

# FMA FOCUS

FEB 2018/ VOL 51, NO 3

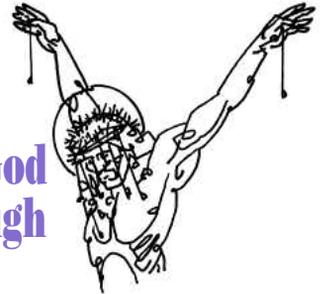
Franciscan Mission Associates  
Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10551

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



## Virtue: Prudence

Prudence is an often-misunderstood virtue. According to our Catechism “the prudent man looks where he is going.” Prudence guides other virtues by setting rule and measure. A prudent person takes his time and makes decisions based on what is God’s will. Often times this is not the easy decision, to speak out against a crowd, to welcome a stranger when others turn him away. It is the second part of prudence, the action part that people often forget. They assume a prudent person is unable to move forward, that is so wrong. Those who possess the virtue of prudence act swiftly and deliberately once the path of goodness and morality is defined. Take time, St. Thomas Aquinas says, in deciding what is right, but then don’t delay doing it. ■



## Loving God all through Lent

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, falls this year on February 14, a day set aside to honor love. And while some may think Lent and Love might not go together, they are mistaken. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). It is the ultimate act of love that Jesus dies on the cross for us to save us.

Lent is also when Christians spend seven weeks in preparation for Easter. It is a time when we recall our Baptismal promises, and strive to reapply our decision to imitate Christ in our manner of life. This can mean spending more time with our family,

especially those who might have fallen away from the Church for whatever reason. Many times people who don't want to go to Church are busy all week and say "Can't I just have Sunday for myself?" As true believers and followers, it is our baptismal obligation to reach out to those who may begin to take their faith for granted and show them they need to participate in the relationship with God, not just take from it.

Lent is a time for serious reflection on who we are, why we are here and where we are heading. In one way or another all of us fail in faith and succumb to the world, the flesh and the devil. It may be - missing a few Masses because we want to watch sports or sleep in, or using God's name in vain during a bad traffic jam. It could also be not following God's simple commandment to love one another. Lent is a good time to look around in our parish, look for opportunities to repent by helping others. Helping others is both the hardest and easiest commandment to follow. Start with your family, especially those who have moved away from you emotionally or

physically. Reach out – do your part to mend the relationship.

Life is long and hard and during that journey we tend to stray from the pilgrim path to our final destination. God knows we will stray, so many parables are about that topic and how God forgives and welcomes us back. Lent is the annual opportunity to return to the right road to intensify our faith in Christ's promises and to keep our own promises to follow the teaching and example of our Savior. ■

## 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 3182**  
**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.



## THOSE RADICAL PROPHETS

Most of us think of a prophet as one who can predict the future. Instead the Church calls prophets those who are more keenly aware than others and are able to see the present in its divine perspective. The prophet sees things as they are and how far they are from what God intends them to be. Consider Isaiah, the first Major Prophet – whose name means “salvation of God.” His possible aristocratic lineage gave him the ear of the powerful when he spoke and wrote about the coming of Jesus, the sins of Israel, the Day of the Lord and the kingdom of God. Isaiah like all prophets denounced what was wrong in Israel and fearlessly gave witness to what must be changed to conform to God’s plan and purpose.

Very often in Lent the Mass readings are drawn from the prophets of old. Some of the most beautiful words from Isaiah, which show his prophetic language, also included words of hope. All is not lost according to Isaiah when we move to the Lord “remove the yoke from among us and turn away from evil.” (Is. 58:9)

“The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong;

and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations, you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.” (Is 58:11-12)

It is easy to see why prophets are called counter cultural. They call on us to clear away all that which takes us from the Lord, vices and sinful activity that gets scant attention these days. So much of our life is consumed by that which is unimportant, getting and spending money, getting and spending influence and using time to profit ourselves, not improve the world. How often do we sit in front of the television and say, “something needs to be done about that,” or “how can that still be happening?” If you hear yourself saying that again and again, realize it may be God’s way of calling to you. Asking you to pay attention to the prophet inside you – the voice that acts as a witness to God’s truth alone. True prophets are never popular. But we are all called to be witnesses to Christ, and that we must be, to some extent, prophets in our own time. ■

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## 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. 3184, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

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# GOD'S REWRITE OF ANTHONY'S PLAN

In the life of St. Anthony, we note his constant effort to draw closer to Christ. Each step or misstep he took was an attempt to follow his Savior's example which he found mirrored in Holy Scripture. And he fulfilled his wishes, he became a humble teacher who was able to proclaim the Word of God and live a full, if short, life following God's will.

At a young age, Anthony knew he wanted to devote his life to our Lord, so at 15 he joined the Augustinians believing this was his true path. He even asked to be moved to a separate residence so his friends visiting wouldn't bother him. Surely this was a way to show his love for Christ and to march down his path of truth. Eight years went by as Anthony grew in his faith and his knowledge of the life of Christ through his study of the Bible. Another twist of fate was in the near future. Anthony, realizing his urge to not just live and learn the Word of Christ but to spread it, asked that he be released from the Augustinians so he could join the missionary group, the Franciscans. This, he thought, will bring me closer to Christ; I will be living his Word and spreading it to those in far off lands where they have not seen the light. But this, also, was not to be. First Anthony fell ill, then his ship was blown off course and he ended up in Sicily. He eventually made his way to

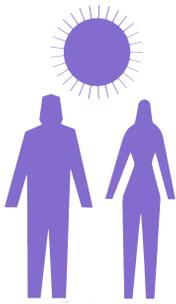


Assisi where he met and became an ardent disciple of St. Francis. Initially Anthony was assigned menial tasks and reveled in the humility the Order fostered. Like Jesus, he was a poor man but rich in his love for our Father. But God knew of Anthony's talents, his ability to speak and gather crowds and truly engage nonbelievers. So during an ordination ceremony Anthony was pressed into service, much to his chagrin. He was asked to deliver a sermon. At first Anthony balked, he was there to work as a lowly servant of God not to be center stage. But he accepted God's will and was brilliant. And all were amazed. So following

in Jesus's example, as was his lifelong goal, Anthony was sent to preach all over and the crowds grew, and his reputation swelled. He knew this was also a way to be close to Jesus. He was accepting the path Jesus had put in front of him so many years before. Anthony continued to preach and work himself tirelessly until his untimely early death. Now in heaven, St. Anthony makes evident the concern of Christ for us in all the events large and small in our lives. ■



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FranciscanMissionAssoc](http://www.facebook.com/FranciscanMissionAssoc)



# LENTEN PENANCES

Magicians will tell you that their acts are successful because of misdirection. The audience is looking at one thing and the magician manipulates something else to achieve his end.

Often we all use this misdirection to deal with our own lives. We look away or dismiss something as someone else's fault not our own. We don't take responsibility for our failings. We stayed up too late watching television and didn't finish a report but it is the boss's fault because the deadline was too short. Students blame teachers, children blame parents and parents blame others instead of themselves. During Lent we are guilty of misdirection at times. Not with blame maybe but certainly our eyes are not focused on the prize.

In good faith, many good Catholics look for things to do, penances to take on in order to put themselves in the spirit of this penitential season. The best penances, some spiritual writers claim, are not those we select for ourselves, because they can give rise to pride. We tend to give up chocolate, or that time-wasting television show. We promise to put an extra donation in at

Sunday Mass. And we look at ourselves in four weeks and proclaim – we are the best. We did it, a quick pat on the back and then we go right back to our old ways. What we could be doing, instead, is looking at our own lives and the penances we already have. Perhaps we have a sister or brother, or aging parent who for whatever reason we have lost touch with. Perhaps they asked us for favors when we know our time is stretched so thin already. God asks us during this Lenten season to look at that family cross we bear more closely. That cross is not a penance we chose ourselves to conquer but one God fit to our back with every intention of making sure we know it is there. Not as a punishment, but as a method of making us whole, and the best disciples we can be, living the Word of God. It might be harder than keeping candy out of our mouths for a couple of weeks. But we know that God has our best interest. He knows what we need much better than we do. He can guide us in a way we wouldn't have even seen. Lent should be a time of moving closer to God. And that means listening to His suggestions. So perhaps this Lent we can try to accept the penances we already have as gifts from a loving God. ■

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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. 3185,  
Franciscan Mission Associates, PO Box 598, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

# Becoming like St. Francis

Even if you know nothing about the life of St. Francis, you could model your life after his by just paying attention to just some of the lines in the prayer associated with his name, known as the prayer of St. Francis.

## **Let me be an instrument of your peace**

That should be an easy model to follow. Be the peacemaker in the family fight, be the peacemaker in the office jealousy problem, be the peacemaker in the Church council meeting, be the peacemaker instead of giving in to road rage on the highway. But short tempers and too much time listening to people shouting on television or the radio can make our fuses short too. How do we resolve this? How do we resolve anything, look outside yourself. That person in your family fighting with you may be remembering a long lost hurt. Try talking with them, or listening – even better. Remember the saying “God gave us two ears but only one mouth for a reason.”

## **Where there is despair, hope**

This doesn't just mean that we HOPE everything will be all right. But this hope is instead the knowledge that God loves us and no matter what the trouble or woe, God will be there to welcome us home when we pass this time of trial and see Him face to face. This hope is what gets us through small disappointments and greater

losses like the death of a loved one. This hope is our gift to others in our lives that may not have the strong faith we do, who need this lifeline when they are drowning.

## **For it is in giving that we receive, pardoning that we are pardoned**

Ah perhaps the hardest part of the prayer to follow. As faulty humans we are designed for self-preservation. We instinctively want to take and do whatever we can to make ourselves feel better. It turns our simple sensibilities on our heads to be confronted with the thought that we are actually better off when we give. Try it. Try giving, even when it is hard. Next time you argue with your family member forgive first, don't stand your ground and wait. In doing this we follow in the footsteps of our beloved St. Francis, the humble preacher who gave up everything and joyfully became a true follower of Christ. ■



# 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,

While many associate the somber season of Lent with penance, and rightfully so, there is another view. Lent gives Christians a chance to show how much we love God and are sorry for our sins.

How appropriate that this year Ash Wednesday falls on February 14, a day love is celebrated. It is a gift and a reminder this year to begin Lent with the overpowering, all embracing love of God as our focus. That grace and solace is there, always. It greets us in the morning, and helps us calm our minds after a long day. But one of the best ways to meet with Jesus during Lent is to receive penance. Many Churches offer more chances to confess our sins during Lent in preparation for Easter.

God knows we love Him and we are aware of his love for us. But just like your family and friends, it is important to show God your love. Walk that extra mile for others, dedicate time to our Lord, and really focus in Mass on the readings and especially the Gospel. He is there for us always; let us spend Lent being there for Him.

God bless you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Robert, ofm".

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

# FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS A SPIRITUAL EMPIRE IS GROWN

*This is an excerpt from an article that first appeared in the Catholic News Service*

**H**is Boston Red Sox baseball hat is almost as big a part of him as his brown Franciscan habit. Anywhere Franciscan Father Flavian goes in El Salvador, he's known not only for his love of baseball, but more importantly, for the only thing he loves more than the game: the poor.

More than fifty years ago, Boston native Father Flavian, arrived in El Salvador with one piece of luggage, much in the same way his Italian grandparents first arrived to the United States, the country where he was born. Though the U.S. is where he grew up and received his formation in the Friars Minor of the Order of St. Francis for the Province of the Immaculate Conception in New York, "my heart, my mind, it's all here," said Father Flavian, referring to El Salvador, the country to which he has devoted five decades of his life.

In those five decades, he's built what amounts to an empire of social and public services called the AGAPE Association of El Salvador. Known in the country simply as AGAPE, the Greek word for love, it includes clinics, a soup kitchen, a home for the elderly, a nascent university and other educational centers for children and adults, as well as a restaurant (named after his mother), a hotel, and TV and radio stations.

Through war, natural disasters, and now the rampant gang violence that plagues the country, Father Flavian has remained steadfast to his vision to serve the poor of El Salvador.

As others abandoned the country because of the impending conflict, Father Flavian began feeding the poor in a rural





soup kitchen in 1978, and as the country found itself in the middle of war in the mid-1980s, he built the AGAPE headquarters on the rural outskirts of the city of Sonsonate in the western part of El Salvador.

“When I want something, I get it done,” said Father Flavian, 83. Though he’s retired from his post as head of AGAPE, he keeps an office on the Sonsonate campus where he sees visitors wanting to know about his life’s work. It all began in 1977 when he hosted the homeless for Christmas dinner at the parish where he was serving.

“That day I learned the true meaning of happiness,” Father Flavian told the International Labor Organization in 2009, when it honored him with the Social Entrepreneurship Award. “Not that I was not happy before, but this was a different type of happiness, one more profound and meaningful. It was a happiness based on giving.”

What began with a soup kitchen expanded into more than 50 programs that medically treat, train, educate, feed or employ hundreds of thousands of Salvadorans who have at one point or another used AGAPE’s services, now in 24 locations throughout the country.

When Father Flavian arrived in El Salvador on July 9, 1967, as a 32-year-old friar, there was no war, but there was rampant poverty.

“It was easy for me to understand (the poor) more than any other priest because I was poor,” said Father Flavian in an interview with Catholic News Service.

Though his father had once made a good living as a mason in Boston, he became ill, died and the family went into poverty. A group of religious sisters and the Knights of Columbus helped his mother with education for the children and other necessities such as shoes, but they couldn’t save his dreams of becoming a baseball player.

During his formation, he recalls, when seminarians were told to go home and give away all their possessions, he had nothing to give away, “not even five cents,” so instead he spent the day learning to drive and got his driver’s license the same day. When he arrived in El Salvador, he said he clearly understood when mothers asked for help to send their children to school because of what his mother had gone through. He knew what it meant to be hungry, what it meant to have no money.

He asked to forgo vacations, other than occasional ones to visit family in the U.S., because the “poor can’t even take one vacation” he said. Instead, he devoted that time to building what has become one of the biggest employers in El Salvador and a spiritually based empire of sorts. ■

# TAKING DOWN FENCES

By Amanda Ceraldi

Amanda Ceraldi from Franciscan Mission Service, a Volunteer with Valley of the Angels

When driving nearly anywhere in Guatemala City I am constantly surrounded by fences. Wooden fences, wire fences, tall fences, wide fences—on every street there are fences. Some of these fences are lined with barbed wire or shattered glass, some are less like fences and more like walls, but nonetheless, Guatemala City is a city of fences. These fences have many different purposes. They gate communities, block construction, and encase parking lots and shopping centers, but their foundation is all the same. These fences are for safety and security, to protect what's behind them.

I've found that I have become used to the fences of Guatemala City. In many ways they dictate my life. These fences tell me where I can and cannot go, they tell me when to turn left or right, they keep me protected from the unknown dangers that might lie ahead. These fences do what they were built for, they make me feel safe, they provide the idea of comfort, whether or not they serve their purpose.

But, the fences that have surrounded me in Guatemala are not always physical. Sometimes these fences are more figurative. They are the fences that hide my insecurities, my fears and my anxieties. Throughout my whole life I've slowly built

up these imaginary fences. Similarly to the fences I see everyday in Guatemala, my own personal fences are lined with barbed wire, they are brick walls, they are taller than I can see and wider than I can reach. These fences are used for the very same reasons that the fences have been built in Guatemala City; my fences make me feel safe and secure, they provide me with a level of comfort, and do exactly what I built them for. Just like Guatemala's fences, the fences I have built dictate my life.

These fences, the ones that protect me from facing my insecurities, my fears, and my anxieties, the ones that I have built up and use block me from the uncertainty in my life, are coming down. Piece by piece and brick by brick the kids at Valley of the Angels are taking down my fences. The love of these kids is taking away my insecurities, my fears, and my anxieties. Their love is showing me that these fences are not protecting me, but rather they are hiding my authentic self. The 215 precious angels that I live and work with have shown me how to be my authentic self, they have shown me that I don't need my fences because these kids have replaced the bricks and the barbed wire with their unconditional love. And for that I will be forever grateful. ■



# Words Worth Noting



*God instructs the heart, not by ideas but by pains and contradictions.*

*Jean Pierre de Caussade*

*Love has no meaning if it isn't shared, it has to be put into action.*

*St. Teresa of Calcutta*

*If you want peace work for justice.*

*Pope Paul VI*

*There is nothing worse than a brilliant image of a fuzzy concept.*

*Ansel Adams*

*I wish to not merely be called Christian but also to be Christian.*

*St. Ignatius*

*Love is not about staring at each other, but staring off in the same direction.*

*Antoine de Saint Exupery*

*The secret to staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age.*

*Lucille Ball*

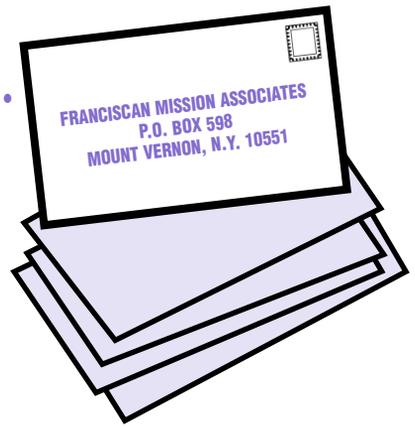
*Wrinkles should merely indicate where the smiles have been.*

*Mark Twain*

*No one has the right to feel hopeless, there is too much to do.*

*Dorothy Day*

# Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father,

This is a Thanksgiving gift. I did a Novena to St. Anthony of Padua and I received what I was asking for!

P.L.

Girard, OH

Dear Father,

I am sending \$50 to help your missions and to thank Saints Joseph, Jude, Anthony, and Francis for the graces received especially the sale of the apartment and purchase of a home. Please pray for my children and grandchildren and families that they will all return to the sacraments and the grace of God. I enjoy reading FOCUS.

A.D.

East Elmhurst, NY

Dear Father,

Thank you so much for remembering me at Mass and in your prayers on my birthday. Your card arrived when I was praying so hard for our daughter to get a job she had interviewed for and wanted badly. That same day she was hired for the job and I feel the good Lord blessed us in abundance and was smiling down on us.

Sincerely,

M.R.J.

Hilton Head, SC

Dear Father,

Thanks so much for the birthday card and remembrance at Mass. I will remember you also in my daily morning prayers before Mass. I am especially eager for our Lord to have mercy and greet my request for successful finances to be used for health care.

Take Care,

L. B.

Madison, WI

Dear Father,

I want to thank you for your gift of St. Francis of Assisi prayer and memento from your Pilgrimage to the Shrines of Italy. I will keep them in my purse always, this way I can pray any moment I have. This makes me be closer to God and His saints.

God Bless you,

A.P.

Seal Beach, CA

# THE SACRAMENT OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

It is the most natural thing and often seems easiest to escape the difficulties of the moment by seeking refuge in the past, or dreaming about a golden future where problems no longer exists. Yet the present moment is all we really have. One of the secrets to living one day at a time, is by realizing what the spiritual writers call – the sacrament of the present moment. A beautiful guide to this path is a book by the same name *The Sacrament of the Present Moment* written by 18th century Jesuit Priest Jean-Pierre de Caussade. Despite its age, the wisdom contained in it is perfectly suited for today's fast-paced, electronics-obsessed and distracted world.

Fr. Caussade details simple ways followers are able to clear the clutter away and be with God in the present. First realize that God is fully present always hiding in ordinary details of our lives. His divinity guides as we make simple decisions, what to say, how to comfort, how to counsel or praise your child for his actions that day.

Fr. Caussade then reminds readers that he means what he says about the PRESENT. Don't dwell, don't look for God's Word tomorrow. Be aware, He is speaking to you today, now. That calm you infrequently feel in traffic, or in line at the pharmacy. That is your

chance to speak to God or better yet, listen. And find the joy and love in God's will for us – follow the impulses that you know are given to us by God and be JOYFUL.

Another bit of advice, don't sabotage yourself and don't underestimate your ability to be holy. Fr. Caussade writes, "holiness consists of one thing only, namely fidelity to God's plan. And this fidelity is equally within everyone's capacity." He notes there is active and passive practice of fidelity. The active practice consists of following the general laws of God and the Church, passive fidelity consists of "accepting what most frequently can not be avoided and in suffering with love that is to say with resignation and sweetness what is too often endured with weariness and discontent." How often do we complain when a husband or wife changes plans, cancels or our child disappoints. Too much of that and our relationship not just with our loved ones but that with our Lord suffers. Fr. Caussade's advice is to see God's hand in the change or the disappointment, perhaps our Lord is making room for something else in that person's life. We don't always understand our Lord's plans for us but if we live in the present moment and trust His will above our own, we will find a spiritual peace that has up until now eluded us. ■

# MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR SACRIFICES

The best penance for Lent is that which makes our daily routines a conscious act of sacrifice to God. It is an annual discussion around some houses and Catholic school classrooms, how do we truly grow in Christ this Lent? There are some simple ideas out there that can make a difference. How about instead of giving something up, taking something on like 40 days of an act of kindness toward someone, especially someone with whom you don't always get along. Or 40 days of learning about a subject that broadens your world and makes you a more empathetic Christian. Look up Adoration times at your parish and others in your area; make time to be with the Lord in prayer at Adoration. Here's one, how about getting a cross for your apartment or home? This will be a constant reminder of the sacrifices Jesus made for us. If daily Mass is not something that can fit in your schedule, try daily meditations. Who can't spare 10 minutes in the morning or evening to commune and focus on what this season is truly about?

When you think about your life it is easy to get caught up in the idea that you are sacrificing, making your own coffee instead of stopping to pick it up, giving up a television show or chocolates. But so many of us really don't know the sacrifice others make. Sacrifice means literally "making holy." Our missionaries sacrifice

everything to devote their lives to bringing the Word of God to those who have nothing. So making do with the small and great pleasures of our life with gratitude to God, and putting up joyfully with the pains of daily existence, especially the small ones, is a way to make Lent spiritually fruitful when borne out of love for God. Matthew reminds us the sacrifice is not one that should be a visible badge of honor.

"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matt. 6: 16-18).

It is with joy that we bear our crosses, not just during Lent but during the whole of our lives. We know what awaits us, what God has planned. God made us in his image and likeness and it is our responsibility to grow in his love and deepen our faith to become what He knows we can be. ■

Visit us on the web  
[franciscanmissionassoc.org](http://franciscanmissionassoc.org)

# Seeing St. Joseph in today's youth

In his homily for a Mass this past year, Pope Francis spoke of St. Joseph, the patron saint of the universal church, and the earthly father of Jesus as a “dreamer capable of accepting the task” given to him by God. The Pope likened him to today's teenagers, saying they too are dreamers. Joseph, as we remember, through a dream accepted God's promise and carried it forward with silence and strength and make sure God's will was done.

Today's teens have a hard time listening to their dreams or even having time to dream. Many belong to every club, play every sport, they have an extreme view of their lives. Their dreams are those of failure sometimes or disappointment. The Pope is encouraging today's teens to never lose the ability to dream and take risks that will improve or change the course of their station. He is encouraging them to not be afraid of the more difficult road that lies ahead, for God is with them.

In his homily the Pope described Joseph as a man who “doesn't speak but obeys, a man of tenderness, a man capable of fulfilling his promises so that they become solid, secure.” Sometimes the star quarterback dreams of writing the great American

novel or volunteering weekends at the homeless shelter but practice and games preclude that. Teenagers these days are told not to dream. They need to prepare for a life of work, a successful career in a hard charging world. They need to keep up with technology, friends and new ideas. But they are not given the time to find the peace they may need to be truly fulfilled later in life, when some of those “successes” find their way into their lives. Teens should be encouraged to find a balance, just like adults, in their lives to welcome spiritual growth, not just physical or academic. So often once they are confirmed, students begin to fall away from church, they stop going to CCD or even Mass. They feel they have “graduated.” This means the emphasis on their spiritual growth may be halted but this is exactly the time to dig in and really get to know Christ and his plans for you. Let's pray for today's teens and hope they heed the Pope's call to follow their dreams straight into the loving arms of our Lord and Savior. ■



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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.

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 3183, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

# FMA Spiritual Exercises - Lent-Easter 2018

For the petitions and special intentions of all our benefactors, Franciscan Mission Associates will conduct this series of spiritual exercises during the Lenten and Easter season.

You are cordially invited to join us in prayer for your own needs and petitions, for those of our Franciscan Friars and their people, and for all who cooperate by prayer and sacrifice for the spread of the faith.

During the Lenten and Easter Season these Novenas of Masses have been arranged:

- January 1-9 .....Holy Family Novena
- February 2-19 .....Our Lady of Lourdes
- February 14 - March 25 .....Lenten Masses (40)
- March 20-28 .....Feast of Easter
- March 20 - June 12 .....13 Tuesdays to St. Anthony
- April 1-9 .....In Thanksgiving for the Risen Christ

Holy Mass is offered each day for all Franciscan Mission Associates benefactors and 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 3181, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

## Join us on Pilgrimage

MAY 8-18, 2018

### 11-Day Pilgrimage to the Heart of Italy

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

MAY 14-24, 2020

### 11-Day Pilgrimage to Austria, Germany, Switzerland

*Vienna - Melk Abbey - Salzburg - Garmisch - Lucerne*

*And Featuring the famous Oberammergau Passion Play*

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. F, P.O. Box 598, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

**Tel: 914-664-1747 or 914-664-5604, franciscanmissionassoc.org**