

FMA FOCUS

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



Virtue: Trust in God

As we get older we learn to break away from our parents or guardians and rely on ourselves. It is a rite of passage and one that forms us as a productive adult. We never cut ties completely, because the more we know, the more they do as well. This sentiment is even stronger when it comes to our reliance on our Lord. As mortal beings, we will never understand fully as God does. So it is faith in God's gift by which we conquer the world and attain heaven. To place all our reliance on God alone and to trust in His promises requires some effort on our part. We believe often we can handle our crosses ourselves, but why would we when we can trust in God to guide the way. Pray often for an increase in faith. ■

Your Lenten Penances



Lent, a time of penance, is perhaps the best time for a modern mediation on Chapter 58 of Isaiah the prophet. These powerful words in scripture lay out exactly how we should be penitent during Lent and always. The chapter of the bible opens with the faithful crying out "Why do we fast, but you do not see it, afflict ourselves but you take no note?" (Is 58:3) These people wanted God to do something for them, while they did nothing for others. God calls us to reach out to others, not up to heaven for a pat on the back. Here God exposes the shallow worship of His people. "See on your fast day you

carry out your own pursuits, and drive all your laborers, you fast only to quarrel and fight and to strike with a wicked fist” (Is 58: 3-4). God is firm in saying these people are crying out to be heard in a way that will not lead them to a heavenly reward. They are fasting to be congratulated unlike the way a true penitent would. Oh God does hear their cries but He also sees their actions as inauthentic and unholy. He reaches out to them with some ways that will bring the reward for which they are looking. “If you lavish your food on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your gloom shall become like midday” (Is 58:10). Fasting is not genuine if the person fasting is not changing or reforming his or her life. However, if those who wish to be heard by the Lord do perform genuine fasting and penance, their lives will be forever transformed. “Then the Lord will guide you always and satisfy your thirst in parched places, will give strength to your bones and you shall be like a watered garden, like a flowing spring whose waters never fail” (Is 58:11).

Lastly Isaiah speaks about honoring the Sabbath. “If you glorify it by not following your ways, seeing your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs then you shall delight in the Lord” (Is 58:13). Caring for others, humbly sacrificing and observing the Sabbath are three ways during this holy season of Lent we can strengthen our own faith. ■

Remember...

*Both in life and in death,
we belong to the Lord. (Romans 14:8)*

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 3192
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Please address all correspondence to Father Robert, O.F.M., at P.O. Box 598, Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10551. Please send changes of address six weeks in advance; if possible include your mailing label, and give both old and new address.

GOD'S WILL AND YOURS

Each time we offer the Lord's prayer we say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." But what exactly is God's will? Scripture tells us plainly, "It is God's will that you grow in holiness: that you abstain from immorality" (1Thess 4:3). Holiness is nothing more than the imitation of Christ, our Lord in every action of life. With the pleasures of the world at our fingertips virtually, and sometimes even in the flesh, it is difficult to push them away. Greed and selfishness are byproducts, sometimes, of busy lives. It is much easier to say it is too time-consuming to be good, to think of others when we barely have time to think of ourselves. But there are no excuses. God's will is the only path to true happiness and peace. Too many of us have a distorted notion of God's will as something unpleasant, opposed to pleasure, and all the good things of life. This is reducing the word pleasure to its basest and most pedestrian form. But that is not what God is asking us to seek. True pleasure and happiness reside in the heart of

Jesus and are ours if we do as he asks, love one another, keep holy the Sabbath, covet nothing and follow the other commandments he has laid down for us, primarily loving Him most of all. God is not a spoilsport though, He is against all selfishness and self-seeking. God condemns never the sinner, but only his sin which is fundamentally saying whether in word or deed "Not your will by my will be done." When we ignore God's will for us, when we take our spiritual future in our own hands we are hampering ourselves. God does not turn His back on us, even when we spurn Him. C.S. Lewis said, "To walk out of God's will is to walk into nowhere." Only He knows what our lives are meant to be, what our true path is. We are best served listening and heeding His advice. ■



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 _____

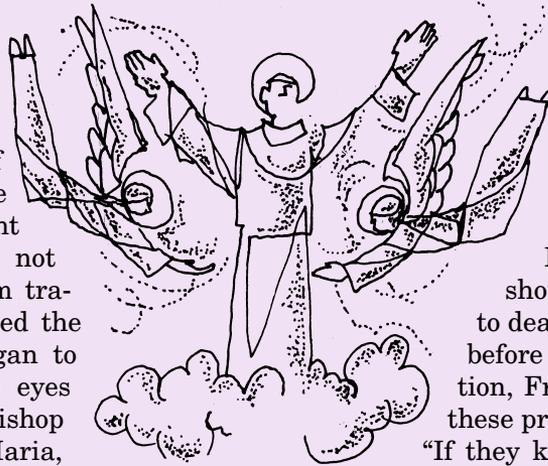
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DRESSED IN LOVE - A NEW SAINT FOR OUR TIME

"God wants His Christian dressed in love." Saint Oscar Romero

Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdamez was born into a large family in 1917 in El Salvador. His father sent him at 13 to be an apprentice carpenter. Soon after, Saint Oscar Romero heard God's call and entered the seminary the next year. He studied in El Salvador and in Rome and was ordained in 1942. He convinced five radio stations to broadcast his Sunday sermons to the peasants in the fields. As Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador, he was not one to fight authority. He did not want to break from tradition and supported the hierarchy. God began to open Fr. Romero's eyes and in 1974, as Bishop of Santiago de Maria, where he saw many of the poor dying, especially children, because they could not afford medicine. He donated church money to those in need. In 1977 he was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador. At this time the military was killing the Salvadoran people, especially those demanding justice such as teachers, nuns, priests, including Fr. Romero's good friend, Fr. Rutilio Grande. Thousands of people began to go missing and Fr. Romero demanded his friend's death be investigated and the authorities turned a blind eye. Fr. Romero did the only thing he could, he preached. He reported in

his sermons the names of those who were missing or killed, he demanded something be done, he reminded Christians of their responsibilities for the poor and marginalized. The night before he was killed, Fr. Romero spoke directly to the soldiers and police, "I beg you, I implore you, I order you, in the name of God, stop



the repression." The following night a gunman entered the chapel of Divine Providence Hospital and shot Fr. Romero to death. Two weeks before his assassination, Fr. Romero said these prophetic words:

"If they kill me, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people. If the threats come to be fulfilled, from this moment I offer my blood to God for the redemption and resurrection of El Salvador. Let my blood be a seed of freedom and the sign that hope will soon be reality." Romero's funeral became the largest demonstration in Salvadoran history, some say in the history of Latin America. More than 30 people were injured or killed when soldiers fired on the mourners and threw bombs into the crowd of thousands. This Saint, beloved in his lifetime, lived courageously in defense of the true Christian teachings. ■

BE PATIENT AND GOD WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY



St. Anthony's life teaches us patience. It illustrates that even our most unselfish hopes and purest desires may fall far short of God's own purpose for our lives. Often we hear about St. Anthony and his many paths. But do we really take it in? Do we see how God is working

in our life to direct, in small and in large ways?

In his zeal, St. Anthony set out for the missions to unbelievers. God showed him his mission was different than he had supposed. How often does this happen to us? Think of yourself as a college student, visions of architecture or engineering. Fast forward 20 years and you are following your new interns during rounds as a physician. God knows better than we do, about everything. And His will for us is a comfort. To lean on the Lord is the best way to live. And it wasn't one time Anthony's life changed direction. God over and over called him to something

new, changed his life plan. Every time, like our blessed Mother, Anthony said yes Lord.

Once he realized God did not have a missionary life in store for him, St. Anthony went to Italy where he was stationed in a small house of the Lord. In his humility St. Anthony worked at lowly tasks as a friar until God made it plain he was to be a preacher of the Word. No one was prepared to speak at an important ordination so the humble and obedient Anthony accepted the task. Anthony impressed all with his sermon, which was the culmination of all his years of study and prayer. Anthony is often called upon when we lose an object, but let us also remember he is a perfect saint to pray to when we ourselves are lost. God made sure Anthony was never lost in his many twists and turns and that he ultimately ended up exactly where he was needed. God's will for us often becomes clearer in the circumstances and sometimes the surprises of life. God's will for us is always for better than any narrow calculations of our own. ■

St. Francis of Assisi – A Man Transformed

The story is told of how Francis asked a friar one day to accompany him into the town of Assisi to pray and to preach. The two walked through the town interrupting their silent prayers now and then to greet villagers along the way, to assist those in need, and to pause to shake a hand of the frail or ill. When they returned to the friary the younger friar gently

chided Francis for not having preached during their walk. Francis said they had indeed preached by their example.

Francis's life has been called "a living sermon." It was not always one though. As a young man growing up in the town of Assisi, he was the life of the party. A happy-go-lucky youth from a well-to-do family.

Continued on next page

As he grew older his nobleman father had plans for him. Francis followed the traditional path to noble rank along the battlefield. Two tours later he was back with his father in the shop during the day, carousing at night. That routine continued until one day Francis heard a call he did not at first recognize or want to admit. It was the Lord calling him to a life of poverty and service. Scholars have said Francis “fell in love” with poverty.

This new life of total devotion to God changed Francis completely even in one area that surprised him - his attitude toward lepers which he could not look at. As he rode along a path on the slopes of Assisi, one day a begging leper salut-

ed him. Francis kissed the man’s hand and resumed his journey. Francis felt a deepness of joy. When he turned around there was no sign of the leper. Francis realized he had shown charity to the Lord himself. Francis later wrote that he believed God had changed him, had given him the strength to do penance and overcome his fears. Francis truly believed his attitude toward the sick, especially the leper had been a sin. “When I took my leave of them what had previously seemed disagreeable now was changed to something sweet to my body and soul,” Francis later wrote. Let us all listen to the Lord this Lent and do our penance so we may also be open to more graces. ■

SHARING GOD’S LOVE

*by Bishop Joseph, O.F.M.
Juticalpa, Olancho, Honduras*

A missionary life is filled with travel, food and God’s love. Recently we spent three days at the parish of Our Lady of Suyapa in Palosa. It was a three-hour trip by boat on the long and winding river. We were so busy when we were there and parishioners showed us such gratitude. During our latest visit, we heard confessions and celebrated First Holy Communion and Confirmation. We also had the privilege of welcoming new members into our community with a few baptisms. After the ceremonies, we were invited



to eat special meals of rice and beans and a little portion of chicken that we enjoyed so much. After the meals and the goodbyes, we headed back on our long journey home. God is good and showers us with so many blessings. Our visits were short but were filled with love and faith. ■

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 of the Franciscans,

So often during the solemn season of Lent there is an exhaustion and almost sadness that permeates. For many parts of the country it is winter – so it is colder and darker. And we are reminded of our sins and of the way our Lord suffered. In short, we are tired. It was during one recent winter that someone shared with me this Thomas Edison quote, “When you have exhausted all your possibilities, remember this, you haven’t.”

This realization is one of the cornerstones of our faith. There is always hope, always a better day coming, and ultimately, for the faithful, everlasting happiness.

When we believe our sacrifices are too much of a burden, especially during Lent, we need to keep pushing. Keep reaching for more ways to spread the Word of God, more ways to show our Lord we are sorry for our sins and are grateful for His mercy and grace.

Often by taking a step back and truly looking at our blessings we see how much we are loved by the Lord, how much He holds us in the palm of His hand. His ultimate sacrifice puts our own sacrifices in perspective. He is always with us and always assisting us when we are too weary to carry our own crosses, and for that we are so grateful.

May God bless you and keep you,

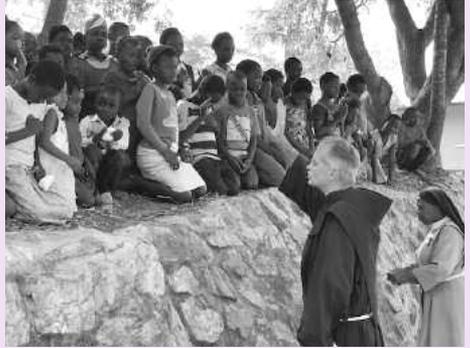
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Robert, OFM".

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

SHOWING THE POOR GOD LOVES THEM

For the last eight years, I have been honored to serve with Silent Children's Mission, a nonprofit Catholic charity which seeks to relieve the suffering and neglect of the poorest of the poor. Officially registered in Toronto, Canada in 2011, and directed by Frankie Burg-Feret, a Minister of her Secular Franciscan Community at our St. Francis Center in Orangeville, Canada, our organization is guided by the charism of St. Mother Teresa. We are active in various countries in the developing world, and our focus is on those who do not have a voice, especially abused children and women. The goal is to clothe, feed and educate these little ones and to let each of them know someone cares, that God has not forgotten them, but loves them tenderly.

We presently help the poor in eleven countries including Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Malawi, Zambia, and Liberia. Our funds are directed to lay missionaries, priests and religious working at ground level in order to assist them with their programs in healthcare, education, nutrition, spiritual care and counseling. We value the relationships we have with our missionaries as our friendships in Christ enable us to work effectively for the children in need. We recently visited the Secular Franciscans and Franciscan Sisters in Chililabombwe, the Poor Clares in Lusaka and the Sisters of Charity in Ludzi who are selfless, Christ filled individuals who do the work of many. They welcome our visits and the opportunity to share about our work and our faith with a day of recollection and prayer. On our recent mission visit in Zambia and Malawi, we reflected on Pope Francis' recent Exhortation



Fr. Michael, from Valley of the Angels, Guatemala, blessing the children at the Poor Clare convent.



Sr. Bernadette, Fr. Michael and Frankie with Maria (wearing the dress she sewed).

Gaudete et Exsultate, where he encourages all people to respond to God's call to holiness.

During our visit, we were able to see the many fruits of our work in Malawi and Zambia. What brought us great joy was our supported children who had recently graduated from school and who have either found employment contributing to their communities, or are moving on to higher education. Each story is unique and a testament to the transforming love of Jesus Christ. Gabriella's story of

abuse and extreme poverty would almost seem hopeless, but with determination she just graduated from Agricultural College. Maria, a child from a very poor family in the village near the convent, struggled academically until Sr. Bernadette's faith in her and her direction to tailoring school helped this child to blossom! And Thokozani, an orphan, after her beloved mother died of AIDS, recently graduated from high

school and has just started college to become a nurse. A visit to the SCM sponsored farm in Mkanda, Malawi, left us in wonder at God's many gifts as we saw the once barren, dry land transformed into a productive, self-sufficient farm providing food for the poor and jobs to many. These are some of the inspiring stories of God's work made possible by the many benefactors of Silent Children's Mission. ■

ACROSS THE BORDER

by Fr. Jack, O.F.M.

When one travels in the United States of America, there is no problem moving from one state to another, except for traffic. However, the experience in Latin America is quite the adventure. In comparison to the journeys of up north, the movement from one small country, the size of Massachusetts, to another, requires lots of paperwork including IDs, at times money, and in the case of students, documentation from family members (parents or guardians), endorsed by lawyers.

Why am I saying this? This is all part of the preparation that goes into an event such as the one I am anxious to share with you, our readers and benefactors. The Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception Province have been working in Latin America for well over 70 years and much of the success of the friars has been due to people much like you, who have so generously given of your time, talent and treasure.

It just so happens that in two different countries, Honduras and El Salvador, the friars have been responsible for the establishment of Institutions with the

name: San Francisco de Asís. It has been my dream since returning to El Salvador to have an encounter of the two. So, recently some 22 students, chosen from the junior and senior classes of San Francisco de Asís in AGAPE, crossed over the border from El Salvador to Honduras to participate in an artistic exchange of song and dance at the



Instituto San Francisco de Asís in Tegucigalpa. Accompanied by our director and three teachers, with the assistance of Fr. Rafael, the foundation president. Fortunately the only tie up there was waiting for extra copies of their permission papers to be presented by each of the students besides showing their passports. On the other side of the bridge in Honduras, things went considerably much smoother, and soon we were rolling on to Tegucigalpa perhaps some three hours away.

Once settled in at the friary on the property of the Instituto San Francisco de Asís, our young people were anxious to meet with the students and share their talents, but that would have to wait until Wednesday, the day of celebration and “fiesta.” So our kids got to see some of the countryside after an early morning breakfast and Mass at the chapel of “Our Lady of Suyapa.” After the tour of the Basilica itself, we drove off to the hill village of Santa Lucia and then to the little town of Valley of the Angels, which disclosed signs of our “Provincial presence” of long past. Where else would the “Franciscan chapel” there have the coat of arms exactly like the Province of the Immaculate Conception of New York?

Wednesday was the day of grand celebration at the school. The atmosphere was almost like the Olympics, with the wonderful display of talent by the children representative of each grade to welcome us with music and dance. Of course, the delegation from San Francisco de Asís high school in El Salvador had its chance to contribute to the day’s merriment with its own renditions of typical dances. And there was even a professional dance troupe.

After an exchange of customary and local souvenirs, our group spent the



afternoon at a local mall, knowing that in the early morning of the following day we would be on our way to visit the colonial capital of Honduras, Comayagua.

Our first stop would be the Cathedral, which houses the very first clock in America, located in the bell tower. It still works and is very accurate due to a pulley system of weights. Many of the students were anxious to climb the tower and see for themselves the ancient piece of history. Then we made a visit to the museum within the newly refurbished walls of the Bishop’s residence. Bishop Roberto offered juice, soda and cookies to the gang and we move to “Barrio Arriba,” where we visited another residency of Franciscans: Los Santos Martires (The Holy Martyrs), also known as St. Sebastian. I wanted to show the students the seminary of which I was the first rector and how it has grown to become a Franciscan parish with Fr. Carlos (my classmate), whom I haven’t seen in 42 years. It was a most joyous occasion for me.

The journey was long and fun but it also was witnesses of the results of years of missionary work and presence of the Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province in the two countries: all thanks to the years of sacrifices made by you, the donor who is reading these words. ■

Words Worth Noting



There are many things that can be seen only through eyes that have cried.

Saint Oscar Romero

Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny.

C.S. Lewis

Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned.

Peter Marshall

Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom.

George S. Patton

Education is when you read the fine print, experience is what you get when you don't.

Pete Seeger

Pure faith believes without seeing or feeling.

Jean-Pierre de Caussade

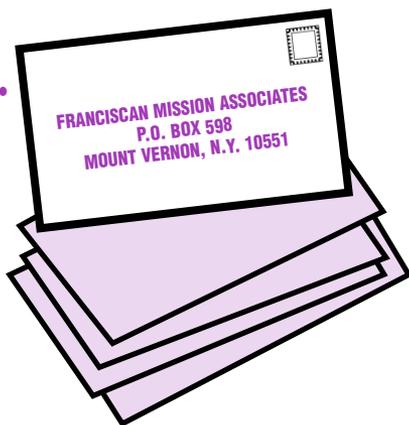
No one heals himself by wounding another.

Saint Ambrose

Friends show their love in times of trouble, not in times of happiness.

Euripides

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father,

One thing I appreciate about FMA, in addition to looking after our brethren in Central America, is your continued promotion of time-honored Catholic devotions, such as the rosary and novenas to saints. These spiritual practices are such a part of the life of the Church.

A Facebook Friend,
R.S.
Kenner, LA

Dear Father,

I am so grateful for all your prayers and comfort during a difficult time in my life. Knowing you, and the joyful workers at the Franciscan Mission Associates are keeping me in their prayers has lifted me up in immeasurable ways. Know you are also in my prayers as always.

God bless,
E.D.
Orlando, FL

Dear Father Robert,

Thank you for the blessing I received from your religious birthday card. I'm a year older now – too old to wear a religious habit – however I will continue with the rosary and chaplet of Divine Mercy as well as personal prayers and the intentions.

St. Jude, Padre Pio, St. Anthony have been very powerful aids.

May God richly bless you,
J.P.
Flemington, NJ

Dear Franciscan Mission Associates,

I offer my praise and thanks to the most holy Virgin Mary and all the saints and angels to petition for a cure for my nephew's illness.

All praise to the Lord, thanks be to God.

Sincerely,
B.A.
Chicago, IL

Dear Father Robert,

With great humility and gratitude, I want to thank you for the Father Pamphilus Da Magliano medallion and scroll.

I certainly was not expecting anything at all like this great honor. I was brought up in a good Catholic home. I know my parents are saints. My father often said "God will not be outdone in generosity" He gave us our talents to use and many other words of wisdom.

I thank you so much for your prayers and am so happy God has given me my family.

A.M.
New York, NY

CHRISTIAN CONSOLATION

One of the most consoling things about Christ's message is its application to all of us, its fundamental democracy. "We have put our trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men" (1 Timothy 4: 9-10). God's love has been described as being like the rays of the sun. It reaches everyone, regardless of his or her status, even on an overcast day. We need not be rich, socially acceptable, well educated or learned to have a place at God's table in the kingdom of heaven. The poorest of us in the world's eye may, in fact, be more blessed than those with many possessions. No one, whatever his conditions in life, is excluded.

"Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, 'Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth,

but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood'" (Mk 12: 41-44).

Some Bible scholars believe this passage has two points. First it shows how the widow is genuine and pure in her giving. She truly sacrificed and by doing that shows, more than the rich donors, her devotion. The second point is a condemnation of the leaders at that time who encouraged the poor to donate life savings while only touching the surface of their own wealth.

Even some kings have become saints, and Christ himself on the cross canonized the believing thief. "Amen I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

If anything God frequently favors the least likely people in his choosing. These are the words children especially need to hear. Some feel they could never be saints so why try. But, if they are told from an early age God loves us all, no matter what, and is filled with mercy, they may be encouraged to see the path of truth and wisdom. ■

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.

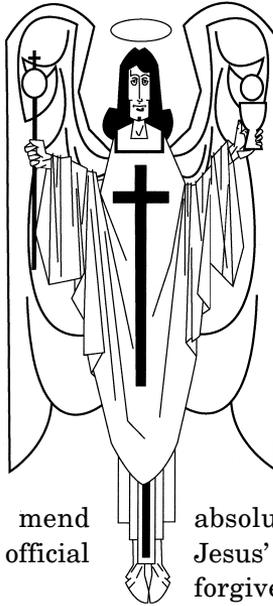
Often all they really need is the special courage to hear God's call and to answer Him. Please join us in daily prayer for God's grace in providing devoted brothers, sisters, priests, and religious for Christ's work in today's world.

For further information please write Fr. Robert, O.F.M. at
Franciscan Mission Associates, P.O. Box 598, Dept. 3194, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

RECONCILIATION AND RESOLUTION

The best way to observe Lent is by being officially reconciled to God in the great Sacrament of Reconciliation. Though the actual confession of our sins is private, our reconciliation by the Church in the penitential rite is a public event. Sincere sorrow actually wins God's forgiveness before we ever approach the priest for absolution. But in Christ's stead the priest receives our confession of fault and our purpose to mend our lives as the Church's official minister.

School children learn about the sacrament, but if it has been a while since you made your first confession, what follows is a quick refresher, courtesy of Msgr. Richard Hilgartner of the USCCB. In his essay "The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation: Forgiveness in Four Easy Steps" Msgr. Hilgartner writes first about confession – which "entails admitting and naming one's sins." This step is done with the priest who can encourage the penitent to fully confess his or her sins. The second step is contrition – "one's expression of sorrow for sin." This step usually involves reciting the Act of Contrition, which asks God to forgive our sins and transgressions. Third is satisfaction for sin in which – "the sinner demonstrates by action



the intention to heal the harm done by the sin." This is the penance part of the sacrament in which the sinner repents and through action, or prayer, makes amends for the sin. Lastly the priest offers Absolution from sin. During this the priest is acting "in the person of Christ." Msgr. Hilgartner points out that the power to offer absolution "has its roots in Jesus' giving the authority to forgive to his Apostles." Our intent not to sin again is strengthened by the power of the Sacrament and the firmer the intention, the greater the healing grace we receive from God. Pope Francis in last year's Lenten penitential service reminded the faithful it is not God who abandons us when we sin, but it is we who separate ourselves from him by sinning. "We know that the state of sin distances us from God. Yet that does not mean that God distances Himself from us. The state of weakness and confusion that results from sin is one more reason for God to remain close to us. The certainty of this should accompany us throughout our lives."

So before Lent grows too old, renew yourself in the Sacrament of God's pardon. ■

A Secret Mission



Each of us has a secret mission, known only to ourselves and God. To some it is to bear wrongs in good grace, to others it is to accept painful sorrows. To each of us, though, is a secret sorrow, shared with no one but the Lord and he gives us the strength and spiritual power to bring in from sadness to spiritual life by accepting sometimes without understanding, the uniqueness that is ourselves. In today's all sharing society where adolescents, and some adults, are attempting to one-up each other on social media, it is difficult to believe anything is secret. But that is where we, as Christians, must be most aware of the invisible crosses many bear. Most often the most prolific sharers whose feeds are filled with smiling friends and family are secretly hiding their sorrow. Perhaps this person has turned away from God, has stopped attending Mass or receiving the sacraments. The more they move away from God the more sorrowful their lives become. This is where a friend might realize their secret mission is to reach out to those

who seem all put together and see if it is simply a house of cards. Today many relationships are virtual. It is easier to fake good mental health on the phone or via text than it is face to face. Loneliness is such an issue, not just with the aging, that the United Kingdom has appointed a Minister for Loneliness. Statistics bear out that loneliness is a genuine health concern. It has been associated with greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, depression and anxiety. Loneliness is genuine and sometimes hides in plain sight. One of the Lord's first commandments is to "Love our neighbor as ourselves." There are many simple ways to do this – bring a neighbor to Mass, offer to get food for a family that has lost a loved one, or just had a new baby. A quick hello in a coffee shop or in an elevator goes a long way. We all have our own crosses to bear and we know if we reach out to others it also makes our own cross a little lighter.



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 3193, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

FMA Spiritual Exercises - Lent-Easter 2019

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 Missionary Friars and their people, and for all who cooperate by prayer and sacrifice for the spread of the faith.

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

- January 1-9Holy Family Novena
- February 2-19Our Lady of Lourdes
- March 6 - April 14Lenten Masses (40)
- April 9-17Feast of Easter
- March 19 - June 1113 Tuesdays to St. Anthony
- April 21-29In 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 3191, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

