

# FMA

# FOCUS



NOV 2019/ VOL 53, NO 2

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



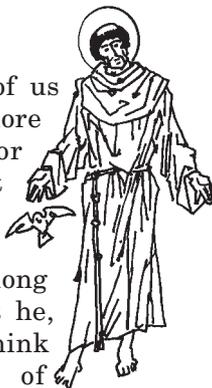
## Virtue: Empathy

One of the most attractive qualities a human heart can possess is empathy. When we have empathy, we feel in our heart how the other person feels in his, and we act accordingly.

In one of our greatest compassion stories of all time, the Good Samaritan, we see empathy in action. This story is so ingrained we know it by heart. But do we live it? When we play out the parable in life, are we the priest who walks by the beaten man, the Levite who also pays no attention to the suffering of others, or the Samaritan? The Samaritan lifts the crumpled soul onto his own beast of burden and pays for his lodging. He doesn't shy away from a difficult situation. We are asked to be Samaritans, to feel the pain of others. This shows God's love through us. ■

## Francis's Plea

Not too many of us would ask for a more painful life, or would seek out pain. That is how some say St. Francis lived his long and holy life. But he, himself, didn't think so. Some stories of Francis's life include details that he would sometimes throw himself naked into a snow-filled ditch or roll in a thorny briar patch, when he felt tempted by worldly desires. He called his body, "brother donkey," and denied himself many legitimate physical comforts. God enlightened Francis to see the great value in a life of penance and reparation, and his example has helped the whole world. He never proceeded in Holy Orders beyond the diaconate because he did not feel worthy of the honors of the



priesthood. One of his outstanding virtues was his compassion, which reached out to all, but especially to the marginalized and the underprivileged. This is how we traditionally think of St. Francis: humble, loving and caring for one and all, including animals. He truly felt for others and shared his great love of Christ with others. One of the biographers of Francis said of him, "Among the saints, he was the most saintly, and among sinners, he looked like one of them."

Francis lived his life wanting, not material goods but spiritual challenges. He prayed:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, I entreat you to give me two graces before I die; first, that in my lifetime I may feel in body and soul as far as possible the pain you endured, dear Lord in the hour of your most bitter suffering; and second, that I may feel in my heart as far as possible that excess of love by which you, O Son of God were inflamed to undertake so cruel a suffering for us sinners."

While few of us have the constitution of this beloved Saint, we can make an effort to empathize more with those in pain or those suffering. Feel the pain, feel the love.

Feeling the love is strengthened by our feeling the pain. When we experience God's personal love for us we are strengthened, as Francis was, to endure hardship. In today's fast-paced world, pain, for some, can mean missing our daily \$5.00 coffee. It is a small hardship for us, but that change in our pockets means dinner on the table to many in the missions. Let us spend our money and time making an effort to feel others' pain so we can also feel the comfort of God's love. ■

### **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:**

**Franciscan Mission Associates  
P.O. Box 598, Dept. 2194  
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 and the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

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.



# Purgatory Article - St. Gertrude's Prayer

At death our place is ready in glory but we may not be quite ready for it. The Church teaches that some souls may need to be purified after death. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines purgatory as a “purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven,” which is experienced by those “who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified” (CCC 1030). It notes that “this final purification of the elect . . . is entirely different from the punishment of the damned” (CCC 1031).

The purification is necessary because, as Scripture teaches, nothing unclean will enter the presence of God in heaven (Rev. 21:27). And while we may die with our mortal sins forgiven, there can still be many impurities in us — specifically venial sins and the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.

As a child we are told purgatory is like a weigh station — a holding spot before we are ready to enter heaven. One saint who is closely associated with purgatory is St. Gertrude the



Great. Gertrude wrote many works, although few survive today, she was considered a mystic and prayed often for the souls in purgatory. Gertrude was a 14th century Benedictine writer and who had the gift of miracles and prophecy and was also regarded as a great theologian. When she was 25 years old, Gertrude had a vision on the feast of John the Evangelist where she is said to have heard the beating heart of Jesus. In one vision, Gertrude was told by our Lord that each time this following prayer was said, 1,000 souls would be released from purgatory. When you say this prayer, realize the souls you are releasing to heaven and praise God:

*Eternal Father, I offer you the most precious blood of your 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*

*And for those in my own home and within my family. Amen.*

How grateful we are that St. Gertrude was on this earth to move the faithful toward everlasting life. ■

---

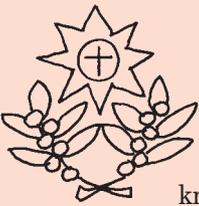
## VOCATIONS

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, especially during the seasons of Advent and Christmas, 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. 2192, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

---



# GIVING THANKS

In early 20th century America, no preacher was more known than Mr. William Stidger. He was one of the first ministers to use modern marketing methods to get bodies in the stands. He was known for his grandstanding and flamboyant ways. In many of his sermons, he extolled the virtues of thanksgiving and gratitude including this one from the early 1920s in Missouri:

“We go to bed at night and get up in the morning and our milk bottles are standing on the back porch waiting for us. Fifty years ago we got up at five, dressed in the cold, shivered as we dressed, went to the barn, knocked ice from the buckets...We worked for our milk then, now it is brought to us.”

This is a reference few today know about, getting milk at the door, but the idea of instant gratification, or reward with no work attached is something very relevant to today’s society. Today, with the click of a button, anything we want can appear at our door: groceries, furniture, clothes, and books. The world is at our fingertips. But is this a good message for our children and even ourselves? Because of this fast-paced society there has been, recently, some push back from modern philosophers and sociologists. There are many movements toward still-

ness or at least reflection. You see it in write-ups on schools. There is a push toward NOT pushing. The idea that maybe we have what we need and it is enough, and most important, that we should be grateful for what we have and not spend our life looking for the next best thing. William Stidger had a great deal in his life, including maids, gardeners, and many followers, but he realized that was not going to satisfy. Norman Vincent Peale, another well-known minister and promoter of positive thinking, knew Stidger at his lowest, when he was, by Peale’s account, on the verge of a nervous breakdown. A friend suggested to Stidger that he try the therapy of thanksgiving: beginning to thank all the people in your life who have been kind to you. Such a task! But it worked. Stidger started with a teacher — whose return letter was so heartfelt Stidger went on to send more than 500 letters. His depression lifted. He kept a copy of each letter to reread in low moments. Thankfulness is therapeutic; it strengthens and heartens; it makes us focus on the good; it lights up our lives with gratitude. During this time of the year when many are contemplating the idea of Thanksgiving, why not begin your season of gratitude and somehow find a way to thank those who have influenced you. The blessings to you and to those you thank are endless. ■



# St. Anthony and Leading by Example

St. Anthony became one of God's saints because he didn't let Christ do everything and himself nothing. In a sermon, Anthony pointed out that total self-giving is hard:

“But how many of us shrink from that daily offering of ourselves to the Father's will? Rather, didn't we like to pick the time and place and circumstance of any sacrifice stemming from the Gospel? In fact, we are tempted to pick and choose even when we read the Gospel.”

It is very human to think we can handle anything. We can “take charge” and we must be self-reliant. You see it everywhere, people undergoing enormous stress to either handle a problem themselves, or ignore a need. There needs to be a balance in our interactions with Christ. We have, as we well know, His unyielding mercy and love. However, just like a good parent asks a child, we will be asked to grow and learn to handle many earthly challenges on our own. When you read the Bible, the phrases most often refer to God's helping humanity, not doing everything for humanity:

“I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.” (Is. 41:10).

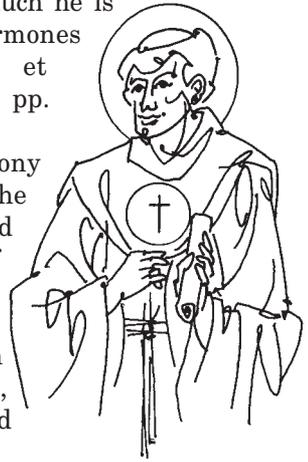
God asks us to work **with** Him to move toward salvation. St. Anthony is used as an example of how we say yes to God no matter what and how we live the Gospel. Anthony's story is well known: he knew he wanted to devote his life to Christ, but that journey took him on many roads before he found the true calling. St. Anthony, as a

Doctor of the church, lived the Gospel because he knew the Gospel, – studying endlessly during his time before becoming a preacher. In his sermons, he spoke of how reading, studying and sharing the Gospel is the best way to prepare us for salvation. St. Anthony put Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, at the forefront of his preaching and his life. In one of his sermons, he urges us to do the same:

“Christ who is your life is hanging before you, so that you may look at the Cross as in a mirror. There you will be able to know how mortal were your wounds, that no medicine other than the Blood of the Son of God could heal. If you look closely, you will be able to realize how great your human dignity and your value are.... Nowhere other than looking at himself in the mirror of the Cross can man better understand how much he is worth.” (Sermones

Dominicales et Festivi III, pp. 213–214)

St. Anthony looked to the Gospels and the life of Christ when he needed guidance on how to live, and so should we. ■

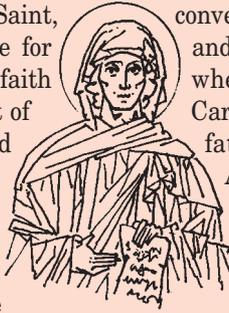


Like Us on Facebook!  
[www.facebook.com/  
FranciscanMissionAssoc](http://www.facebook.com/FranciscanMissionAssoc)

# St. Monica and the Act of Never Giving Up

St. Augustine is a revered Saint, and indeed his backstory is one for the ages. He struggled with his faith and earthy temptations for most of his young adult life. But behind the scenes, as often is the case, was a human force reminding Augustine of the rewards that would meet him if he got his life together and turned toward the Lord. That driving force was St. Monica, his mother. St. Augustine's autobiography, *Confessions*, paints the best picture we can ever have of St. Monica — a portrait of a woman whose 56 years in this world yielded a rich harvest of accomplishment for the Lord.

St. Monica was born to a Christian family in North Africa in 332 AD. She married a pagan, Patricius, whom she never stopped trying to convert. She eventually succeeded and his last year of life on this earth was filled with happiness, grace and peace. Her marriage was not without violence. St. Monica went into the public at large to bring the love of our Lord and help those struggling with domestic abuse. It is said she actually saved many lives. Still her son Augustine, (she had three other children as well), continued to turn away from God. St. Augustine became her most famous



convert. His opposition to Catholicism and dissolute lifestyle grew worse when he left home to study at Carthage at age 17. Eventually, he fathered a son out of wedlock. Augustine spoke of how his mother lived her life with joy and truly cherished her relationship with God. She never came at her son with relentless attacks expecting him to become a member of the church. She knew in her heart she would succeed and because she loved her son and wanted everlasting life for him, she never ever gave up in her quest to show him God's way. Very soon after St. Augustine converted, his mother became ill, never to recover. As they journeyed back to Africa, it was evident Monica would not make it alive. At that point, she was not afraid. She knew her life mission had been completed, and she told her beloved, "Son, nothing in this world now affords me delight. I do not know what there is now left for me to do or why I am still here, all my hopes in this world being now fulfilled." St. Monica's faith was so strong, and she was able to change the minds and hearts of many, including her son, who pushed back on God's love. When we pray to St. Monica, let us ask for some of that perseverance and faith. ■

---

## 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. 2195,

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

# 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,

The Gospel passage that is so well known and repeated this time of year is Luke's description of the Angel speaking to the shepherds:

Do not be afraid, I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11).

Imagine those shepherds and how they might have reacted to such a dramatic event. What a blessing to know our Lord has chosen you, a humble shepherd, to tell all that a Savior is coming. God sends his messengers in many ways. We should not always expect Angels. Instead, we need to see the face of God in all humankind. We are told to "love our neighbors as ourselves." This does not mean our literal neighbor, it means humanity at large. We are commanded by God to love others, even when it is difficult or bordering on impossible. Our Lord loves us, without condition, all of us, even those who do not love Him. We are asked to love others so they may also see God as we do, as the one and only Savior who came to this earth as a child to redeem our souls, and lead us to everlasting life.

May you all have a blessed, safe and love filled Advent and Christmas Season,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Robert, ofm". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

# VALLEY OF THE ANGELS BIDS GOODBYE TO ITS OWN PERSONAL ANGEL

*Fr. Michael, O.F.M.*



and for every single soul God has surrounded me with in Guatemala. I feel very blessed and privileged to have served such an amazing God-centered loving and caring community. I will never forget all the support I received from everyone – I always said God must have said, “This Gringo needs all the help he can get.” The amazing friends I met here, who are my family now, and

It is with both sadness and joy in my heart that I want to announce some news. After 20 years of ministry outside the country (six in Canada, three in Rome and eleven in Guatemala) I was given a new assignment and will be heading to Boston for the new year. It is the church across the street from where I was born and where I was baptized and ordained a priest. While my joy comes from a wholehearted trust that it is God’s will, I cannot help but feel sad as well. There is a huge emptiness and heaviness in my heart which aches at the thought of not being able to show our children love — hugging them and letting them know how special they are every single day. They have been my daily joy and consolation for the last eleven years and have taught me more about how to love than any theology book or course ever could. Although I was sent to educate them, they have given me the greater lessons about resilience, courage, empathy, compassion, friendship and humility. I leave valley in the good and capable hands of Fr. Joaquin, a holy Central American Friar from our Province who will be coming in the months ahead. I am tremendously grateful for having the opportunity to live and minister here,



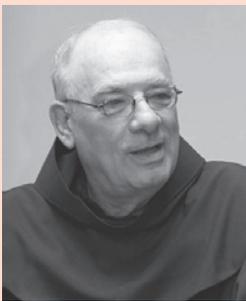


all my Facebook friends who were so crucial, especially in the first few years when I was alone and far from home. These are all treasured memories that will always be a part of me and ever dear to my heart. Most of all, I feel a deep sense of gratitude for having had the chance to father these children in some way during my time here and accompany these holy angels. These years have been without a doubt the most rewarding and fulfilling of my life

and priesthood. I know we can continue to rely on your support for our children. And I pray that God continues to grace our angels, always affirming their human dignity and letting them know their value and goodness. Please pray that this time of transition is smooth and allows everyone to continue helping our mission with an even deeper sense of trust in God's providence and hope for the great things God wants to do in the future. ■

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND LOVE FROM AGAPE

*Fr. Flavian, O.F.M.*



**S**ince I was in the seminary at 18 years old, I only went home once for Christmas—when my nephew died. That means I have not spent Christmas with my family in more than 60 years.

Here in El Salvador, we have built the biggest non-government project in the country. El Salvador has 14 departments and we have projects for the poor in each of the 14, with 1200 people working for AGAPE. At my age, it isn't easy. And next we begin building in two different places.

We will build a clinic in the middle of the country to hold 40 machines for dialysis; and here at our base we will extend a hall to hold another 12 machines, giving us 24 in all. Your donations will help us make this dream come true and save many lives.

I was in the hospital and in our home for the aged for more than seven months this past year. I had to be isolated because my defenses were low after the kidney transplant. I no longer need dialysis because of a generous kidney donor. And now I am feeling better.

We are so blessed to have such great educators here as well. Our school won first place again as the best school of the department and one of the best schools in the country. Also, thanks to your generous gifts, we are again able to give each of the 1200 people who work in AGAPE a Christmas gift.

People ask me how I spend Christmas day. Well, first of all, I go to Mass. After Mass, I visit the soup kitchen

for the poor men and women who live in the streets. This soup kitchen is where I began AGAPE 40 years ago, and it is still operating after decades of hard work. This year, I will give each of the people there waiting for food \$5 each. I will go back soon and I also hope to bring them a towel. A towel is very useful especially when it is kind of cold. They cover their heads or bodies, or wrap it around their necks. Remember they sleep on the ground in the streets. These homeless people were the first ones I helped in AGAPE. When they couldn't walk, I put them in one of the three homes for the aged that I built. At the end when they die, we even bury them. I bought 50 plots in the cemetery, and now those plots are almost filled.

Once again, I want to thank each and every one of you. I am also wishing you all a very happy New Year filled with joy, peace and love. Be assured of my prayers at Mass. I shall never forget your generosity. ■



# Words Worth Noting



*A mistake is simply another way of doing something.*

*Katherine Graham*

*It is amazing what you can accomplish when you don't care who gets the credit.*

*Harry S. Truman*

*We did not invent human rights, in a real sense human rights invented America.*

*Jimmy Carter*

*I think you should take your job seriously but not yourself, that is the best combination.*

*Judi Dench*

*The only man who never makes a mistake is a man who never does anything.*

*Theodore Roosevelt*

*How wonderful is it that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*

*Anne Frank*

*He who denies his heritage is not worthy of one.*

*Arabic proverb*

*Teach us to give and not count the cost.*

*St. Ignatius of Loyola*

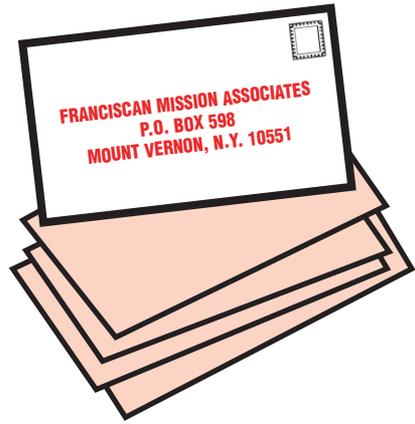
*Worry is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do but never gets you anywhere.*

*Erma Bombeck*

*Christmas will always be as long as we stand heart to heart and hand to hand.*

*Dr. Seuss*

# Our Readers gladly write...



Dear FMA,

I am a Chaplain and the Religious facilitator at a 1400-person minimum security male facility in Connecticut. This is a facility where all the men will be returning to society and to their families within a time frame of several months to 15 years. My job is to meet the spiritual needs and provide for spiritual growth and maturity of this population, many of whom are very serious about changing their lives and improving their relationships with the Lord and their families. Thank you for the FMA FOCUS booklets that you sent to our facility. The booklets are greatly appreciated and will be put to good use, I assure you. I know that the men appreciate what you have done for them. Thanks again and may God continue to bless you in your ministry.

Deacon, R. L.  
Chaplain  
Enfield, CT

Dear Father,

A special thank you for a favor received. I am also thanking Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Pio, St. Anthony, and St. John Paul II. Please publish this, thank you, and pray for me as I keep you in my prayers.

A.S.  
Woodlyn, PA

Dear Father Robert,

Blessings, prayers and gratitude to you for all your prayers. I wish you a grace-filled Advent, Merry Christmas and New Year replete with the Lord's joy, peace and love. A kind gesture lasts a lifetime. Thank you for the beautiful birthday card and spiritual remembrance, how thoughtful. I was privileged to be born on Our Lady's Feast, the Immaculate Conception. You and your wonderful community are remembered in my prayers. God bless you.

Thanks again,  
Sister R.A.I.H.M.  
Scranton, PA

Dear Father Robert,

God bless you and your ministry. Please keep in your thoughts a close family member whose daughter is now in the military. We know God is with her in times of danger or peril. Thank you for the good work you do for those in need.

M. S.  
Rutland, VT

# OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONES, TO BECOME MORE LIKE CHRIST

We cannot, ever, understand fully our Lord, due to our human condition. He, on the other hand, understands us completely. Advent and Christmas reminds us that the Son of God yearned to “get the feel of being human” wrapped in swaddling bands of our humanity. He knows just how we feel. He teaches us to care about how others feel. This season of anticipation let us ask God to work with us on our empathy. In his apostolic exhortation on the family, Pope Francis only directly mentions empathy once — but the concept is infused throughout. “A mother who watches over her child with tenderness and compassion helps him or her...to grow in self-esteem and, in turn, to develop a capacity for intimacy and empathy” (No. 175). The idea, however, is found in other passages. Throughout “The Joy of Love”

Pope Francis writes, for example, that in communication with another person, “we have to put ourselves in their shoes and try to peer into their hearts, to

perceive their deepest concerns and to take them as a point of departure for further dialogue” (No. 138).

Empathy toward those in need, toward our own family members and even toward our enemies is critical to our growth in spirit and our faith journey. Pope Francis has said, “We need to learn to listen, differences always scare us because they make us grow.” This is easy to hear but hard to put into practice. The world is so complicated and filled with strident people who stick to their guns no matter what. Here is where our Lord is calling us to extend out of our comfort zones, and here is where our earthly spiritual leader is asking us to open our ears and our hearts. We don’t know everything, even when we think we do. Throughout scripture there is evidence of those who were believed to be one way but turned out to be another. Those who were enemies of the state but were the ones who listened to Christ and heard the message. So often, even when we believe we are listening, we are not truly drinking in what God is offering. We need to. He is guiding us along the true path. We need to follow. ■



Visit us on the web [franciscanmissionassoc.org](http://franciscanmissionassoc.org)  
or on YouTube  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/FranMissAssoc>

# The Supreme Importance of Perseverance

The road to success is strewn with failures; people who stopped trying, stopped forging ahead. Sometimes that is us, we get just so far and realize we don't have it in us. That is when we turn to the Lord and say, "I will do my part but please help." So many Saints have stories of perseverance in the face of unknowable challenges. One such saint is Saint Marguerite Bourgeys known as the first female saint from the Catholic Church in Canada. Marguerite was a Religious Sister who helped care for and educate many Native Americans and Canadian colonists.

Marguerite was born in Troyes, France, one of more than a dozen children. At the age of 20, she believed she was called to religious life. However, her petitions to join the Carmelites and Poor Clares were not successful. So she left France and journeyed to Canada to start a school in Ville-Marie, which would later become Montreal. She recruited friends and other young

women to come teach at the school where they educated Native American students. In addition to making three voyages to France, she endured stark poverty, attacks from Native Americans and the dangers of what was then the Canadian wilderness. Her biggest battle turned out to be an internal church battle. She fought first to establish her order, the Congregation of Notre-Dame de Montreal, which still thrives in countries around the world. Then she fought to ensure it remained uncloistered. Marguerite modeled herself after the Virgin Mary whom Marguerite said was, "not cloistered and never refused to be where charity or necessity required help." Because of her persistence, so many children, girls especially, received an education they otherwise would not. She was so instrumental in the education system in that part of Canada she is called the "Mother of the Colony." She was canonized by St. Pope John Paul II in 1982. ■

---

## 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 2020 and in a Solemn 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. 2193, Mount Vernon, NY 10551

---

# GIVING OF YOURSELF THIS ADVENT SEASON



We know that Advent has been taken over by the commercial crush of shopping and gift giving. We also

know as the faithful, this season is truly for reflection and preparation for the coming of our Lord. Pope Benedict XVI in his Homily at First Vespers of Advent in 2009 addressed the time this way:

“Advent, this powerful liturgical season that we are beginning, invites us to pause in silence to understand a presence. It is an invitation to understand that the individual events of the day are hints that God is giving us, signs of the attention He has for each one of us.”

One of the ways we can convey our love of God is through our love of others. This season, so many people don't need a new watch, or computer, or car. They need company and a

comforting word. They need the gift of our time. This can mean shoveling a sidewalk if you are in that part of the country, delivering a hot meal to a new mom, or just stopping for a minute after Mass to listen to an elderly parishioner. Often, we rush from one thing to the next, the next text or social media feed. None of that is truly soul saving or even satisfying. Scripture tells us to extend to others, not just during Advent but always: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me” (Mt. 25:35–36).

Another person you need to make time for is yourself, especially during this busy season. Make that extra daily Mass. Sit with Scripture—read the Gospel records of the birth of Jesus and delight in the miracle that is our faith. And truly pray. Start a fluid and consistent dialog with God. Be grateful for what we have in this life and prepare for the everlasting life to come. ■

---

## 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 2195, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

---

# Special Novena Schedule Advent - Christmas 2019

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 1-30 .....Novena for the Faithful Departed (30 Masses)
- December 1-31 .....Infant Savior (31 Masses)
- December 8-16 .....Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- December 16-24 .....Feast of Christmas (in Padua)
- December 24-January 1 .....Feast of Christmas (in Assisi)
- December 25-January 2 .....Christ 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 2191, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

---

## OUR JUBILEE YEAR



In August our Friars celebrated seventy-five years of joyfully serving the Church in Central America. The genesis of this wonderful anniversary occurred when the Province heeded the call of Central American bishops, and sent four friars to Olancho, Honduras in 1944. By 1950, these missionary efforts would extend to Guatemala and El Salvador. The friars were instrumental in eventually establishing a native Province there, the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Today, our Province continues to minister in nine sites including parishes, an orphanage, schools and a variety of outreach programs to the poor.

Our Lord's love knows no bounds, we see that every day in the mission. Our work, supported by our generous benefactors, allows us to insure those with nothing know they are beautiful children of God. As we embark on our next seventy-five years, know you are in our prayers and God is guiding us as we continue to illuminate a part of the world in great need.