

FMA FOCUS

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



Virtue: KNOWLEDGE

“Getting to know you...” These are the first words and title from an old song that talks about the importance of knowledge in any relationship. All the more so, when people come from “different worlds” so to speak.

Good barometer to reference as we move ahead on the Christian’s life-long pilgrimage, getting to know God.

The Church teaches that deep personal knowledge of God is the province of the Holy Spirit’s gift of wisdom. But it is the gift of knowledge that helps us discern the practical techniques, the “how-to” information that will point us in the right direction.

Why get to know God? Because God made us in his image and likeness; and he calls us to an intimate relationship as his own children. We’re family. ■

Summer: Time to learn about God



It must have been a summer day in the 11th century when St. Anselm poured out this advice.

“Escape from your everyday business for a short while,” he urges. “Make a little time for God and rest a while in him.”

Today the wisdom of this Archbishop (Canterbury), Theologian (Father of Scholasticism), and Doctor of the Church, seems more vital than ever. For as Christians, it is our privilege and duty to deepen and grow in our relationship with the Creator - whom Jesus, the Son of God, told us to address as **our** “Father.”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit help us, beginning with Wisdom – the pathway to personal and experiential love of God.

And it’s the gift of knowledge that will guide you in the best ways to achieve your goal.

Here are some time-tested ways to get to know God:

- **Prayer.** Beginning with our primary prayer: Holy Mass on Sunday. But the summer is rich in Feasts that should draw us to daily Mass as well. On Friday, August 6, we celebrate one of the key moments when God revealed the Divinity of Jesus. The Transfiguration of the Lord. Try putting this daily Mass on your calendar - and add a few minutes for reflection.

- **Service to others.** Again, as Jesus taught us: Whatever we do for those most in need, we do for God Himself. Whether within your own parish or a parish cluster, there are many opportunities to come closer to God via the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy: food pantries, soup kitchens, thrift shops, tutoring children at risk, visiting the sick and the elderly. Add to that, inviting family and friends to come to Mass with you, or even to a parish picnic. You never know where God will surprise you!

- **The retreat.** Even in summer, local retreat centers or houses of prayer offer ways to lavish time on the Lord. But it won't happen, until and unless you schedule it on your calendar.

- **Fast and "sacrifice" with a purpose.** It is a form of prayer. We

Catholics honor Friday as a day of sacrifice. One example: The whole family can plan a Friday of simple meals – with all proceeds going, perhaps monthly, to the Church's missionary work. This kind of prayer will connect you and the family with other members of God's "family."

- **Get comfortable with the Bible.** This year we focus on the Gospel of St. Luke. Try to read a small portion - at least once a week, and give yourself some time to be lost in awe and reverent wonder.

- **Go to Mass,** perhaps even one day a week besides our Sunday Assembly. Then, like those once dejected disciples of Jesus, who thought they had lost him forever – you too can tell others how you "came to know him (Jesus, Emmanuel, God with Us) in the breaking of the bread." (Luke 24: 13-35)

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you make honest decisions about where and how you can commit some time to your relationship with God – the relationship that grows and moves with you – all the way into eternity. ■

Visit us on the web
franciscanmissionassoc.org

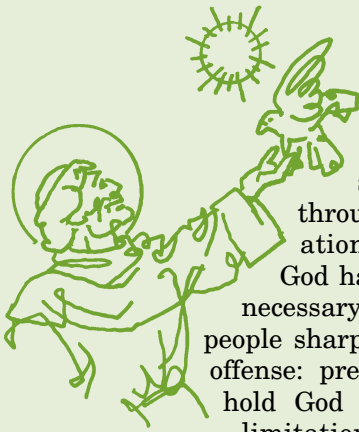


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Learning about St. Francis



It seems that throughout creation history, God has found it necessary to correct people sharply for this offense: presuming to hold God to human limitations. God's reality adjustment: "Nothing is impossible for God!" (Genesis 18:14) And the offense: Faltering faith.

It is the same truth the disciples heard from Jesus. Some feared they could not perform the miracles Jesus commissioned them to do, like healing the sick. With faith in God (even as small as a mustard seed), Jesus reminded them, "Nothing would be impossible for you." (Matthew 19:26)

We find St. Francis of Assisi; some 1,300 years after Jesus walked the earth, radically free of that age-old error. So much so that most of his contemporaries judged him to be a lunatic, albeit a holy one. The saint's own father, numbered among his detractors.

For Francis, already tried by many fires, lived a life of faith. He never doubted what he learned about or from God. Because his faith was rooted in his Lord Jesus, the Gospel, and the Lord's Holy Church.

This great saint, gifted with a mystical relationship with God, constantly amazed people of importance in his own times, people who might have thought they ruled the world.

Francis found God present, for one thing, where most people would never

look. He saw and celebrated the presence and power of God among society's throw-aways: the lepers, the demented, the poor.

Francis saluted God's creatures as family (sisters and brothers), even to the animals who walked the earth, and the winged creatures who move between heaven and earth.

For Francis - just something to sing about; and sing, he did, often.

His classic hymns and joyful poetry continue to speak to people today, people of all faiths and even no faith.

Two of the most popular are: "All Creatures of Our God and King" (a standard in Anglican and Lutheran Churches as well as our own). Also popular: "Prayer of St. Francis" (often titled by its first line, "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace").

When you can, spend some time, with the words of these songs. They will prove a painless way of learning, if just a tiny bit, what Francis knew about God, and how he came to this understanding.

St. Francis' paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer is another example, as relevant today as it was in the 13th century. Here is the closing stanza, a short and powerful prayer.

*And lead us not into temptation,
be it hidden or obvious,
sudden or persistent.
But deliver us from evil,
past, present or future. Amen.*

All said and done with that investment of your time, you will find yourself getting to know God as Francis did. Could time be spent in any better way? ■

JUNE 2009-2010 A YEAR FOR PRIESTS

Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI opened A Year for Priests on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in June 2009. The Feast, the Pope explained, is a day “traditionally devoted to prayer for the sanctification of the clergy.” This formal celebration of priesthood closes on the same Solemn Feast Day, this year - June 11, 2010.

Much like the “Year of St. Paul” observed throughout the Church in 2008, the Year for Priests encouraged focus on specific themes worthy of attention, in any year. Among subjects highlighted:

- The “courageous fidelity of so many priests,” as Pope Benedict expressed it, a fidelity in the face of misunderstandings, and even hostility.

- No doubt referencing the solitary life of so many diocesan priests in this age of vocation shortage, Pope Benedict cited the natural “fraternity” of priestly life. That is, the “communion between priests and their bishop,” a sacred relationship grounded in Holy Orders and the celebration of Holy Eucharist. The Pope urged priests to participate in whatever such peer-groups already flourish, or to be instrumental in developing them.

- The Pope invited “all priests, during this Year dedicated to them, to welcome the new springtime which the Spirit is now bringing about in the Church...” including fostering and welcoming the services of trained and dedicated laity.

The special year, the Pope declared, celebrates priests as

“heralds of hope, reconciliation and peace” in today’s world. “Our faith in the Divine Master,” he says, “gives us the strength to look to the future with confidence.” He added: “Dear

priests, Christ is counting on you.”

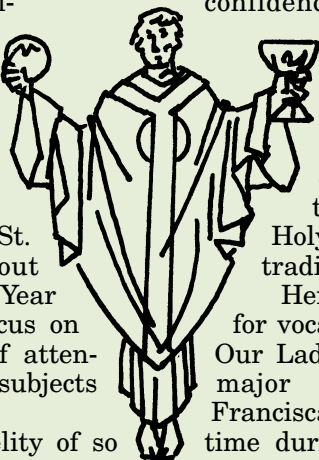
Pope Benedict dedicated the Year for Priests, entrusting all its concerns, including vocations, to the care of “the Most Holy Virgin.” Also a long-held tradition.

Here is a Franciscan prayer for vocations. A prayer imploring Our Lady’s patronage, it lists the major charisms sought in Franciscan vocations. Useful any time during the year, it is surely appropriate for Our Lady’s major summer feast day, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on August 15. Please pray for vocations on that day. [Of note: The Assumption falls on a Sunday, thus superseding the Mass for the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time.]

Prayer for Vocations

O Mary Immaculate,
Patroness of the Americas
and Queen of the
Order of Friars Minor,
we ask you to inspire humble
and chosen souls
for a life in Christ
and in the spirit of St. Francis.

With Motherly care, foster vocations
to our Order and to our Province,
so that seraphic love,
labor and sacrifice
will ever flourish in this land
dedicated to your protection. Amen. ■



The Sacred Heart: Feast and Symbol



We owe much of our devotion to the Sacred Heart, something almost taken for granted as we celebrate the Solemn Feast, to the strong faith of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. She was born in the Burgundy region of France in 1647; four years after King Louis XIV came to the throne.

Very early in life, she was drawn to prayer and love of God, even consecrating her life to the Sacred Heart. Leading her further to a truly personal love of God was her devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Yet, sorrow and suffering were part of her youth. She lost her father when only 8 years old, and battled rheumatic fever, bedridden from 10-15 years old. But faith pulled her through, in an age when life-threatening diseases claimed thousands of lives in France alone.

Just 20 years old, the future saint began to experience visions of Christ.

Professed as a Visitation Nun in 1672, she experienced a series of revelations that lasted over a year and a half.

The Lord asked her to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart, instructed her in devotions known in later times as the Nine Fridays and the Holy Hour, and asked that the Feast of the Sacred Heart be established.

Yet, very few believed this future saint when she tried to do as the Lord had asked her. It was not until 1683 that her religious community understood the spiritual gifts showered on this young nun, and thus joined in promoting the devotion to the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

Two 17th Century priests also worked tirelessly to promote devotion to the Sacred Heart. They were Jesuit Fr. Claude La Colombiere, for a time, Sister Margaret Mary's confessor. The other, was Normandy-born St. John Eudes.

Pope Clement XIII officially approved the devotion in 1765, some 75 years after Margaret Mary's death. She was canonized in 1920.

"This divine heart," St. Margaret Mary wrote, "is an abyss of all blessings... an abyss of love to meet our every need." ■

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. 4105,

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

WHY IN THE WORLD...?

Here in the USA, people are accustomed to seeing Franciscans in many ministries, though they don't always know their name. How often do we hear this question (and answer): "...can't think of the name!.... you know, those missionary priests and brothers, the guys in the brown habits, that's right: the Franciscans!"

To be noted, of course, is that Franciscan "habits" can also be black or gray, depending on what "family" of Franciscans may be the subject of comment.

But "missionary" is indeed the unspoken definition people bring to the name "Franciscan." And how happy St. Francis of Assisi must be with that definition!

Because the mission apostolate is right on target, and always was.

From that moment when Francis heard Christ calling him to serve God, he never let go of "mission" as an apostolate. That call ("Rebuild my Church") came with the familiar echo of Christ's command to his Apostles and Disciples. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus told them (and all who would follow them) to "go... and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them... Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world!" (Matthew 28: 19-20)

One of the remarkable things that missionaries observe all over the world is the vibrant life of faith they find in mission lands.

It is not a faith taken for granted. The letters from our missionaries in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, attest to that and more:

- For one, physically getting to church in many developing areas is a challenge. Yet, people come, often walking over great distances of terrain we would call "hostile."

- Moreover, many people bring others to Mass and the sacraments - a generous commitment, despite great personal hardship.

- Men of the parishes will often pitch in to help construct needed buildings... offering whatever free time they have to accomplish it.

- Lay leaders and volunteers step up to take care of so many services that together form a community of God's people.

This summer, pray for the Lord's missions - and pray for the gift of vocations. And when you can, ask how you fit into God's plan for "mission" - at home and abroad. ■

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 10551-0598. If you wish additional information about how to do this, please feel free to contact:

**Father Robert, O.F.M.
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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 Friends,

Who hasn't been to a June wedding? With trees and flowers in full bloom the earth itself seems to be in love. On your way to a wedding this year tuck St. Francis's Prayer in your pocket and read it through before you head into the church. The familiar words embody the sacrifice, love and joy that can be the foundation for a holy and blessed union.

As you well know the first half of the prayer illustrates how together two can overcome – or work to change – hatred to love, injury to pardon, discord to union, doubt to faith, despair to hope, darkness to light and sadness to joy. It sets the couple on a path to ensure they are “instruments of peace” in their own home and in the greater community.

The beauty of the second half of the prayer is its simplicity and humility – two attributes that come in handy when navigating the marriage waters. This section always strikes me as perfect for young couples to hear and take to heart... “It is in giving that we receive, pardoning that we are pardoned.” So often people believe marriage is an unending well of support, love and comfort not realizing when giving to a spouse you can receive such appreciation and grace in return.

Pray to St. Francis this summer and ask that he bless those headed to the altar and watch how in giving you receive the Lord's love in abundance.

God Bless Your Generous Heart,

Fr. Robert, OFM

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

BECOMING A “FATHER” ALL OVER AGAIN

By Fr. Albert, O.F.M.

Fr. Albert, O.F.M., tells of the home created for street orphans in Olancho

The day I became a Franciscan priest, naturally I left behind such things as becoming a father, having children and building a family. My family was supposed to be of another kind. Though I pride myself of having a pretty fertile imagination, I never, in my wildest dreams, ever thought that one day I'll have a whole bunch of kids jumping all over me. Some of them even believe that I am their true father!

But that's exactly what happened!

The diocese of Olancho consists of 26 thousand square kilometers and has more than half a million inhabitants. When I came to work here, more than 25 years ago, one of the first things I noticed was the fact that there wasn't a single orphanage in a place as big as Massachusetts. That meant that any child who, because of different circumstances in life, ended up without a father and a mother, his only choice was a life on the streets. Los ninos de la calle (street urchins) are now famous all over Latin America. Many times, unfortunately, as they grow up, they're recruited into violent street gangs who eventually become their family.

I really felt that we, as church, had to do something about it. And we did!

Bishop Maurus gave us a piece of land and we embarked on a series of activities to raise funds. The Franciscan Mission Associates with the aid of their benefactors helped us generously. And after 16 months of hard work and huge sacrifices, the dream became a reality.

It seems like yesterday but it was more than eight years ago. On the 24th of March, Bishop Maurus celebrated Mass

and solemnly blessed the Hogar de Ninos: Santa Maria De Los Angeles. Five days after the inauguration, with barely the basic necessities to our orphanage, the District Attorney's office brought us the first six little kids, picked up off the streets of Juticalpa, the capital of the State of Olancho.

None of us had any experience how to run the place. But we started learning fast enough! Sor Felicita and Sor Nilda, two Franciscan nuns from the Parish, fell into the mother role. And somehow, without even realizing it, I found myself becoming the father figure.

We bathed them, we fed them....we started learning how to comb hair, cure bruises, mend toys and even how to tuck them in bed with a fond kiss at night. More than anything, we tried to give them love to satisfy at least some of their hunger!

The nuns even learned how to change diapers and to wake up at night to hug a crying child, assaulted by one of his nightmares. Once we even got a baby one



hour old. His unfortunate single mother died in childbirth and no one could care for him. That day I even found a woman in town to come breast feed our newest arrival. Today, he's four years old, Alberto, a vivacious little kid who brought so much happiness to the family we started many years ago.

Today, more than twenty of the orphans have started school. I can now really appreciate what Mom and Dad did for me when I was a kid.

Uniforms, shoes, copybooks, pencils, satchels, bus fares, you name it, and somehow I had to find it. I never imagined you need so much stuff just to be able to go to school. But it's even a little harder when you have more than 20.

In spite of it all it's the most beautiful feeling you can experience. Everyday, besides my Pastoral work I always try to spend time at the orphanage. They wait for me to listen about their day at school, I help them with their homework, I settled the little fights that pop up now and then, I get them small toys and some candy which they love with a passion...well, I try to be a father. I also attend parent's meet-

ings at school and I try to remember fairy tales to put them to sleep at night. Who said that parenthood wasn't a full time job?

Now Florinda is ten years old. She is the oldest of the family. She came to the Hogar when she was three. She never knew her father and barely remembers her mother who died of AIDS. She's blossoming into a young lady. She already helps take care of the little ones. One day she told me she wants to become a doctor to be able to heal the wounds of her many brothers and sisters at the HOGAR. She dreams a lot and I dream with her. The kids need me to dream with them about their future. But as I go along I'm finding out that I probably need them, even more than they need me. They're my family now.

Thanks to you, our benefactors, Santa Maria De Los Angeles is made possible in Honduras. ■

THE BEAUTY AND JOY OF CORPUS CHRISTI IN EL BARRIAL, JUTIAPA.

By Fr. Roberto, O.F.M.

Celebrations, ceremonial walks and devotion greet the Eucharist during Corpus Christi in El Barrial, Jutiapa. One recent Corpus Christi celebration began on an uncommonly beautiful and sunny Sunday in the month of June; usually during this month the days are rainy. It was seven-thirty in the morning and walking to church we witnessed people's joy and enthusiasm as they decorated the front of their houses with yellow and white colored papers. Others, at the same time, were very motivated making an altar in front of their houses for the Holy Sacrament to rest from its walk and in order to get a special blessing.





Mass started at eight in the morning with incense and very emotional chanting from the residents of the whole town from the bottom of their hearts, marking with their voice a friendly encounter with “their God.”

The people were so respectful during the moment of consecration that a silence blankets the temple together with a feeling of deep devotion. Our Lord’s Prayer was intoned by people with their hearts on their lips, and all that enthusiasm makes one feel close to Heaven’s door.

It took twenty minutes to administer the Holy Eucharist to the crowd that does not stop singing. The end of Mass approaches and the preparations for the scheduled procession on the town’s streets start. It was just after nine in the morning when we started walking, accompanied by solemn singing, praying and incense. The bells tolled and on a beautiful patio we encountered the simple but beautiful altars made with so much love by the families.

Noon has arrived and the three hours of walking went unnoticed.

It was close to twelve-thirty when we entered the church where the beautiful altar awaited; we visited thirty-four altars that were simple but made with such devotion and enthusiasm, highlighting their great love for Jesus Eucharist. The overwhelming sun, fireworks and the beautiful voices of the people have accompanied us through the whole walk. Once in the temple the Eucharist has been placed on the altar full of candles and flowers, and the Holy Hour begins in which people crowd the church and continue to pray.

At one-thirty in the afternoon the Holy Blessing was given and the people with eyes full of emotional tears, show their great gratitude to Our Lord, blessing Him for having allowed them to be part of this solemn day. ■



Words Worth Noting



I am like a little pencil in God's hands. He does the writing; the pencil has nothing to do with it.

Mother Theresa

To me education is a leading out of what is already there in the pupil's soul.

Muriel Spark

The reformer is always right about what is wrong. He is generally wrong about what is right.

G.K. Chesterton

He who complains or murmurs is not perfect, nor is he even a good Christian.

St. John of the Cross

Each of us makes his own weather, determines the color of the skies in the emotional universe which he inhabits.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

Some people regard discipline as a chore. For me, it is a kind of order that sets me free to fly.

Julie Andrews

Do not wish to be anything but what you are and try to be that perfectly.

St. Francis de Sales

No matter how high a little bird can fly, it will never be a kite.

Indian Proverb

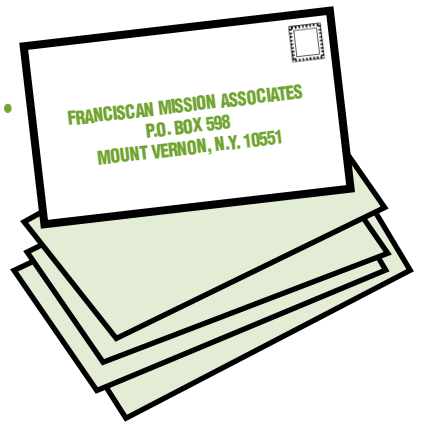
He who cannot pray when the sun is shining will not know how to pray when the clouds come.

Anonymous

If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm.

Vince Lombardi

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father Robert,

I would like to thank you with all my heart for the Lourdes water that I received recently. The meaning of the water is indescribable. Thank you for all of your prayers and prayers from the other Fathers as well, for many of my prayers have been answered. My heart is full of gratitude.

Thank you for praying for me as I can't tell you enough how much it means. I will pray for you too Father. God bless you and keep you.

Very sincerely,
L.S.
McLean, VA

Dear Father Robert,

Thanks to all of you who participated in the Novenas of Masses in March for my son. St. Jude was certainly listening. My son had a very good report from his oncologist and will be participating in a prostate cancer study in the near future. He is responding well in his current treatment.

God bless all of you in your work. Thanks also for the St. Jude medal and Novena booklet.

Sincerely,
B.B.
San Juan Capo, CA

Dear Rev. Father,

Enclosed find \$20 which I promised to St. Anthony during my stay at the hospital. I am not better yet but I hope I will be. Please remember me in your prayers.

Respectfully,
N.C.
Eastchester, NY

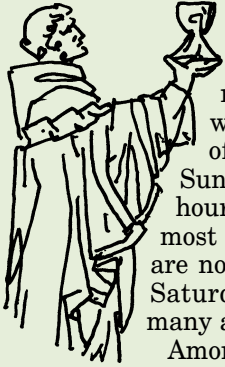
Dear Father Robert,

I want to thank you so much Father for your letter and your prayers to St. Anthony for me. One day after I received your letter my prayer was answered. A retired worker is going to drive me to and from work everyday until I get my license back in September. Praise be to God, His Mother and all His Saints and Angels. St. Anthony has never let me down.

When I get back to work, I will send your missions a gift in thanksgiving of this answered prayer.

Love always in Christ,
S.F.B.
Brick, NJ

The Mass is Celebrated Everywhere (Home Away from Home)



Some of us remember the time when our home parish offered a schedule of Sunday Masses, almost hour on the hour. For the most part, such schedules are now “history”, as is the Saturday Daily Mass, in many areas.

Among other issues, what will a slim Mass schedule mean for Catholics planning vacations?

Including for those who make no reservations **until** determining a Catholic church will be a reasonable distance away?

Three words: *Much More Research*. Two more words are wisely added: *Plan Ahead*.

Begin with calling ahead, checking with a local chamber of commerce at your destination. Google ahead, since you can find and verify much good information online.

Most will want to call the parish directly, so that your “vacation church home,” can verify Mass times, and perhaps suggest other points of interest, such as shrines or special events.

Then - make your reservations, and block out the time on your schedule.

Our grandparents might have cautioned in days gone by: “Remember your Sunday obligation!”

For Catholic families today, however, Sunday Mass is more than an obligation. The nourishment of God’s Holy Word and Sacrament is a necessity. Especially so, as living a life of faith grows more and more ‘counter-cultural’ in our society.

In fact, vacationing families going out to Mass, Sunday and/or weekday, are always an “evangelizing moment” for many people. And the reason is simple.

Observers and onlookers will wonder: “I don’t have time for this... why do **they** make time for church?”

In God’s plan, that question may be all the Holy Spirit needs.

And while you are on vacation, pray for members of the Church who risk their lives to attend Mass today, in so many places around the globe. Even on the great Holy Days and Feasts of the Church year.

Your prayer will also be a chance for thanksgiving (the meaning of ‘Eucharist’) for all the options you enjoy in practicing your faith.

How privileged we have been - and continue to be - when we can count on gratefully gathering with others to wait on the Lord. The same Lord who is also with those who can never take for granted the grace of God’s sacramental presence, any day of the year. ■

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 Fr. Robert, O.F.M. at
Franciscan Mission Associates, P.O. Box 598, Dept. 4104, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF CANCER WITH ST. PEREGRINE

Even with all the progress science has made in medical research over the past few decades, a cancer diagnosis is frightening. Life-changing. Fearsome. And that's the pure and simple of it.

Many patients and families - even health care providers - seek out a spiritual role model, as well. They look to St. Peregrine Laziosi, whose 85 years on earth spanned the second half of the 13th Century and 40 years of the 14th Century. And yes, he was a cancer survivor himself.

And he was... well, a standout all of his life.

By his teenage years, Peregrine was hailed as a 'natural leader.' The son of a prominent family, he was brilliant, loud in his enthusiasm for whatever cause he championed, certain that only his view was right - and utterly fearless. Even when at odds with the Church.

Hardly the profile people attribute to future saints.

But the Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways.

By chance, Peregrine met St. Philip Benizi, a holy Servite priest and preacher, acclaimed as a miracle worker, and something more: a bridge builder. He could reach out to people of no faith - and they would walk

away converts; others would return to the faith, as did Peregrine.

From that time on, the know-it-all bully turned his life around. He entered the Servite community, was ordained a priest, and became renowned as confessor, preacher, and even care-taker for God's abandoned sick and elderly.

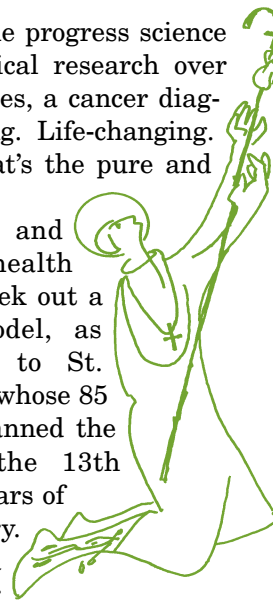
It was a medical crisis of his own that brought this holy priest to new levels of faith. The best doctors of the day declared a recurrent problem of Peregrine's leg and foot to be cancer with amputation, the only option and then, with no guarantees.

The night before the surgery, Peregrine was surely as fear-stricken as anyone else facing likely death. But instead of sinking into the emotional quicksand of fear, he spent the night in the chapel, prostrate in prayer before the Tabernacle, abandoning himself to the will of God.

In the morning, he walked out of the chapel a new and healed man. To the amazement of all, the zealous priest's leg was healed.

Peregrine lived another 40 or more years in God's service, living proof that faith triumphs fear, in any day, any age.

Countless people today turn to Peregrine in prayer, and in respect for the example he sets. Peregrine's strong belief in the power of faith and prayer shines as a beacon of hope - and a reminder of God's enduring love and presence, with us always. ■



JOYFUL JOYFUL. ASPIRATIONS... BY WATER, CLASSROOM, WHEREVER

One of the great aspects of Catholic education is the integration of faith with daily life. Mixing it all up and weaving a kind of spiritual garment to last a lifetime.

Many of us can remember “Sister” teaching us those quick little prayers that remind us of God’s gifts and presence, all day long. The aspirations.

A favorite example: Sister Mary Boniface exhorting the class to “rise and face the windows. All of us, right now,” she would say clapping her hands, “It’s good exercise.”

Because those windows faced eastward, Sister Mary Boniface had more in mind than mere recreation.

“Take a look, breath deeply and drink it in. All that sunshine out there, flooding down from the heavens. It’s wonderful! And we’re going to tell God about that. Now, all together, repeat after me: *‘Thank God for the sun. Thank God for the sun!’*” And soon, 40, 50, or even 60 or more little voices called out in rhythm (and you had better believe, in unison): *“Thank God for the sun! Thank God for the sun.”*

Good exercise. And good practice. It’s a way to see God’s hand in creation, a way to praise God for all those gifts.

A lesson for those times... reaching all the way into our own lives as

parents, as working professionals, as people facing challenges, sorrows, great happiness - even people on vacation!

The words of these short prayers change... as do our experiences. The aspiration works equally well in times of sadness, stress, gratitude, thanksgiving. It is a practice of reaching out to God... in our own words. Out loud, or within the chamber of our heart. Good exercise no matter how old we become.

Something to remember, especially when we have so much to be thankful for - like being with those we love. Enjoying the privilege of leisure time (still a rare thing, when looked at on a worldwide scale).

Aspirations are those little prayers that remind us: God is always close. Filling our lives with gifts. Sustaining every breath we take, available to us at any time.

Remember your “little prayer” power while vacationing, during a good meal, while sitting quietly with a loved one on the beach, or enjoying the quiet of a pristine forest. Whatever is part of your summer ritual (taking in a good movie, visiting with relatives, finding time for a good book).

No need to be fancy. A simple “Thank you, dear God,” is all you need. ■

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 4103, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

Special Novena Schedule Summer 2010

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 16-24	Feast of St. Dymphna (May 15)
June 2-10 and June 11-19	Feast of the Sacred Heart
June 2-10 and June 11-19	Novena of the Holy Spirit
June 5-13 and June 13-21	Feast of St. Anthony (June 13)
June 22-30	St. Anthony for a safe summer
July 2-10 and July 11-19	Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
July 18-26	Feast of St. Anne
August 2-10 and August 11-19	St. Anthony (in Padua)
August 7-15	Assumption of Our Lady
Sept. 2-10 and Sept. 11-19	St. 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:

**Father Robert, O.F.M., Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 4101, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

Join us on Pilgrimage

Lourdes, Shrines of Spain and Fatima

13-Day Pilgrimage

May 16-28, 2011

Lourdes – Barcelona – Zaragoza

Madrid – Avila – Fatima

Dear Father, Please send information on Pilgrimage to Lourdes, Fatima, Shrines of Spain

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**