

# FMA FOCUS

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America

## Virtue: TRUST

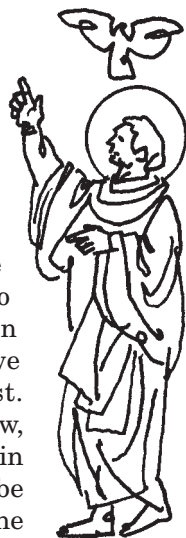
If St. Peter could do it, so can we—learn to trust in the Lord. Peter was a bull-in-a-china-shop kind of man. He rarely thought things through before speaking out (although he often proved to be correct). He was the Apostle who time and again vowed allegiance to the Lord and then found himself denying Jesus, not once, but three times.

Peter changed. He would say it was God's grace. In his epistles, Peter urges the early Christians to "trust perfectly in the grace which is coming to you through the revelations of Jesus Christ." Pray to St. Peter to help develop your trust in Jesus. ■

## He made us to love us!

The great thing about the Catechism so many of us memorized in childhood: those facts, those answers come back to strengthen and even empower us when we need them the most. "God made us to know, love and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him in the next." Those few, quickly recollected words reinforce an understanding born of repeated life experience for baptized Christians: God made me... God sustains me...because God loves me, just as Jesus taught us.

Certainly, God "gets" nothing out of love for us. God is the great "I AM," the creator, the author of life. So God made us, after all, out of love, pure love.



It is the kind of love that parents understand so well. The unconditional love of one's child. For parents are co-creators with God in bringing new life to this world. And parents love their children, not for what they can get out of them, but just because they 'are'. Often that love of the child moves parents beyond the natural desire to be loved in return; rather, parental effort moves into an expression of love rolled up into what those parents "can give" to the child. And to all their children. Recognizing that each is unique, with God-given talents that will be different from those of any other child. A beautiful, wonderful expression of the mystery of life, of God's sharing in His own infinite existence.

St. John's First Epistle, written to the early Christians, spelled out this love for us clearly:

"We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God

is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him". (1 John 4: 16) And just a few lines earlier, he prepared the understanding of his readers this way:

"No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another God dwells in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us." (1 John 4: 12)

Take a few moments this fall, to start a new course, if you will. Read over Chapters 15, 16, and 17 in St. John's Gospel. Then, follow up with a careful, prayerful reading of the First Epistle of St. John which explains God as Father, and us, as His beloved children.

Then, on those days when you may be thinking you are "not up to par," let those profound and yet simple words flow back on you, like the words of the Catechism. Remember that God made you so that He can love you. Thinking of that should help you love God even more. (And it may just set you to read more of God's Holy Word, where you will find a good deal more on the subject).

In other words, in God's eyes, you are gold. You are precious. You are loved. ■

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**Let us ask for the gift of perseverance for all priests: may they stay faithful to prayer, celebrate Holy Mass with ever renewed devotion, live listening to the Word of God and day after day assimilate the same sentiments and attitudes as those of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.**

**Pope Benedict XVI**

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**[franciscanmissionassoc.org](http://franciscanmissionassoc.org)**



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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.

# September song... as we grow older.

Gone are the days when so many people planned on retiring at age 55, perhaps with plans to travel, play golf, etc. Today, when people retire early, they do so only after completing plans to move on to a second career!

For, there may be adult children moving home. Or maybe grandchildren, who for whatever reason, need their grandparents to serve as Mom and Dad for many years.

Also the ranks of younger people likely to survive to their golden years is now shrinking. Even though disease no longer takes the toll it once did there are other evils culling that ranks the youth. The twin evils of abortion and drug addiction are wiping out many of our young people—some, of course, even before they take a first breath.

The Church is particularly interested in each child of God experiencing a sense of self-worth. As long as 40 years ago, older members of religious communities were recognized as a resource and a wealth. They brought a vast experience, both in terms of “jobs/work” as well as in the area of spiritual growth and renewal.

And so, as if a new curtain would open on the stage, religious began preparing early for a so-called “second” career within their vocation. Perhaps moving to nursing or chaplaincy, when education or social work were no longer full-time callings (or when policies asked for retirements).

As many lay men and women came to “retirement age” it was clear that for today’s generation, older is not

frail or sick. We have all seen many new programs developed in church and society for “seniors.” And with a newer emphasis: the elderly are themselves their own best resource.

Call it “peer ministry.” It means simply that mature people are in the forefront in serving other senior citizens. Many retired people now supervise a “home health care” program for parents who previously needed to find a place in a nursing home. Others are in the forefront of service to parish and liturgy - and often the major population at daily Mass. And they bring their expertise from former jobs to assist others. Retired accountants, for example, help seniors in the parish prepare tax returns.

There are many opportunities for all of us to assist in this new ministry to the growing older population - particularly if we are older ourselves.

Take a new look at yourself, through God’s eyes. ■

## 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:**

**Father Robert, O.F.M.  
Franciscan Mission Associates  
PO Box 598, Dept 172,  
Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

# THE GREAT NEED FOR RELIGION ON OUR SOCIETY



Doesn't it make you wonder? Anytime you see a film or TV sitcom or drama - why is it that the families, the main characters, are never shown going to church?

For believing people it's a glaring hole in the story line.

For Catholic people, the liturgy is the central "homecoming" of the week. Where we pray and celebrate and receive the living nourishment of the Lord's Body and Blood... when we come to know, pew by pew, that we are brothers and sisters together, related in the Body of Christ. One as children of the same Father, the Giver of Life.

That makes watching depictions of life with no wholesome reference to God or to relationship with God an anemic story at best.

Nearly 20 years ago, the late Pope John Paul II issued a document on the laity in the Church. One of its main points was brilliant focus on the role of the laity, surely in the Church, but in the world at large. Particularly so in demonstrating the importance of religion in the world.

The Pope's document was entitled

"Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici."

A major concern: The ever-growing existence of "religious indifference and atheism," along with the effort to remove religion from life, particularly through secularism.

According to Pope John Paul II, the greatest task of the laity today is to be the bearer of the good News of Jesus Christ. Evangelization accomplished through witness and service. In the family, in the parish, the community; in business, in education, in the many professions where laity bring not only their skills, but their life as believers.

It is through the laity, the Pope said, that the Church of Christ is made present in the various sectors of life in the world today "as a sign and source of hope and of love."

And how is such a vital and holy goal to be accomplished? The answer reviews the teaching of Jesus. He commanded his followers to know their destiny: to be holy "as the heavenly Father is holy." Because people are created in the image and likeness of God; in fact, children of God.

The laity is a sign of hope and love when they simply fulfill the lay vocation to "holiness" of life. The Pope called it the "perfection of charity." ■

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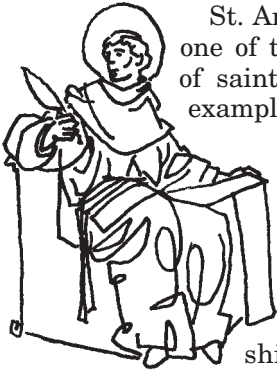
## ST. ANTHONY'S BREAD

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 174, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

# Back to School with St. Anthony



St. Anthony of Padua, one of the most popular of saints, is the perfect example of many things.

Take scholarship, education, learning, the quest for knowledge. Some say Anthony was born to scholarship. Even as a child, he loved

learning, excelling in all the subjects of his day.

What drew Anthony to more solitude was the desire for more freedom to study - and to pray. To learn and to come closer to God, to make himself more available to God's service and ministry.

So it was a surprise to Anthony and others, when he found God calling him to become a Franciscan - a missionary and martyr. And the Franciscans called him to become a teacher, a professor of theology. He was the first member of the Franciscans to have this title.

We have the letter from St. Francis of Assisi to Anthony, confirming the appointment.

In part it says this: "I am well pleased that you should read sacred theology to the friars *provided that such study does not quench the spirit of holy prayer and devotion according to our rule.*"

Here, Francis was making clear an important aspect of study - even when the study is theology, the study of what we know, what we can know about God - and where that knowledge can lead.

Francis clearly stated that the purpose of study regarding God is to serve the spirit of prayer and devotion. It can not replace either prayer or devotion. In other words, the friar who teaches about prayer, about devotion to and love of God, such a friar should surely practice the same.

Hence, the wise, honest and clear statement by St. Francis. Keep the priorities straight. Let nothing get in the way of God. Good advice for a friar... for anyone.

The advice relates directly to the First Commandment. "I am the LORD your God... You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20: 2-50)

For Christians who are called to holiness by Jesus (and given the grace to work on that goal in the sacrament of Baptism), it's a no-brainer. Always, we are God-focused; and prayer is our major communication channel to that calling. If something gets in the way, something becomes more important than making time for God and prayer in our lives - look out! We are getting out of proportion. Forgetting the essential—for a child of God.

We should never allow ourselves to be fooled into thinking that learning for its own sake, for example (or art for art's sake, etc) should take a higher priority than prayer.

As our world returns to school after summer vacation, you can pray that seminarians, religious, deacons, lay ministers and all who are studying will keep the wisdom of St. Francis in mind. ■

# ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON - FIRST AMERICAN SAINT

This September, thousands of young people all over the country enter a new year in the Roman Catholic parochial school system, coast to coast, north-south-east and west. And years from this September, they will mirror thousands who went before them: "These were the best years of our lives..."

That strong and memorable school got its start with a petite New York woman born in 1774, as the American Revolution was getting under way. And she died in 1821, when the fifth American president, James Monroe was governing during his second administration.

Elizabeth Ann Bayley, born to a distinguished Episcopalian family, was educated by her father, a professor at what is today Columbia University. She was the step-sister of an Episcopalian Archbishop of Baltimore. Clearly a child called "well born." And as American as apple pie.

In good order, Elizabeth was wed to a wealthy New York merchant, William M. Seton when she was 20 years old. She and her husband were blessed with three girls and two boys, she soon became involved in social work among New York's poor. In that same period, Elizabeth nursed her husband through bouts of tuberculosis. Taking him abroad to Italy to recuperate, she was attracted to the Catholic Faith, and would formally convert to Catholicism two years after her husband's death in 1803.

Ostracized in New York for her conversion, she was invited to open a

school in Baltimore by the rector of St. Mary's Seminary. In 1809, she worked with four companions to begin a religious community, then called the Sisters of St. Joseph. These sisters began a small school for poor children in Emmitsburg, Maryland. It was the beginning of what is today the Catholic parochial school system.

By 1813, Elizabeth had been elected superior of the new 19-Sister community, called the Sisters of Charity. She took religious vows with a rule officially approved by Archbishop Carroll of Baltimore, and would see her community grow consistently - because it addressed pressing needs, as well as situations particularly "American."

This genteel and determined young American woman would be canonized in 1975, some 150 years after her death. She was the first native-born American saint.

The spiritual strength she found in prayer at an early age is reflected in the many writings, talks and letters that survive.

The Liturgy of the Hours - the Breviary - provides passages from one of her talks or conferences with her religious sisters. Among its insights: "...keep your eye of faith always open. Perseverance is a great grace. To go on gaining and advancing every day, we must be resolute and bear and suffer as our blessed forerunners did. Which of them gained heaven without a struggle?..."

Good teaching, good spiritual health advice for us all. ■

# 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,

There always seems to be someone crying at Mass. Whether in the silences or during the sermon – usually not when the choir is singing.

So what do we do? Do we think of the many tears shed all over the world for the sick or dying or troubled or dispirited.

Or do we think “Why can’t they keep that child quiet?” Why does it have to bother my prayer or listening or silence?

If it is a trial for us – how much more is it a trial for the poor mother who came to Mass to seek God’s favor and brought her child to God to share in the wealth of grace that comes with each Mass?

Every parent knows children go from tears to joy in an instant. A cry is often cured with a small treat – a book, perhaps – a drink of milk – a “shush” so quiet only the child can hear.

But a cry at Mass can be a meditation if we give it a bit of thought. Because we, ourselves, are here at Mass to experience something of the Joy of God. Yet, like the child and the mother we know that slipping from Joy to Sadness can be separated by a heart-beat because, as Pope Paul VI told us, we know that joy here on earth is always imperfect, fragile and threatened.

For we all know the only true happiness is the Joy of God. And while here on earth we can feel it for a moment or an hour or even a day, but we know it will come to an end and like the child, the tears will begin.

It is a great gap between seeking God which we do at Mass – the Pope called it the desire for the infinite – and the reality of daily life on earth – in what we know is a time of trial.

So we can, listen to the cry, hear the soft tears dropping and turn our minds to God. Simply, honestly, prayerfully – knowing that He, like the loving parent He is, one day will dry our tears, kiss our smiling face, and tell us “No more tears” because we can share always in the eternal Joy of God.

God Bless Your Generous Heart,

*Fr. Robert, OFM*

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

# NEW SCHOOL BUILDING DEDICATED IN HONDURAS

*Fr Francis OFM tells of the new school building named after Friar Blaise*

The whole crowd was there – teachers, parents, students, workers, bus drivers, gardeners and lots of our friars to bless and dedicate a new building for the Instituto San Francisco – in honor of 83-year-old Friar Blaise Tranchida OFM who had worked in the missions for 40 years.

Now living in Canada and still working in parish ministry, Friar Blaise remembers his years in Central America with great affection.

The new school building is really needed since the growth in the student body; where before there were 37 classes with the new building there will be 41. The new “Friar Blaise Hall” includes a cafeteria and – ever needed today – computer classrooms. Future plans call for an additional third floor with four more classrooms.

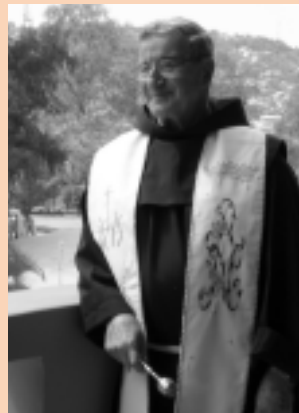
The Instituto sits on a hill getting a freshening breeze most afternoons. The Rector, Friar Rafael Fernandez, points out it offers academic quality, spiritual development, administrative excellence, economic value and has ample facilities for learning. He, the Vice-Rector Friar Peter Walsh OFM and Provincial Minister Friar Robert Campagna OFM and his administration continually support the best education for the youth of Honduras.

Father Blaise is a native of Brooklyn, NY who was ordained over half a century ago in 1950. In his first year as a priest he was sent as a missionary to Central America where he learned the language, customs and traditions of the wonderful people of Central America and spent the next 40 years of his life giving of himself to all those he met.



In a message sent to the dedication he said:

“Many persons such as rectors, principals, secretaries, professors as well as the bus drivers, mechanics, assistants, counselors, janitors, guards, and cooks have been a great part of the life of the *Instituto San Francisco* for the last 60 years. Although I cannot name everyone, I wish to end by honoring 2 persons who



have worked untiringly for the past years for the good of the *Instituto*: our brother, Bishop Robert Camillieri OFM, and Mrs. Olivia Sierra de Ortiz. I finally wish to express gratitude for the many fellow Friars who are here this day.

But the best part for all of this dedication is the knowledge that all this will be used for the honor and glory of God. In the name of the Friars, the Sisters, the parents, teachers and administrators of the Instituto San Francisco, let us give thanks to God for having given us the gift of Saint Francis of Assisi who gathered together his brothers, like Friar Blaise, to do God's work. ■



## DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR FRIAR ROCCO IN GUATEMALA

*Fulfilling a dream for Father Rocco OFM on one Guatemalan day*

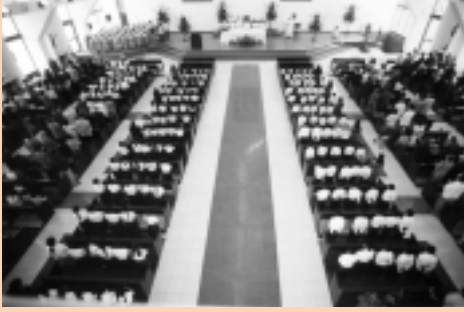
It was a dream fulfilled for Fr. Rocco Famiglietti, OFM last January with the blessing and dedication of the beautiful new church, "Our Lady of the Angels" which came on the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. And 50 of those years in continuing service to the Franciscan ministry in Guatemala.

A 30 acre plot of virgin land some 20 miles from Guatemala City, donated 25 years ago to Father Rocco by a very dear, personal friend and benefactor, Mr. Rene Abularach, became the golden opportunity for the realization of his dream to care for very poor and needy Guatemalan children. It was the beginning of the Valley of the Angels Orphanage that today is home for 300 children in a complex of buildings;

dormitories, classrooms, kitchen and dining room, multi purpose building, assembly hall, music, arts and crafts, outdoor recreational areas and facilities. Also a sister's convent, a friary, medical and dental clinics. Now, at last the crowning glory, the beautiful new church, Our Lady of the Angels.

Cardinal Rodolfo Quezada Toruno, Archbishop of Guatemala, celebrated the solemn blessing and dedication Mass with many fellow Friars, clergy, as well as the President of Guatemala, Oscar Berger, his wife, his mother together with family members and friends of Fr. Rocco from the US plus over 400 Guatemalan friends and benefactors.

The new Church holds 600 worshippers. The Sanctuary is graced with three



10 by 13 foot paintings depicting Our Patroness “Our Lady of the Angels”, “The Resurrection of Christ”; “St. Francis embracing Christ Crucified.” These massive art works created and donated by the internationally famous Guatemalan artist Rodolfo Abularach. And of course the Church and altar were decorated with floral pieces and banks of fresh local flowers by our faithful volunteers and benefactors.

The day after the dedication, Father Rocco celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Everyone of the 300 visitors joined in the happy prayers and second joyful celebration with Father Rocco’s fellow Franciscans, family and friends. A reception followed in the Orphanage Hall which was donated for the event by the Hotel Camino Real and other Guatemalan friends.

So many people from so many places and in so many ways doing good for others less fortunate said Father Rocco. This is what brings dreams to life. Thanks to the work and support of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province, the Franciscan Mission Associates and the generous donations given over all these years by our many American and Guatemalan friends. Many hands make light work, they say and they also can build homes like the Valley of the Angels.” ■



# Words Worth Noting



*One can endure sorrow alone, but it takes two to be glad.*

*Elbert Hubbard*

*We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing; other judge us by what we have done.*

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

*Justice is the insurance which we have on our lives and property. Obedience is the premium which we pay for it.*

*William Penn*

*The laughter of a child is the light of a house.*

*African proverb*

*Other men's sins are before our eyes; our own are behind our backs.*

*Seneca*

*For anything worth having one must pay the price; and the price is always work, patience, love, self-sacrifice – no paper currency, no promises to pay, but the gold of real service.*

*John Burroughs*

*It often happens that I awake at night and begin to think about a serious problem and decide I must tell the Pope about it. Then I wake up completely and remember that I am the Pope.*

*Blessed John XXIII*

*There is no way on earth of making a person worthy of love, except by loving them.*

*Thomas Merton*

*Family faces are like mirrors. Looking at people who belong to us, we see the past, present and future.*

*Gail L Buckley*

*Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.*

*Robert Frost*

*The test and the use of man's education is that he finds pleasure in the exercise of his mind.*

*Jack Barzun*

*There is not a tree in heaven, higher than the tree of patience.*

*Irish proverb*

## Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Franciscan Friars,

I want to thank you for sending me the statue of St. Anthony. I was so moved by this great gift, and was so overwhelmed it brought tears to my eyes. I can't thank you enough for your thoughtfulness I will treasure this for the rest of my life. Please accept the enclosed check and my prayers for all the Franciscan Friars. You will always be in my prayers.

L.S.  
Elizabeth, NJ

Dear Fr. Robert:

I am sending an extra donation to St. Anthony's Bread for this month in thanksgiving for favors being received. I wish to thank the Blessed Mother, St. Anthony, St. Michael the Archangel, St. Jude and our dear Infant Jesus, who all will be working miracles for me. St. Jude needs to know I am causing him to be invoked.

M. F. G.  
Kansas City, MO

Dear Fr. Robert,

Enclosed is my donation of \$20.00 in thanksgiving for prayers answered through the intercession of St. Jude. My thanks to this great saint and your FMA Focus magazine.

J.G.  
Mineola, NY

Dear Father,

I'm sending you a small donation in honor of St. Anthony and thank him for help in finding my grandparents' rosaries which were lost. The rosaries are over 100 years old. I'd like to also thank St. Jude for three important favors granted through his intercession.

Thanks  
T.M.  
Tulsa, OK

Dear Father,

A sincere "thank you" to the Scared Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of the Rosary, Blessed Mother, St. Jude, St. Anthony, St. Dymphna and St. Peregrine. It is a way of acknowledging my gratitude for the many favors that my family and I have received through prayer. Some favors seemed almost impossible. Enclosed is a donation of \$25.00 for St. Anthony's Bread.

Sincerely,  
G.M.K.  
Seekonk, MA

# HOW TO ATTRACT RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS – ST. FRANCIS

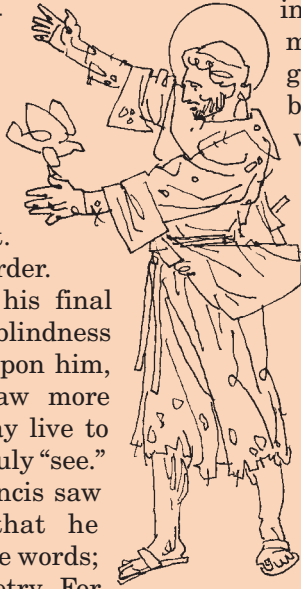
One form of meditation is to learn enough about a holy person, and then to try to see the world through his or her eyes. The world as the saint experienced it.

In the case of St. Francis, that's a tall order. We know that even in his final years with advancing blindness and ultimate darkness upon him, the Little Poor Man saw more than most of us who may live to advanced age will ever truly "see."

We know that St. Francis saw so much, so deeply that he couldn't express it in mere words; he needed song and poetry. For Francis was called to a mystical union with God - whether he wanted it or not. He accepted that gift, something most people would see as fearsome, even terrifying - a burdensome ordeal.

On the other hand, we know that sometimes, Francis spoke not a recorded word about things he had seen and experienced. Those times as a prisoner of war when a young man, left to survive in a dungeon, albeit reserved for men who had the look of nobility. Yet, that experience of war, of killing, of being degraded, seeing others slaughtered and maimed: it changed him. He began to be and act like a different man.

And so he became poor. Not just in terms of an "ideal," or as some remote goal. Rather, Francis lived it. He was



in fact a wandering beggar. The more poor he became, the greater freedom he enjoyed to be about God's work, God's will, and not his own. For in all matters, Francis did nothing without prayer, without surrendering to God.

This was more than a "charismatic" stance. Francis clearly lived a radical response to the Gospel.

And so others began to "see" religious life as a way of following Christ in the world with others - God's people.

At first, it was Bernard of Assisi, a tradesman, who joined Francis. Next, a priest, Peter of Cattaneo. Then, Brother Giles who grew famous for his simplicity and spiritual wisdom. Thousands more were to follow.

The remarkable thing about vocation hunting and St. Francis: his method seemed to bring out the best, all that was real and unique, about those he attracted to ministry.

We do not often think to pray to the great saints for vocations so badly needed today. Yet, we should. Pray to St. Francis, especially during the special days of prayer and novenas surrounding his October 4 feast day. Pray for the vision to see without blinders, and to have those answer God's calling to priesthood and religious life by following the great saints. ■

# PRAYER FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

You hear it over and over on television and radio news... "Today, the Middle East is a virtual tinder-box..." Tinderbox, yes, but you will often hear the word, "beautiful" as well.

And when discussion turns to the spirituality of the region, "beautiful" is not too far fetched a description. Nor is "holy" - for the Middle East is the homeland for three great faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

At the heart of each faith tradition, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, is belief and inspiration in the same One True God each worships. In fact, each also honors a common ancestor - the Patriarch, Abraham, as well as the great prophets of ancient times.

The Church and its Vatican II-led renewal has been calling for the world to look at what people hold in common and to build on that common heritage. Among Christians, this calling and endeavor is called ecumenism. And that is all about working toward a time when the Church itself may pick up the fragments and unite as one (in good time, the Holy Spirit's time).



In a similar spirit, the Church has opened doors to dialogue and exchange with other believers. These inter-faith and interreligious dialogues with the Moslem world have particular importance because they build on that common belief in the One True God, and on the common ancestry of prophets, traditions, sacred books.

Ecumenists, many of whom are laity, will tell you: it's hard work. Work that requires both your participation and your prayer. When a local Islamic Center, a Mosque, for example, or the local Jewish Temple, holds an open house or a prayer day open to the others, think about going. Your parish or diocese may ask participation. And no invitation at all is needed to pray for God's Holy Land, our Holy Land, the ancient Middle East. Try to pray every day for peace in the Middle East and for its long-suffering people. You may want to focus your prayer on one or three Middle Eastern families. A Jewish, Catholic, and Moslem family - people with ancestors, children, a future (they hope!) - people just like ourselves.

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Father Robert includes a special remembrance for all Franciscan Mission Associates on their birthday if he knows when it is. To be remembered at his Mass on your birthday please send him the filled in form below at any time.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My Birthday is: Month and Day \_\_\_\_\_

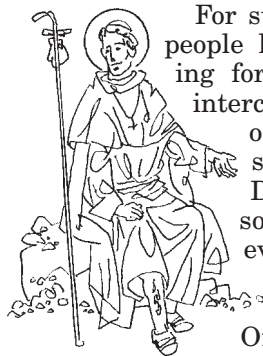
My address is \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Fr. Robert, O.F.M., Dept. 176,  
Franciscan Mission Associates, PO Box 598, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

In the end, successful ecumenical and interreligious activities, supported by prayer may make a greater difference than all the other “usual” methods. Prayer can end wars and violence. Even before that ideal is realized, however, people who pray can respectfully build on their common past, and work toward their common future with the Lord. ■

## THE LESSONS OF SICKNESS - ST. PEREGRINE



For such a long time, people have been praying for St. Peregrine's intercession on behalf of people with serious illness. Do you wonder, sometimes, if he ever gets bored? After all these centuries?

Of course St. Peregrine Laziosi, that remarkable 14th Century Servite priest, preacher, confessor, health care provider (and let's say it, a likely workaholic), himself a survivor of a near-fatal illness: that busy saint lives now in heaven, where The Eternal Now is the only time. Safe to say he's not counting... not days, not hours, not numbers of “requests.”

No, we need not worry about asking St. Peregrine for help, just one more time.

But remember to ask his intercession and example for spiritual illnesses as well as physical disease and sickness. For St. Peregrine's life itself reminds us that sickness is not

always of the body. The spirit, too, can suffer illness, even life-threatening sickness.

In our world today, there is no doubt that preventing disease is ultimately less costly and surely less labor-intensive than dealing with a deadly or debilitating malady. And so there are recommendations, even laws requiring inoculations. What's involved, of course, is the introduction of the germ or infection into the body. Natural germ-fighters, called antibodies, then are produced by the body to ward off and destroy such an infection. The inoculation is not the disease itself.

So it is with diseases of the spirit. A list of the seven deadly sins cover the turf of possibilities.

Peregrine's personal holiness as well as his preaching skills served as the inoculation for his own times in terms of spiritual disease and death prevention. And much of his preaching surely drew on his own experience, especially in accepting God's will.

Today, try to listen with an open heart to God's Holy Word at Mass, in the readings and Gospel. Listen as attentively to the homily. Each offers lessons in Gospel-based spirituality - the certain inoculation “shot” preventing spiritual disease.

God's Word will peel away the scales that blind our own eyes to perils we may deny exist in our lives. Through such creative listening, we can learn as Peregrine did, that prayer and acceptance are God's method of vaccination against spiritual sloth and the diseases of sin.

Listen as Peregrine did, not only with your ears, but with your heart. And like Peregrine, you will find yourself listening to the Word, Himself. ■

# Solemn Novena Schedule Fall 2007

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

September 2-10/11-19 .....St. Jude the Apostle  
September 21-29 .....St. Michael the Archangel  
September 26-October 4 .....St. Francis of Assisi  
September 29-October 7 .....Our Lady of the Rosary  
October 7-October 15 .....Our Lady of the Rosary  
October 23.....9 Tuesdays before Christmas  
in honor of St. Anthony of Padua

All Franciscan Mission Associates, sponsors, and benefactors are asked to join in prayer for the intentions and petitions of those taking part in the exercises. Please pray also for peace, for our Franciscan missionaries, for the people they serve, for an increase in vocations and for all our associates. Holy Mass is offered each day for all benefactors and for the intentions they request. Kindly forward your petitions for the Novenas scheduled to:

**Father Robert, O.F.M., Franciscan Mission Associates  
PO Box 598, Dept 173, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

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## Join us on Pilgrimage

# Shrines of France

**May 12-23, 2008**

*Lyon - Ars - Lac d'Annecy*

*Paray le Monial - Paris*

*Alencon - Nevers - Lisieux - Lourdes*

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

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