

# FMA FOCUS

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



## Virtue: Inner Peace

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. For children it is a way to learn. Something we all need to remember, and then imitate more in this fast-paced world is the grace and saving balm known as the inner peace of Our Lady. In her litany it is the final crowning title "Queen of Peace." We tend to think of peace as something the world needs and that is certainly true, every day the world is filled with strife and pain. The best way to bring peace to the world is to practice it in our own lives. Pray, during Lent this year to be able to imitate the inner peace of Our Lady which will bring us and others to happiness and joy. ■

## Giving the Kiss of Peace



God invites us to be peacemakers, every day, and in all circumstances. The simplest way to show we believe and will follow this invitation is to enthusiastically offer the Kiss of Peace to our neighbor at Mass. Of course, we don't actually kiss – except sometimes for family members, but a smile and gentle handshake are not too much to show we live and offer our peace to the world. This familiar gesture has been a part of the Mass since its beginning according to theologians. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gives this command: "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your

offering” (Matthew 5:23-24). The current General Instruction of the Roman Missal explains that the gesture is to be performed directly before communion:

“The Rite of Peace follows, by which the Church asks for peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament.” (GIRM 82)

The Kiss of Peace, or Sign of Peace as it is now known, has had many forms. While it is typically given only to those standing next to each other, at some points in history and in other rites priests would kiss the altar and then pass that to attendants, or even come from the altar to kiss or embrace worshippers. According to published research in the 17th century, only the Roman Rite was practicing this gesture during Mass and it was restricted to the priest and those in the sanctuary. This changed again with Vatican II, when the ancient custom was again moved into the pews to be used by the faithful in attendance.

Whatever its incarnation, the gesture is always a reminder to us that we must make peace in our own hearts to clear the way to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Additionally, it allows us to embrace the idea of peace and find ways to bring the Peace of Christ to our family, our town, our world. The practice of peace requires self-discipline and Lent is an excellent time to practice discipline for all our desires even good ones. ■

## Remembrance

**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. 3202  
Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**



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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.



# Following Christ's Way

Although the devotions of the Stations of the Cross (also called the Way of the Cross) are conducted year-round, we pay special attention to them during Lent since we associate them with the Passion and Death of Christ which we celebrate in a special way at this time. The sacred passion and death of our Savior is a sign of His great love. It shows us the way to follow since there is no other path to God except by sacrifice which shows our love. The Stations are also our way to salvation. They move so many of us to tears from the very start with the condemnation to death. Jesus accepts his sentence and takes up his cross, knowing he is doing God's will. How often do we dismiss God's will as not our own? In the next few stations – Jesus begins his last journey – falls for the first time and meets his mother and Simon and Veronica. There is so much pain for Mary and his followers as they watch the man they revere being persecuted. Veronica's merciful act of pity reminds us that we, too, need to hear the cries of those in need and in pain. Jesus then falls for a second and third time and speaks to the women who are weeping and following him. In his hours of need he still offers comfort to those around him. Now we are nearing the end of



the road. Jesus is stripped of his garments, nailed to the cross and dies, a slow and agonizing death. It is here we see the humanity of Jesus, he cries out to the Father asking if he is alone. This is all of us so many times in our lives, feeling alone, fearful, unsure of our relationships. This pit of despair is where we need to reach out, open our eyes and see that our Lord is waiting for us always. Turn to Him in our hour of need and he will be there. Lastly the two final stations, Jesus is taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb. Jesus has died for our sins. He has been laid to rest only to rise in glory on the third day. As faithful followers, we must embrace these days between the gravity of the death of Christ and the unblinding joy of the Resurrection. This Lent, as we pray the stations in a group, or alone, let us deepen our beliefs and love of Christ and grow in our faith. ■

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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. 3203, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

# ST. FRANCIS AND PEACE

St. Francis knew and loved intensely the Christ of faith, the Jesus he met in the Gospels especially. The marks of Christ's wounds – the stigmata – impressed on Francis's body in 1224 were striking proof of this. And the world, even those with no connection to our faith, know Francis well. Largely due to his legacy as the Prince of Peace. His Peace Prayer is known worldwide and practiced by children and adults.

*Lord make me an instrument of your peace.*

*Where there is hatred let me sow love;*

*Where there is injury, pardon;*

*Where there is doubt, faith;*

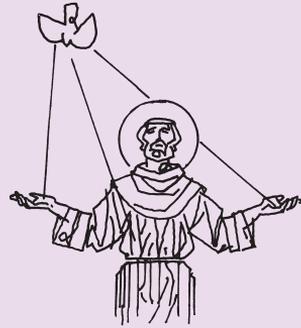
*Where there is despair, hope;*

*Where there is darkness, light;*

*And where there is sadness, joy.*

The tenets are simple in word but challenging in deed. Being an instrument of peace is not just a passive supporter. St. Francis is asking us to actively promote peace in our lives and in the lives of all we meet. In the current climate hate seems like the default emotion. Sometimes it is easier to turn our backs on someone who hurt us rather than turning toward them to forgive. But

forgiveness is at the root of all of these simple, yet complex actions. If we forgive those who trespassed against us we will deliver pardon, faith, hope, light, joy and love. One of the ways also to look at this is to look internally. Can we forgive ourselves? When we doubt or despair can we turn to Christ and to the saints, especially Francis for faith and hope? Then once we have received the grace it is our great privilege to bring that peace, faith and hope out into the world. A suitable penitential practice or Lenten exercise would be to examine this prayer and for each of the six weeks concentrate on each of the six petitions of St. Francis. If we can achieve positive results with only one, we will have made our Lent worthwhile. ■



## 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. 3205,  
Franciscan Mission Associates, PO Box 598, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

# Music can be prayer too

All the hymns and songs we sing in Church have one purpose: to increase our devotion by adding another dimension to our prayers. One who sings prays twice, it is said. In fact, many say the prayer of praise, one of the many kinds of prayer, is often best accomplished in song.

Some of the hymns we hear in Church now are truly prayers in song, “Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me” is one worth pondering during Lent since it directs our attention to reforming ourselves as a step to peace. Mrs. Jill Jackson, after years of self-doubt and depths of despair recorded this song in 1955 in response to an epiphany.

In an interview, Mrs. Jackson said she had “an eternal moment of truth.” She said she truly knew for the first time God’s unconditional love, and understood that He loved her as she was, flaws and all. The song itself has become a rallying cry for the peace movement and the lyrics are filled with love and awareness. They ask us to “let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.” Mrs. Jackson is encouraging us to not wait, to not assume someone else will champion peace for us in our lives, or in others. We must be the conduit, we must be the one who heeds the clarion call and gathers others. The lyrics continue, “Let this be my solemn vow, to take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.”

Again, reminding us to live each moment in peace, it is a choice of ours to allow God to take up our crosses. We can work with each other to create a peaceful bubble in the discord that is our existence right now. God is here, with us, at all times. He is waiting for us to turn off the phone or the laptop and turn to Him. This hymn has been recorded by many different artists over the years. And they do speak to the Lenten theme of peace, walking with our brothers in perfect harmony.

The world today is in great need of peace and also of taking responsibility for promoting peace. Let us ponder how best we can let peace begin with us, “the peace that was meant to be,” during this solemn season. ■



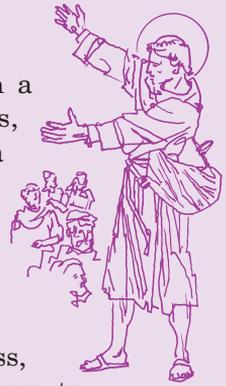
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# Solving the Problems of Distraction (St. Anthony)

St. Anthony of the wonderful memory, winning countenance and profound learning also had a problem. He was too popular. When he first began his life of prayer outside his home town of Lisbon, so many people came to visit him (friends, neighbors, relatives, etc.) that he couldn't find time for prayer. He solved the problem by moving away to Coimbra (100 miles north). It may not be necessary, or possible, for us to physically move away, but we must find time in our daily lives for God. And to complicate things, we can't do it at the expense of our own responsibilities. Since technology is omnipresent in our lives, why not lean into it instead of just letting it distract us. One of the best ways to shut out the world and focus on our Lord is to pray a Rosary. On our phones or laptops or other devices, there are many apps or videos that walk the faithful through the mysteries and the recitation of the prayers. The Rosary reminds us to think about the suffering of Christ and it also reminds us to turn to our Blessed Mother to guide us. The repetition of the well-worn prayers

done alone or with a group after Mass, can put us in a state of grace where we can block out our personal suffering or challenges.

Speaking of Mass, that is another way to push out the noise of the world and focus on all God has given us. If you can fit in a daily Mass that would be the best. Technology can also come in handy here. Often parishes record their Masses, make a point of checking so you can pray with others at home. Do you have a long commute? Try some praise and worship music or a Christian station that will fill you with the Good News and prepare you for your day, whatever that might entail. And last, but certainly not least, all of us can carve out some time to simply pray your favorite prayer, the St. Michael prayer, or Memorare for example. Perhaps rising a bit earlier, staying up a bit later, perhaps take time out of your lunch time. Lent is a good time to start a new way of life. ■



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or on YouTube  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/FranMissAssoc>

# 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,

Many articles contained in this issue discuss peace. So many understand it is never up to someone else to promote peace, it is our obligation and privilege. As the song proclaims “Let peace begin with me.”

By practicing acts of mercy, by truly forgiving those who have trespassed us, we are creating ripples of peace.

Easier said than done, absolutely. Forgiving means humbling ourselves, realizing and admitting our own faults. During the season of Lent there are so many reminders of the Lord’s mercy. Many parishes offer more opportunities for confession and many schools recite the Stations of the Cross. Additionally, the Triduum reminds us of how our Lord suffered for us and forgave our sins.

If Jesus can live among us, die for us and forgive us endlessly when we truly repent, how is it that we don’t willingly forgive slights and perceived wrongdoings against us.

By walking toward Christ and our brother, “in perfect harmony,” we add peace to our beautiful, complicated and chaotic world. It is our duty and our honor to create a better world on earth as we prepare for everlasting life with Jesus our Lord.

Know you are all in our prayers during this Solemn season,

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

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

# FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD

*Jesuit High School students from Florida serve the needy in Guatemala*

*Max Gonzalez '21 – Jesuit High School of Tampa*

I had already been on my first mission trip with Jesuit High School, to South Carolina, so generally speaking I thought I knew what to expect from our trip to Guatemala in June. I was very wrong.

My previous mission had a large focus on manual labor. We built houses and got to know a very small amount of people closely. At the Valley of the Angels school in Guatemala, just a 20-minute bus ride outside of Guatemala City, it was the opposite. There was a little manual work and more than 200 people to engage with. However, one thing remained the same. I got a chance to know almost all of those people just as closely as on the last mission.

We arrived at the school very late and were exhausted from traveling. We didn't sleep too well that first night, but we had to be ready to go in the morning. What aided our transition was the wonderful hospitality from Fr. Michael and the rest of the staff there. Anything that made us feel more at home was granted. After some introductory activities, we took a tour of the expansive campus. The campus was largely self-sufficient, with its own animals, such as chickens and turkeys, and crops including bananas, carrots and coffee, to name a few. The older girls at the mission were tasked with helping out in these places.

Later, we had Mass, and the younger children were very distracted – very similar to how I was as a child. There in that moment I realized we weren't really different. Mass also drew many families from outside communities, demonstrating how much of a uniting force the school is for them.

After Mass was recess. The kids at Valley of the Angels never stop playing with incredible energy. The boys ran circles around me while playing soccer, and I had thought I was in good shape coming off of spring football

practice. One thing that struck me is that the children never complained, about the rules or anything. They were simply happy for God to have given them the opportunity to play.

Every day followed a similar pattern of working – typically packing food or cooking for the kids –eating, playing and prayer. The second day, though, we had an opportunity to go into the village outside of the school and visit another school called Mano Amiga. It wasn't a boarding school like Valley of the Angels, but it also provided education for poor families. After visiting the school, we delivered bags of corn flour, sugar, and cracker sticks to the families of the students of Mano Amiga. Carrying these heavy bags through the hilly streets was hard work, but meeting the grateful families was very rewarding. One such family had a paraplegic son who, despite his disability, had a never-give-up positive attitude. This encounter par-



# AGAPE LENDS ASSISTANCE

*Fr. Jack, O.F.M.*

**M**any of our donors are very interested in seeing their contributions in action, knowing that their sacrifices are rendering positive results in lands beyond their reach. We Franciscan missionaries want our faithful contributors to know that their treasures produce fruit abundantly. Tirelessly organizations in prosperous nations, like our own United States and especially the Franciscan Mission Associates office of our Franciscan Province, serve as liaison to the very needy and destitute in our neighboring countries of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

As a contributor to our FOCUS magazine, I have firsthand knowledge which the power and the influence of your prayers and donations have on the poor in the country of El Salvador, where I work as the General Director of the Association AGAPE of El Salvador, bringing the presence of Christ to



ticularly resonated with me and inspired me.

My experience in Guatemala gave me a completely different perspective on the situation of people in Central America, at least those in the area of the Valley of the Angels. The way that they adjust their way of life to their poverty is amazing. It is also interesting to see that, while many of the people are impoverished, all of them are so happy. They welcomed us with hospitality and warm hearts. I hope and pray God gives the beautiful children at The Valley of the Angels many blessings and opportunities, and I am grateful for the many meaningful experiences from our mission trip there. ■■



God's little ones through His Word and Love in all of our programs, from Healthcare to Education, from Evangelization to Hospitality and even through the Media (Radio and Television, Facebook and YouTube). With that, I would like to share another brief narrative.

During our rainy season (especially the end of September and all of October), the Association AGAPE of El Salvador, besides being a beneficiary of donations from abroad, has recently become a channel of assistance during a designated moment of national emergency. The government agency known as FONAES (in Spanish: Fondo Ambiental de El Salvador), which has as its responsibility the "Environmental conditions and situations of the country." So, FONAES sought the aid of AGAPE in order to reach out to a number of rural communities affected by the harsh and heavy rains we have been experiencing. The consideration on the part of FONAES to approach AGAPE speaks volumes of our transparency and capabilities in offering added assistance in a time of crisis. Due to the impact of the inclement weather conditions, FONAES called upon AGAPE's help in providing the necessary staples (food, tooth brushes and paste, soap, juices and other essentials like beans and cans of sauce). With AGAPE's assistance, FONAES was able to provide attention to some two thousand families in four specific areas affected by the storms: Isla de Mendez, Santo Tomas, San Juan Pico and Rosario de Mora.

The assistance that AGAPE was able to provide during this critical period for the thousands of families could only have happened with the contribution made by you our loyal and loving donors. Many have expressed thanks and continue to look upon

the Association AGAPE of El Salvador as an ally in time of need. We in turn, thank you our donors for all of your prayers and gifts that reap an abundance of peace and goodness to the many who are suffering.

The founder and president of the Association, Fr. Flavian, some 41 years ago, wanted to share his Christmas meal with some of the street people in the town of Sonsonate, where he was parochial vicar in the parish of Santisima Trinidad. Little did he realize then that such a simple gesture would blossom into a greater source of love for the entire country. And, with your continued generosity AGAPE will reach immeasurable heights of solidarity with the most vulnerable of this land.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts and as you pray for us, know that you, too, are in our prayers. ■



# Words Worth Noting



*Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.*

*Albert Einstein*

*Love to be real must be empty of self.*

*Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

*The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it.*

*Flannery O'Conner*

*The traveler sees what he sees, the tourist sees what he has come to see.*

*G.K. Chesterton*

*Love is like fog, there is no mountain on which it does not rest.*

*Hawaiian proverb*

*Have the courage to be truly happy.*

*Pope Francis*

*Love all, trust few, but do wrong to none.*

*William Shakespeare*

*When the debate is over, slander becomes the tool of the loser.*

*Socrates*

*God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.*

*St. Augustine*

## Our Readers gladly write...

Dear Father,

Please accept this donation in thanksgiving for a very special favor I received from our Heavenly Father through the miraculous intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Anthony, St. Jude, St. Theresa, St. Monica, St. Anne, St. Joseph and St. Dymphna. With overwhelming gratitude, my prayers were answered in what seemed like a hopeless situation. This is my personal testament to the power of prayer, believe and trust.

Sincerely,  
S. McC.  
Cincinnati, OH

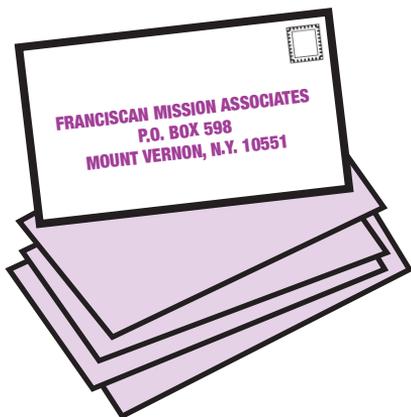
Dear Father Robert,

Thank you so much for remembering my 80th birthday and including me in your prayers. Our Lord God Jesus is really so powerful, merciful, loving and helpful. As I have told you I'm in remission after having been diagnosed with cancer in 2002.

Father Robert, I really believe in my heart that Jesus, the shepherd, really healed me. Since then I always pray to him to keep me well and I also don't forget our Mother of Perpetual Help, with Little Jesus.

You take care Fr. Robert, I'll remember you always. God bless you and everyone in the missions.

Sincerely,  
R.M.  
San Francisco, CA



Dear Father,

Let this be a note of public thanks to our Father, Son and Holy Spirit along with Our Blessed Mother under her title, "Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal." I ask these and all the saints to intercede for me to Our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, St. Jude, St. Ann, St. Anthony, St. Paul and St. Dymphna for favors, graces, healing and help. I am grateful for the help of all of those God placed in my journey to help me. I thank God and give him gratitude, honor and love.

Sincerely,  
R.S.  
Madison Heights, MI

Dear Father Robert,

Please publish my thanks to St. Anthony for blessings received regarding employment for my daughter. Our prayers were answered. God bless.

Sincerely,  
M.E.M.  
Bridgeport, OH

# Remembering it is reconciliation not just confession

During Lent our eyes often turn to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, sometimes called Confession or Penance. While we do confess our sins and work through our penance, that is not what we, especially those receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time, should focus on. The true heart of the sacrament is not the divulging of the sin, nor is it the penance, although they are key components. The most critical component it is, in fact, the reconciling. Throughout the New Testament, Jesus gave the apostles authority to hear sins and to be a spiritual conduit. “Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (John 20:22-23)

All of us need this sacrament, no matter what we think of ourselves. Pope Francis in a recent Mass reminded those who are behind the curtain of their role as well. He said Priests must be aware that the confessional is a place where people find forgiveness and mercy, not terror and condemnation. “When we priests – in the Lord’s place – hear confessions, we must also have an attitude of goodness like the Lord.”



Reconciliation should be a place of peace not fear. It should be where sinners, and that means all of us, go to reconcile our relationships. The Catechism of the Catholic Church makes it clear we are not just reconciling with the Lord when we confess our sins, but with all of our brothers and sisters. “Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God’s mercy for the offense committed against Him and are at the same time reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer, labors for their conversion.”

Simply by going to confession and offering a true penance, we are not just receiving the beauty and grace ourselves, but extending that grace to the entire faithful community. God’s mercy insures we are welcomed back with open arms.

During Lent, many parishes offer additional slots for us to receive the Sacrament, many evenings are set aside as well as Saturdays. This Lent, let us humbly understand that this beautiful act of grace strengthens us and gives us a clearer path forward. ■

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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 3204, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

# Refresher on the Triduum

This year the three most holy days of the year are early in April. The Triduum will be Thursday, April 9 – Sunday, April 12. Families may be together during these days preparing for the end of Lent and the glorious Easter Mass and celebrations. On its website, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has a number of questions on the Paschal Triduum. Here are some of the highlights.

*When does the Triduum begin and end?*

The Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday and ends with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. Deacons may not officiate at the Celebration of the Lord's Passion which takes place Good Friday, usually in the afternoon.

*The Adoration of the Holy Cross?*

The Adoration of the Holy Cross begins on Good Friday with one of two forms of showing. In the first

form, a deacon or "suitable minister" obtains the veiled Cross which is brought to the center of the sanctuary. The priest uncovers the cross in three distinct parts, first the upper part, then the right arm, then the entire Cross. Each time he does this, the priest sings "Behold the wood of the Cross." The second variation is similar and the priest sings "Behold the wood of the Cross" at each step of the unveiling as well.

*What considerations should be given for the Paschal Candle used at the Easter Vigil?*

The candle should be made of "wax, never be artificial, be replaced every year, be only one in number and be of sufficiently large size that it may convey the truth that Christ is the light of the world." Those who choose the size and color should have it reflect the sanctuary's architecture and size.

*How many readings should be proclaimed at the Easter Vigil?*

Be prepared for a long and interesting evening if you attend the Easter Vigil. There are seven Old Testament readings and two New Testament readings, which chronicle the "outstanding deed and history of salvation." Between each is a responsorial psalm. The solemn evening reminds those in attendance the glory of our faith and its long true history. ■



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

# NEW SAINTS FOR NEW TIMES

Five new saints were declared by Pope Francis in 2019, four women and one man who dedicated their lives to Christ and service.

Brazilian Sister, Dulce Lopes Pontes, was born Maria Rita, in Salvador de Bahia, in 1914. At age 13, after the death of her mother, Maria Rita decided to dedicate herself to the poor and became particularly devoted to St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Known as the Mother Theresa of Brazil, she founded homes, libraries, clinics and schools for the poor. Her dedication to the poor resulted in a Nobel Peace Prize nomination. After a life of service, she died at the age of 77.

Sr. Giuseppina was born Guiditta, in Rome, in 1859. After the death of both parents, a young Giuseppina and her two siblings were sent to Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul orphanage. She worked with a Camillian Father, Luigi Tezza, to restore the Camillian Tertiaries. Newly vowed Sr. Giuseppina became Superior General of the new religious Congregation known as the Daughters of Saint Camillus, which finally received official approval in 1909 after twice being refused by Pope Leo XIII. She died in 1911, but her order had grown to 156 professed religious with 16 houses between Europe and America.

Mariam Thesia Mankidiyan spent her life assisting the poor and elderly in India. She was born in 1876, in Kerala, India and credited her mother with her love of Christ and the saints. Thesia was 10 when it is said, she made a private vow of virginity and she began her life of service by caring for lepers and orphaned children. In her home town, Thesia bore the stigmata in secret and had a series of mystical experiences. After joining the Poor Clares and then a Carmelite Order, she decided on a different path and struck out on her own. She created a small community with two friends that eventually became the Congregation of the

Holy Family, which she headed until her death in 1926. The Congregation grew and established new convents, schools, boarding schools and orphanages.

Marguerite Bays, born in 1815, grew up in a large family and knew from a young age that her calling was to care for them. She attended daily Mass, prayed the Rosary regularly and gently catechized through her actions and dedication to our Lord. She joined the Franciscan Third Order, now the Secular Franciscan Order, knowing a religious life was not her calling. Instead, she cared for her extended family including a difficult sister-in-law, a discarded nephew and a brother who ended up in prison. In her thirties, she developed painful cancer and also bore the stigmata, which she also tried to keep secret. It is said she became desperately ill on Fridays and during Holy Week – illustrating her connection to Christ. She died in 1879 after years of silently suffering.

Cardinal John Henry Newman, born in England, converted midway through his ministry as an Anglican priest to Catholicism. His continual desire for truth led him to Catholicism and began his conversion journey in 1843 asking to be admitted fully in 1845, and then two years later was ordained a priest, founding an Oratory, dedicated to St. Philip Neri. From there Fr. Newman founded schools, continued his writing, including a new translation of the Bible to English. His name is linked to faith centers and bastions of Catholicism at public and private colleges in the United States. He became a Cardinal in 1870 and died 11 years later.

“The Christian has a deep, silent, hidden peace, which the world sees not... The Christian is cheerful, easy, kind, gentle, courteous, candid, unassuming, has no pretense... with so little that is unusual or striking in his bearing, that he may easily be taken at first sight for an ordinary man.” ■

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# Special Novena Schedule Lent-Easter 2020

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 1-9 .....	Holy Family Novena
February 2-19 .....	Our Lady of Lourdes
February 26 - April 5 .....	Lenten Masses (40)
March 31 - April 8 .....	Feast of Easter
April 12-20 .....	In Thanksgiving for the Risen Christ
April 14 - June 9 .....	9 Tuesdays to St. Anthony

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 3131, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

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## *A Spiritual Journey in the Homeland of Pope John Paul II*

### **May 12-23, 2021**

## **Krakow • Czestochowa Wadowice • Prague • Vienna**

The homeland of Pope John Paul II has a spirit and character all its own. In addition to exploring Krakow, one of the country's largest cities, you will also experience the spirituality of Czestochowa and visit Wadowice, the birthplace of the Holy Father. Immerse yourself in these fascinating cultures as you travel and worship in Poland, Austria, and the Czech Republic.

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Dear Father, Please send information on this Pilgrimage to Easter Europe

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**Pilgrimage Office, Dept. F, P.O. Box 598, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598  
Tel: 914-664-1747 or 914-664-5604**