

FMA FOCUS

NOV 2017/ VOL. 51, NO 2

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



Virtue: Hope

“Be not afraid, I go before you always, come follow me, and I will give you rest.” This beautiful hymn we sing at Mass reminds us that no matter what, the Lord is with us. No one understands this more than our missionary brothers. They wake each day, their hearts filled with joy at the prospect of sharing the Sacraments with the poor. Those they serve are courageous and filled with hope as they battle against conditions most can not imagine. Our Lord is with our brothers every step of the way, bolstering their faith and enabling them to be spiritually fulfilled. And nothing is more joyous than offering those in our missions the beautiful Sacraments to strengthen their bond with Christ and spread God’s love. ■

King of Your Life

Christ the King
—Always within a diocese there is at least one church with this glorious name but what does it mean? For the faithful the last Sunday in November is the Feast of Christ the King. Pope Pius XI instituted it nearly 100 years ago in 1925 in the aftermath of the First World War, originally the last Sunday of October. According to historians the feast was a response to the rise of atheism and communism. The day is to remind us that whatever the earthly powers are, money, technology, celebrity, Christ is our King and deserves our true love and devotion. It was a tumultuous time in history and so many Christians were being told their allegiance should be given to government or other secular institutions. Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical wanted to set Christians on the right path, “If to Christ our Lord is given all power in



heaven and on earth; if all men, purchased by his precious blood, are by a new right subjected to his dominion; if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from his empire. He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone (Quas Primas, 33).”

And just so we don't forget what our “kings” look and act like, our readings and Gospel this November 26 on the Feast of Christ The King remind us. The first reading compares the Lord God to a humble shepherd, whose job it is to tend to the sheep, not exactly

regal on the surface. But read the passage carefully. The shepherd is not a lowly outdoorsman, but a guardian, “the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal,” (EZ 11-12). And also a mighty leader, “but the sleek and the strong I will destroy, shepherding them rightly,” (EZ 15-17). Telling us not to underestimate God's love for us and His knowledge of what is truly our right path. Matthew's Gospel reading also brings that exact image home reminding us that God is among us throughout our lives, in humble forms. We should be just as kind to the janitor at our office as we are to the president of the company. This is the way we live God's Word. Christ the King appears to us in many forms throughout our lives and putting Him first will always lead us to Heaven. ■

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. 2175,

Franciscan Mission Associates, PO Box 598, 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 Data & 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.

Ordinary to Extraordinary - Saint Stories

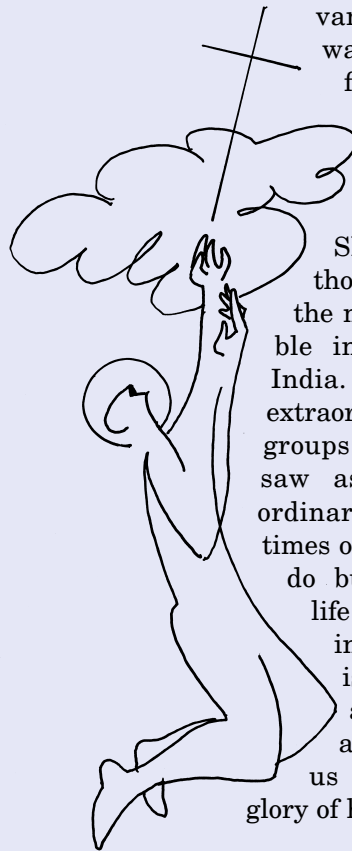
Each November the Church invites all to celebrate All Saints Day. According to Catholic writers a saint knows the truth, is a seer, a realist and a servant of Christ. Growing up and especially in Catholic school, children hear many stories about the lives of the saints. So many familiar ones include, St. Patrick, St. Christopher and St. Stephen.

There are some recent saints that warrant some attention too. This year on the 100th anniversary of Our Blessed Mother's appearance at Fatima Pope Francis canonized two ordinary children who had an extraordinary experience. Jacinta and Francisco Marto are the first child saints who are not martyrs in the history of the church. They were canonized May 13th of this year. Their story illustrates the honesty and purity of children. Six times Mary appeared to them, each time with a message to never offend God, to pray the rosary every day, and to bring peace to the warring world. Adults at first did not believe the poor children but they persevered and by the last apparition thousands believed. The two young children died soon after their encounter but their story lived on. Their cousin Lucia was with them and lived to write about the visions of Mary and her message. She went on to become a Carmelite Sister and wrote extensively about her experience. Sister Lucia lived 98 years and her cause for beatification took a major step this year as well.

Another recent saint is Junipero Serra, OFM, who was born in Spain but is more known for his work in Mexico City and California. This hard working friar founded nine of the first 21 missions in California. He was described as small in stature but robust, optimistic and zealous. His life and mission system are studied in the California schools.

And lastly one recent saint who's extraordinary service to God, Saint Teresa of Calcutta. She has been called an icon for the poor and dis-

vantaged. She was the founder of the Order of the Missionary of Charity. She loved those who were the most vulnerable in society, in India. She saw extraordinary in the groups that many saw as less than ordinary. She had times of doubt as all do but lived her life with others in mind. That is truly what a saint does as they lead us all to the glory of heaven. ■



LIFE IN GLORY ST. ANTHONY

St. Anthony is one saintly example among many of how much more he had been able to do once his mortal life was ended. It is almost as if he promised, as St. Therese of the Child Jesus did, "I will spend my heaven doing good upon earth." It is not unlikely that these two and others know each other in heaven and work together to aid and assist us in our need. How often do we call on St. Anthony for assistance during our day. When something is lost and "can not be found" we ask St. Anthony to help us search. There is a wonderful story about how St. Anthony attempted to preach to those who did not believe. When they turned their backs on him our beloved orator went to the water and began to preach to the fish. The story goes on to state that the fish gathered where St. Anthony was and that forced non-believers to take note of what the young priest had to say. In glory we turn to him to gather those in our families or circle of friends who have walked away from the beauty and safety of our Lord. Teens once they "graduate" after confirmation can at times believe they are done with church. Not the beliefs but the actual sitting in the pew. They are like the non-believers who did not understand the benefit in listening. Teens, and all

those who might miss a Mass or two or abandon the sacraments, need to see our example. They need to see us rushing to St. Anthony and all the saints to drink in the Word of God and the saving sacraments.



Yet another tale of St. Anthony illustrates how he is doing good on earth as he watches over from above. Back in the thirteenth century a child fell into a barrel of water and was drowned. In her grief the mother called on St. Anthony for help. The mother promised to donate her child's weight in grain to the poor if he were restored to life. According to legend the child woke up and this miracle drove many to give alms to the poor as a petition or in return for favors received through St. Anthony's intercession. How lucky are we, earth bound faithful that we can reach out to our heavenly brothers and sisters for help and confidence. The saints share in Christ's glory, no longer limited by time and space. A state we all aspire to and can reach one day depending on how we live our lives each day. ■

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.

Fr. 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 2172, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

THOSE GONE BEFORE US

The devotion to the memory of the dead is one of the most beautiful expressions of the Catholic spirit.

– Pope St. John XXIII

The Church in a particular way during November makes memory of uncanonized saints, “those who have gone before us with the sign of faith, and who sleep in the peace of Christ.” Those who die, but are not yet in heaven, are in need of our prayers. In the Catechism the state of those souls is spelled out, “all who die in God’s grace, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”

We, of course, remember our dear departed loved ones frequently during the year. Though we remember to pray for them and perform acts of mercy and kindness in memory of them, too few of us pray to them in our needs. We think of them, and need to know they are also marching closer to God with each of our prayers. They are also closer to our concerns and us now ever more than they were in life. And our faithful loved ones and friends can see our needs now in better perspective than when they shared our life on earth. One saint associated with those who are not yet saints is St. Gertrude the Great whose feast day is November 16. Little is known about the early life of this prolific saint. She is thought to have joined a convent school at the age of four or five and quickly surpassed all her peers in academic pursuits. She devoured knowl-

edge including lessons in philosophy, art and literature. As a 13th century German nun, Gertrude had many visions, the first at only 25 years old. These visions, of souls in purgatory, and of an adolescent Jesus and His divine heart continued through her life. This prayer, associated with Gertrude the Great, is one faithful use to remember those in purgatory and to keep in mind their suffering.

Eternal Father,
I offer You the most precious blood
of thy Divine Son, Jesus,
in union with the Masses said
throughout the world today,
for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory,
for sinners everywhere,
for sinners in the universal Church,
for those in my own home,
and in my family. Amen.

Let us remember this year on All Souls Day, November 2 to pray for those who are in a state of grace but not yet in communion with the saints. How beautiful to imagine the power of this prayer when said in a community or school with great fervor. ■



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Martyr – Patron of a Difficult Century



When Pope John Paul II canonized the Franciscan Friar Fr. Maximilian Kolbe he solemnly declared him martyr for the faith and called him “patron of a difficult century,” and into this next century I

don't believe the suffering has eased, in fact in many ways it has intensified. St. Maximilian was born Raymund Kolbe, January 8, 1894 in Poland which was then part of the Russian empire. His parents were both devout Christians with a particular devotion to Mary. St. Maximilian also had a deep connection with Our Lady. According to legend after a day of teasing his family and general mischief his mother scolded him. That night he asked The Blessed Mother what was to become of him. It is said, in several biographies written about him, that ten year old Raymund had a vision that night that changed his outlook and put forward the idea that he was to be a martyr. Mary herself appeared to him, according to his recollection, and held out two crowns one white and one red. He was asked which of these two he would accept, white meaning a life of purity and red being a life of martyrdom. Little Raymund told our Mother he would take both. Thereby cementing in his mind his

path to Glory. As a priest St. Maximilian created the Militia of the Immaculata, later calling themselves Knights. These members drew on their love for Our Lady to evangelize and work toward peace in a time of dire circumstances and ultimately World War. Like so many saints, we remember not just the way he lived but the way he died. Fr. Maximilian was arrested and eventually transferred to Auschwitz. One day three prisoners escaped and to deter further escapes ten random men were chosen and banished to an underground bunker to starve. One of the men, a husband and father, begged to be spared and according to witnesses St. Maximilian volunteered to take his place. After two weeks all but St. Maximilian were dead. He was given a lethal injection after being found. His remains were cremated on August 15 the Assumption of Mary Feast Day.

At his canonization in 1982 these words were spoken, *“The reality of death through martyrdom is always a torment; but, the secret of that death is that fact that God is greater than the torment... (He) was filled with the mystery of the divine election of Mary. His heart and his thoughts were concentrated in a particular way upon that new beginning. Which through the work of the Redeemer – was signified by the Immaculate Conception of the Mother (of God).”* St. Maximilian welcomed death to spare another and to fulfill what he believed was his duty and destiny. ■

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,

For some this will be the first Christmas without a loved one. That absence makes, this Christmas different from any other for many of us.

Often in times like these people turn to the prayers of their youth, the simple straight forward Our Fathers and Hail Marys learned at school and at home. This is a wise and comforting thing to do to, go back to our roots.

Through the years we become caught up in more complicated thinking, planning, and living. We forget that the simple prayer of the whole heart can serve better than any other to bring us into God's arms – with all our fears, all our troubles, all our joys, all our successes.

With God in the forefront and ourselves in the back we can spend some time this Advent realizing our blessings and not focusing on our woes. Thanking God for another year of life, is surely at the top of your list when you survey the surrounding landscape. You can also thank Him for the bone that is not broken; the voice still vibrant and strong; the heart still beating with vigor; the mind still active and lively; the food you will enjoy tomorrow; the friends you will see next week; the family who have always loved you; and the prayer you will never forget.

And if by chance a voice you love is stilled or a friend you miss is gone, or a relative's funeral has replaced a birthday, try to see it with God's eyes. Rejoice that their earthly journey is done and that they have moved on to their heavenly reward. Not so easy, I understand. But God does have a plan, we may not see it but it exists.

May God grant you and yours happiness and joy in this holy season whether they are with you are on God's arms.

God bless,

Fr. Robert, OFM

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

HOME IS WHERE THE HUGS ARE

Missioner Amanda Ceraldi recalls a conversation she had with a Valley of the Angels student and how it made her return to Guatemala all the sweeter.

Nearly three months ago as I prepared to leave Guatemala and return to the United States for the first time in two years my student Jaime came and offered to help put my suitcase in the car. When we lifted it into the trunk he looked at me with the goofiest grin, laughed, and said “Amanda, why is your bag so heavy?” I responded by saying “Jaime, I’m going back to the United States for two months and I have a lot of things I need to bring back.” At that, his face turned very serious. He asked me, “you’ll be back right?” “Yeah, Jaime, I’ll be back in January.” He thought about my response for a few seconds and said, “but do you promise?” “Of course, I’ll be back when you return from vacation.” With that response Jaime hugged me and said, “okay, but you have to promise because you can’t abandon us.”

After this conversation with Jaime I wasn’t sure how I could possibly go back to the United States for two months. How could I leave Jaime and the other students at Valley? I was afraid they would think I was abandoning them forever. Part of me felt like I was abandoning them. I didn’t want to get on my plane, but I did. Going back to the States was something I needed to do. It was good to have some time to relax before preparing for another school year at Valley and it was nice to spend time with my family and friends who I hadn’t seen in two years. I am thankful for my time at home, but I was ready to come back to my other home in Guatemala.

When I returned to Guatemala I patiently awaited the arrival of my students. The night before felt like Christmas Eve. I



couldn’t sleep I was so excited to see them. All I could think about was hugging Jaime, letting him know that I was back, and that I had no plans to abandon him. When Jaime walked through the door I felt like my heart might explode with joy. He dropped his bags, ran to me, and hugged me as tight as he could. He looked up at me with that same goofy grin, laughed, and said “thank you for not abandoning us.” It’s good to be back, it’s good to be home. ■

RAISING THE ROOF TO HEAVEN THE VILLAGE FIESTA

By Fr. Albert, O.F.M.



When December comes around, literally, in Juticalpa, all Heaven breaks loose! It is time to prepare for the “Fiesta Patronal” the feast of the patron saint of all Juticalpa. The Immaculate Conception preparations start in earnest nearly two months before the actual event. One of the girls is soon elected as the Queen of the Fiesta. Dozens of meetings are held by the Parish Council to coordinate all the religious, social and sports activities. Short messages are aired on Radio Catolica de Olancho asking people to donate money to help with the many expenses. And there are also a group of people who start looking for fireworks.

Thirty days before the feast the statue of our Lady leaves the parish church and every night there is a visit to a barrio. At six at night there is a very solemn arrival followed by singing and fireworks. Then the rosary is recited by the inhabitants of the

barrio, confessions by one of the priests, a reflection on Our Lady by a layperson and the celebration of Mass. This helps us prepare the whole parish for the actual day of the feast in small groups where they actually live in the barrio.

When the day of the fiesta arrives, December 8, then it’s really something to see in Olancho. Early in the morning, and when I say early it means at about three or four o’clock in the morning, people start coming down from the mountain villages of Juticalpa by jeep, by horse and even walking for long, long hours.

Meanwhile in the town plaza there are all kinds of movable shops selling coffee, tortillas and cheese, and all kinds of local pastries. At 10 am the most solemn Mass of the year is celebrated at the cathedral by the Bishop to a very packed house. Meanwhile two priests are hearing confessions and the singers are at their best since they have been preparing for the last two months.

Besides being the most solemn Mass of the year it is also usually the longest, since it is never over before mid-day. But, nobody complains, everyone is happy. After Mass there is always more than one hundred babies to be baptized, water to be blessed, sick persons to be anointed and very important, lots of candy to be distributed among the dozens of kids present for the celebration.

After Mass comes soccer. Usually there are about three soccer games between the best rival teams of the parish and one of them wins the trophy for the year. After that there is horse racing with some very nice animals brought over for this special day.

When all this is over, it is usually already late at night. People start going back to their villages, the priests are exhausted and the streets of Juticalpa are littered with the day's debris. But everyone

is so, so happy. The Fiesta is a big success and I am sure Our Lady is smiling on her children for all they have done for her. No one doubts it. Next year, the Village Fiesta will be even bigger. ■



Words Worth Noting



From now on any successful life must include serving others.

George H. W. Bush

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.

Malcolm Forbes

If your ship doesn't come in, swim out to it.

Jonathan Winters

A fool bolts pleasure and then complains of indigestion.

Minna Antrim

Even now I am full of hope but the end lies in God.

Pindar

An aim in life is the only fortune worth finding.

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

It is a fearful mistake to believe that if our wishes are not met they can do no harm.

St. Gertrude the Great

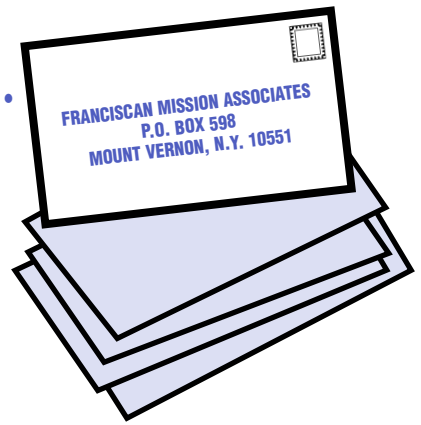
Fallacies do not cease to become fallacies because they have become fashion.

G.K. Chesterton

If everything seems under control you are not going fast enough.

Mario Andretti

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father,

What a delightful surprise. I will be 75 years old in November and would be honored if you or an associate Priest would remember me at Mass on my birthday.

Sincerely,
M.A.S.

Dear Father,

Last November I fractured my left ankle. Daily I prayed the novena for recovery from the fracture and that surgery would not be necessary. After two months the fracture healed added by physical therapy. Less than a month after my ankle healed I tore the cartilage in my other leg. I again prayed daily saying the Novena prayers and after two months of concentrated physical therapy no surgery was needed, it was almost 100 percent healed. I am so grateful to have my novena prayers answered.

F. McD.
Wellesley, MA

Dear Father Robert,

Are you this nice to everybody? Thank you. The letter you wrote me (in response to my small donation to the St. Anthony Novena) was amazing! Things have been rough looking for a job. Your letter has lifted a big weight off my shoulders.

Thank you,
S. W.
Fords, NJ

Dear Father,

Thank you for saying mass on my 94th birthday. I thank God every day for giving me such a good life for so long.

Thank you Father,
M.D.
Powhatan, VA

Dear Father,

My mother died last year and she was devoted to her faith and your organization.

Going through her things, I found your "Prayer for those Living Alone" card, which I now say daily. Thank you for touching my life in so many ways.

C.K.
Warren, RI

Dear Father,

This is a Thanksgiving gift. I made a Novena to St. Anthony of Padua and received what I was asking for. Thank you for interceding for me.

P.L.
Girard, OH

BECOMING LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN

There are many mysterious sayings of Christ in the Gospels. One of them that can engender a lifetime of reflection is this, "I assure you, unless you change and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of God." Each of us should ask ourselves this question: "How can I change and become like a little child?" Today's child is different from the children in the time of Jesus. Today's child has technology at hand, can seemingly answer any and all questions, and have a global view. But do they? So often teens and children use their access to look inward – to project themselves **onto** the world not so much to project themselves **in to** it. However their differing outlooks there are some similarities between today's children and those in years past. Most young children are not worried about money or power over each other. So often those ideas are taught by the world at large. Many children don't worry about how she is fed or clothed, even the poor have an abstract view often of their situation not a concrete one as adults do. And that is right. Children, rightfully, look to their parents for assurances. This is what the

Gospel is telling us, that we as Christians do not always have to only rely on our human selves and earthly concepts. We can run to the arms of our Lord or Our Lady to find reassurances. Children are often not given the total story because their understanding will not match the gravity of the situation. They are left out of decision making roles if very young because they do not have the context or wisdom. In the same way God knows our path and we do not have the divine context He does. Now that doesn't mean we go around doing whatever we like assuming God will pick us up and dust us off and set us on the right path. Even young children know the basic right from wrong and follow it when lead by a steady and loving hand. That is what we need to do. We need to reach for God's steady and loving hand when our lives seem to be veering off into uncharted territory. God, Our Father, who loves us unconditionally and forgives us always, will open his arms and show us the guidance we so seek. And we as children do, will be grateful and once again walking toward his light and love. ■

A SPIRITUAL CHRISTMAS GIFT

If you wish to give a spiritual gift for your loved ones or for special friends at Christmas, may we suggest a gift enrollment in Franciscan Mission Associates.

Those you enroll at Christmas will share spiritually in the Masses and prayers of all our Franciscan friars during 2018 and in a Special Novena of Masses to begin on Christmas Day.

You will receive beautifully engraved Christmas gift cards, well in advance. Each card is designed to show your name as the donor and the name of each person you decide to enroll. You may remail or give the gift announcements as you choose.

To obtain additional Christmas enrollment cards, please write today to:

Fr. Robert, O.F.M., Box 598, Dept. 2173, Mount Vernon, NY 10551

CHRISTMAS TREE, WREATH AND CHRISTMAS CRIB



Three great symbols of Christmas, the tree, that emblazons our living rooms, the crib that sits beneath the tree, and the wreath that helps remind us about the passage of time are all examples of how the Church and the family come together with joy.

We are all taught about the symbolism of the Advent wreath, the evergreens, signifying continuous life. How beautiful the smell and sight of the traditional wreath on the center of the table, always a circle symbolizing the eternity of God and everlasting life. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent and with each passing Mass a new candle is lit, three purple and one rose. Some wreaths include a white candle placed in the middle of the circle signifying Christ. This white candle, according to tradition is lit Christmas Eve. The Advent Wreath's beauty either with real candles or made at school and colored pink and purple, has become a usual and familiar parts of our daily reminders that we are ready and waiting for Christ and the Christmas celebration.

In all our churches we also find Christmas trees filing the space around the altar, wreaths hanging from the walls and as the season culminates, a familiar Christmas manger scene often just below the altar where all can see. Examine the scene and

realize that we are called upon to imitate that picture first in our care and love for each other. Our attention is also drawn to the acceptance of the wonders of God's creation, the animals, the angels, the stars, the magi and finally in our placing at the center of our lives, Christ the center of the season, the home and the manger. Saint John Paul II when Pope reminded us about the significance of the crib, "Contemplating the crib, let us continue to savor the atmosphere of Christmas joy and revive our sentiments of gratitude to the creator who chose through love to take on our human nature to share in our destiny and resort us the hope of heaven."

Pope Francis has called the Christmas Tree and Crib symbols of hope and love and he also asked the faithful to draw a parallel between today's migrants and the Baby Jesus whose family was denied decent shelter and had to flee persecution. (Standing at the Vatican Christmas Tree lighting, Pope Francis, reminded those in "painful" circumstances.) He also asked those who visited the crèche to "rediscover its symbolic value, which is a message of fraternity, sharing, welcoming and solidarity."

Let us remember the humility and meekness in which Our Lord entered our world to save us and to help us eventually reunite with Him in Heaven. ■

Visit us on the web

franciscanmissionassoc.org

or on YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/user/FranMissAssoc>

THE POWER AND BEAUTY OF CHRISTMAS MASS

Some go at midnight – able to usher in the Lord’s birth first. Some wait until dawn breaks and some go mid-day when families have arrived for festivities. Whenever you attend, Christmas Mass is powerful and moving. The Midnight Mass readings this year attest to the wonder of this holiest of days. The first reading from Isaiah reminds us of the longing during Advent for the Lord and the rejoicing after his coming. “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.

You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing,” (Isa. 9:1-6). For children and for some adults, Advent is long. It is a wonderful contemplative time to really clear our hearts and minds for Christ. So much of that time is spent readying for the material Christmas needs; gifts, food, travel arrangements. It is important to remember to spend the time spiritually readying for Christ. This can be done easily in quiet moments before bed or on your commute.

The Responsorial Psalm (Ps. 96) practically bursts into song itself welcoming the Lord and ‘singing’ his praises, “Sing to the Lord a new song...Announce his salvation... tell his glory among nations...Then shall all the trees of the forest exult.” Sitting in the pew week after week we are reminded how much our Lord loves us, this Mass with these readings, allows us to show our Lord how much we love Him and how grateful we are for His coming.

And our Gospel this year from Luke is one we know well but still love to hear. How it must have been for those simple

shepherds. Busy at work when a flash of light and a “multitude of the heavenly host with the angel praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest’” (Lk 2:11-13). What a sight. Let’s not lose track of that beauty and glory in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season.



And after the Liturgy of the Word the faithful, together, receives the Body of Christ. Pope Francis has called the Eucharist “A tangible reminder of God’s love.” He has said it allows us to slow down, “In the Bread of Life, the Lord comes to us, making himself a humble meal that lovingly heals our memory, wounded by life’s frantic pace of life.”

As we receive Communion this year, at Christmas Mass let us remember to slow down our lives, even if just for the day, to welcome the new child who will save all of us, alleluia, alleluia! ■

Did You Know?

You can continue to carry on the work of the Missions and the people they serve by remembering them in your estate plans. These legacies of love can be made in many different ways to fit your individual circumstances. Consider making a bequest of whatever you wish to: Franciscan Mission Associates, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598. Or, if you wish additional information about making a will, please feel free to contact:

Father Robert, O.F.M.
Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 2174
Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

Special Novena Schedule Advent-Christmas 2017

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 Winter months the Special Novena schedule is:

- November 21-29Novena for the Faithful Departed
- December 1-31Infant Savior (31 Masses)
- December 8-16Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- December 16-24Feast of Christmas (in Padua and Bethlehem)
- December 24-January 1Feast of Christmas (in Assisi)
- December 25-January 2Christ Child Novena (in Bethlehem)

Additional Masses: One Mass is celebrated daily for our good friends and their intentions. And one Mass is said each month at St. Dymphna's Shrine in Gheel.

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 our Franciscan missionaries, for the people they serve, for an increase in vocations and for all our associates. Kindly forward your petitions for the Novenas scheduled to:

**Father Robert, O.F.M., Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 2171, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

Join us on Pilgrimage

11-Day Pilgrimage to the Heart of Italy

Assisi – San Giovanni Rotondo - Amalfi - Capri - Pompeii - Rome

MAY 8-18, 2018

11-Day Pilgrimage to Austria, Germany, Switzerland

*Vienna - Melk Abbey - Salzburg - Garmisch - Lucerne
And Featuring the famous Oberammergau Passion Play*

MAY 14-24, 2020

Dear Father, Please send information on:

Pilgrimage to Italy

Pilgrimage to Austria, Germany & Switzerland

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

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