus Christ. Please publish this in the FMA Focus.

Sincerely,
C.P.
Brookhaven, PA

Dear Father,

Please excuse my oversight by not acknowledging receipt of the many birthday cards you have sent me over the years. You, and your missions are in my prayers daily. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and for the Mass that was celebrated for me this year. God bless you.

Sincerely,
I.V.R.
Toronto, Canada

Dear Father,

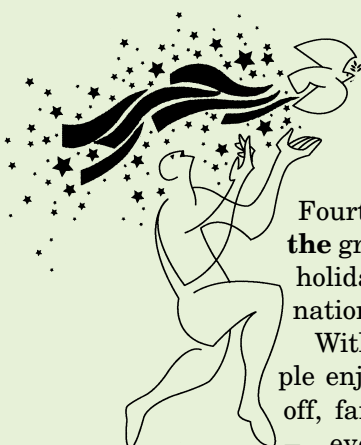
I recently wrote to you and requested rosary booklets be sent to me at this facility. I am writing to thank you for sending them to me and honoring my request in a timely manner. I have kept one for myself and I gave out the rest to other women here who pray the rosary every day. We all thank you for your kindness and generosity in sending them to us.

Sincerely,
S.M.S
Danbury, CT

Dear Father,

I wish to include my thanks to St. Anthony of Padua, St. Jude, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal and all the Franciscans who prayed for me and my family for the favors I requested in your Focus Magazine. I will continue to send my monthly contribution to you for your work as long as I can. Please continue to pray for us and we also will pray for your good work.

Sincerely,
F.B.
Scarsdale, NY



INDEPENDENCE DAY – A DAY OF PRAYER

Yes, the Fourth of July is **the** great summer holiday, observed nationwide.

With most people enjoying a day off, family picnics – even “family reunions” – remain a classic way to celebrate America’s Independence day. And this option looks to traditional menus and sites, ranging from the backyard barbecue, to ice-packed coolers of food and drinks hauled to seashore, mountains, or nearby state parks.

Most Catholics begin the holiday by checking off another “tradition” – going to Mass, whether they are home or on vacation. For attending Mass is a very traditional Catholic way to observe Independence Day. Witness how few are shy about joining in the popular closing hymn, “America, the Beautiful.”

There are many reasons: At the Fourth of July Mass, the congregation remembers and honors ancestors who fled their own homelands, seeking religious freedom and equality in this “New World.” Many also salute their relatives – men and women – who serve in the Armed Forces, defending and protecting this “land of the free and the brave.”

Today, Catholics of all backgrounds and nationalities pray on the Fourth of July with special fervor and focus. For thousands of U.S. Catholics

(whether of Eastern Rites or the Roman Rite) still have ‘family’ in places where practicing their Faith can mean risking their very lives, even on the most joyous of Holy Days (Easter and Christmas).

And as it has throughout history, our Church accommodates great secular celebrations with distinctive Liturgy for the day. For the Fourth of July, pastors may select the Readings for the day from among a wide list of options; and likewise, for the Opening Prayer and Prayer After Communion.

Among the petitions for one of the Opening Prayers:

*“... Open our hearts to the truth of His Gospel,
that your peace may rule in our hearts
and your justice guide our lives.”*

All of the prayers and readings for The Fourth of July remind us to celebrate and rise to the challenge of the gifts bestowed on us by God. This year, we want to keep in mind, as well, our brothers and sisters worldwide who still suffer persecution and poverty. ■

Yet experience tells us that a world without God becomes a ‘hell’ – filled with selfishness, broken families, hatred between individuals and nations, and a great deficit of love, joy and hope.

**Pope Benedict XVI
World Youth Day 2011 Message**

THE SIMPLICITY AND POWER OF PRAYER

It was Our Lord who taught us so much about the power and simplicity of prayer. It was on one of those sunlit late spring days when a spellbound crowd surrounded the Lord, seeking his teaching “because he taught with authority.”

So he led them up the hillside believed to be the Mount of the Beatitudes – and began his Great Discourse.

On the subject of prayer and basic “How-To” approaches, he could not have been more direct. “Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you,” Jesus taught, with an emphasis on asking. “For the one, who asks, receives.”

Suggesting that it is arrogance that keeps us from regular prayer, he explained: “If you, with all your sins, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to anyone who asks!” (Matthew 7: 7–11)

This year, it is the Vicar of Christ, Pope Benedict XVI, who began an update on prayer for today’s Catholics. Prayer, he says, is nothing less than essential for any Christian. In today’s world filled with distractions, regular prayer is the

only way to come to know the essence of our own human life: namely that we are children of God, destined for eternal life.

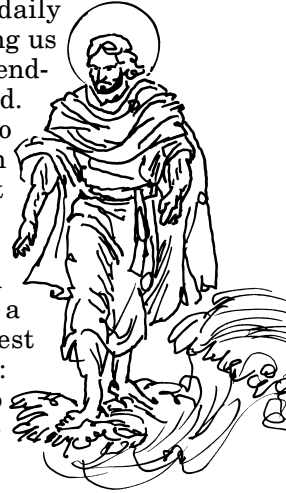
Pope Benedict asks each one of us to “dedicate the proper amount of time to prayer,” which he defines in three important words: “openness to God.”

Regular time for prayer is not “wasted time.” Quite the contrary. Rather, prayer opens us “toward the fullness of life,” and ignites our “love of God – a burning love for him and his church – and a concrete love for our brothers and sisters.”

Summer is a good time to schedule such regular daily prayer time, helping us to deepen our friendship with the Lord.

Ask St. Francis to help you. You can count on this great saint – a man who seemed to pray always – to lead you directly to a Christian’s greatest teacher and friend:

Our Lord, who promised to be with us always. ■



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

To be remembered at Mass on your birthday please send the Franciscan Mission Associates the filled in form below at any time.

My name is _____

My Birthday is: (Month and Day) _____

My address is _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Fr. Robert, O.F.M., Dept. 4115,

Franciscan Mission Associates, PO Box 598, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

SEA (LAKE) OF GALILEE – A SEASIDE RESORT

The Sea of Galilee, called by various names (Lake Gennesaret, Sea of Tiberias) over the centuries, figured prominently in Our Lord's public ministry – and personal life.

As you read the Gospels and hear them at Mass, take notice of that beautiful body of fresh water, eight miles wide in places, and 13 miles long; and at the surface, already some 690 feet below sea level, a natural marvel, developed over the centuries out of a volcanic basin. The towns and villages dotting its shores number among them: Capernaum, Bethsaida, Magdala, Tiberias; and just a few short miles away, Nazareth and Cana.

† It was to this territory that Jesus retreated in mourning, following the murder of John the Baptizer.

† It was here that he established a home base for his ministry.

† It was from the Lake's shores that Jesus called key disciples and Apostles, including Peter, Andrew, James and John.

† Here, that Jesus made the surrounding hills and mountains the "classroom" for his mission and ministry (including the Mount of the Beatitudes and hills where Jesus blessed and multiplied small "picnic" food reserves into meals for thousands).

† It was here, that Jesus sought peace, solitude and deep prayer. Slipping away from the crowds by boating with his disciples across the lake – and at other times, completely alone, walking over its waters.

† And it was here, during the Lord's post-Resurrection and pre-Ascension days that Jesus once again called the Apostles from the waters, to the shore. There, to be healed of their mourning his Passion and Death – to be prepared for their mission: to live the Gospel, inviting all humankind, through all ages, to eternal life.

Today's pilgrim/tourists make the resort-like Lake Gennesaret a 'must' stop in the Holy Land. But once on board the small tourist boats, moving them out into the choppy waters, pilgrim chatter dissolves into reverent quiet.

As the shoreline grows smaller in the distance, larger and larger waves crash against the boat's hull, and sharp winds spray watery mists across the deck. Here, pilgrims sink into that biblical phrase, "holy ground." Even on water.

For the history of Lake (Sea) of Galilee-Gennesaret-Tiberias intertwines with the forever sacredness of a place made holy by the presence of the All Holy Son of God.

Truly, this majestic Lake bids us – whether armchair pilgrims or pilgrim tourists – to recall our baptismal vows: to live consciously as members of the Body of Christ, wherever God has "missioned" us.

This summer, renew your commitment to the Lord. Pray as well for his missionaries whose every minute is dedicated, as it was with St. Francis, to preaching the Gospel by living it. ■

Special Novena Schedule Summer 2011

All year round Franciscan Mission Associates conducts a regular schedule of spiritual and devotional exercises in which all benefactors are invited to take part. During the summer months the Special Novena schedule is:

- May 7-15 and May 16-24Feast of St. Dymphna (May 15)
- June 23-July 1Feast of the Sacred Heart
- June 2-10 and June 11-19Novena of the Holy Spirit
- June 5-13 and June 13-21Feast of St. Anthony (June 13)
- June 22-30St. Anthony for a Safe Summer
- July 18-26Feast of St. Anne
- August 2-10 and August 11-19St. Anthony (in Padua)
- August 7-15Assumption of Our Lady
- September 2-10 and September 11-19St. Jude Novena

Holy Mass is offered each day for all Franciscan Mission Associates benefactors and for the special intentions they request. Kindly forward your petitions for the Novenas scheduled to:

Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 4111, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

Join us on Pilgrimage to the **Shrines of Italy**

*We will pray at the Shrines sacred to our faith
and other shrines with a Franciscan Spiritual Director.*

SPRING - MAY 8-17, 2012

**Padua • Venice • Assisi • Florence • Rome
Vatican City • and more**

Dear Father, Please send information on Pilgrimage to the Shrines of Italy

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

Mail to: Pilgrimage Office, Dept. J, P.O. Box 598, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598
Tel: 914-664-5604 or 914-664-1747