

FMA FOCUS

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



Virtue: Hope

Christianity is a religion of Hope. We are not “muddling through” or “cast adrift” to fend for ourselves after our creation. We are not “abandoned” to war, pestilence, and pain. We are not destined for an “ignominious end.” We are a people of hope based on Christ’s promise and His revelation of our true dignity as Children of God and Heirs to the Kingdom. Hope is the survival virtue, for no matter what happens Christians have hope. Clearly the last year has taught us that we do hope for a better world. Sometimes our methods need to be reimaged. When we look to help each other, to build each other up and ‘love one another as He has loved us’ we see hope for a future with fewer conflicts and more peace. ■

Responding to Christ’s Message



One of the many ways we can participate during Mass is the Responsorial Psalm which comes between the readings. Early Christians followed the practices of the Jewish Synagogue and responded to a scripture reading by singing a psalm or bible canticle. That is what we do today. We respond to God’s Word with God’s Word – a psalm or biblical canticle. As children learn first the words and then the meaning, Christians too learn the Word of the Lord by hearing and singing and reciting. The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls prayer “a reciprocal call between God and family,” exactly what is done during the Responsorial Psalm.

The meaning we derive from the psalm, comes by our pondering and reflecting on the message we have received. The more familiar refrains are ones we do in a rote method – reflexively. And that, like falling into a slightly meditative state during a rosary, is fine occasionally. But to get the most from the Responsorial Psalm, it is best to concentrate on the words. The psalms for daily or Sunday Mass are most familiar including Ps. 25, “To you O Lord I lift my soul,” Ps. 22 “My God my God why have you abandoned me” and Ps. 103 “The Lord is kind and merciful.” Each of these is generally used during a particular part of the Liturgical calendar and matches or supports the tone of the other readings. While we know them well it is important, like during other familiar parts of Mass to “tune in” fully. This was the most difficult for some during the past year as Mass consisted of sitting in our homes and not being in the community. Known phrases and comfortable seating often make it difficult to focus. But these words beg to be heard. The rich but simple messages of the Psalms cover many emotions, anger, frustration and sadness, but a true reading of the Psalms will also illus-

trate the writer’s steadfast hope and belief that God will never fail us. That no matter what the obstacle, God will be our savior and our lives are worthy in His eyes and we are all His children. It is that support that we must reach for during troubling times. Listen closer next time to the Responsorial Psalm or better yet – read them on your own, and you will be refreshed and content in the love of the Lord. ■

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. 2203
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.



Such a simple thing for a miracle - St. Anthony

Sometimes we just have a terrible time trying to figure God out. Miracles like the loaves and fishes, or the resurrection, seem important enough to claim His time and effort. But the Miracle of Cana? To save a couple from embarrassment to provide wine for a party? What could He be thinking?

One of the reasons Jesus performs His first miracle is that His mother asks – or rather – tells Him to. Mary does this because she believes in her son, and His divine power. His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” (Jn. 2:5) And Mary also knows it is time, even before Jesus does. Mary, as His mother, knows her son’s capabilities and responsibilities. He is showing His devotion and belief in her as well when He acquiesces. Pope Francis in a general audience in 2016 explained why John in his Gospel refers to the event at Cana as one of many “signs of mercy.”

Jesus doesn’t perform (it) in order to excite wonder but to reveal the love of the Father. It is a kind of “gateway,” on which are engraved the words and expressions that illuminate the entire mystery of Christ and open the hearts of the disciples to the faith. (Pope Francis, General Audience 2016)

The importance of this miracle is not underestimated by Pope Francis and is in fact explained in full. He shows how it, as one of the first public signs of Jesus’s divine power, gathers and welcomes all of us. At a celebration no less, one that signifies growth, love and hope. St. Anthony also understood (and still understands) the necessity for the unimportant miracle. The story of keeping the little girl dry in the rain when she was bringing food to the friars, the restoring of a wine glass for a poor woman and filling her empty cask with wine. And the thousands of things he “finds” for us when we lose them. Why? God loves us, that’s why and He understands “importance” on a very human scale. Thank God for God. ■



Giving of ourselves in times of sorrow

Often we believe we have depleted our compassion reserves. We can wish we had more to give and truly believe we don't. But we are wrong. God always provides us with the reserve we need and then some. Even with the entire world on lockdown, when every human being was impacted by the global pandemic, still sometimes, that nagging sense that hope was lost. That is why it was so gratifying to see the crowds cheering the first responders and the medical personnel on the front lines. We saw for the first time, with our own eyes, how many actually had it worse, not better than we do. When we begin to feel low, or cornered, or like others might have a better life, it is a good time to choose something to read about some of our saints. They did not have an easy life. Many gave up so much too. In fact, had a more difficult life. One such woman is St. Elizabeth of Hungary, whose feast day is November 17. She had a short but fruitful life dying at a very young 24 years of age. Elizabeth was born a noble woman in Hungary. She was the daughter of King Andrew II and Gertrude of Merania. Elizabeth's young life was filled with

tragedy. Her mother was murdered when Elizabeth was a young girl. Also while young, she married a man she deeply loved and tragically he was killed, this time in the Crusades. She had three young children at the time and even after all that chaos and bloodshed, she dedicated her life to peaceful pursuits. She used her royal position for charitable deeds and to promote prayer. Her generosity toward the poor is well documented. After her husband's death, Elizabeth took a vow of celibacy and joined the secular Third Order of St. Francis. Many are familiar with the famous story of her secret cloak filled with bread that miraculously turned to roses when she was confronted by questions about whether she was taking

food from the castle. God protected Elizabeth so that her good deeds could continue unabated. Elizabeth was on the greener side of the fence; she lived in comfort but gave it up for the comfort of others. This example is one we should be following. ■



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 the next year and in a Special Novena of Masses to begin on Christmas Day.

You will receive beautifully engraved Christmas gift cards, well in advance. Each card is designed to show your name as the donor and the name of each person you decide to enroll. You may remit 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. 2202, Mount Vernon, NY 10551

MEDITATION ON THE CANDLES AT CHRISTMAS

The flickering candles that we see in the windows during the Advent and Christmas season bring such simple joy. The gentle sway of the light during dark, cold nights, showing the way home. Christmas candles give light, heat, and create such innocent beauty. If we think of Christ as the light of the world; if we think of the Christ who warms our hearts with love, brings beauty to our souls and as an infant who calls all humankind to wonder at the miracle of birth, then we don't only see a Christmas candle, we have a Christmas meditation as well.

First consider Christ and light, obviously candles bring light. In times of old they were the only source of light for homes and so their brightness was their primary goal, an essential illuminator. Our souls, like ourselves, also need illumination and Jesus describes himself in such terms.

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”(Jn 8:12)



Candles also bring warmth and a calming comfort, like when Jesus calmed the seas for the apostles.

“He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Quiet! Be still!” The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, “Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?” (Mark 4: 39-40)”

Candles also bring beauty and wonder as Christ did as a baby when the “Good News” was told to an angel.

“For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you, who is Messiah and Lord.

And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:11-12)

Candles are symbols and true essentials. They illuminate dark paths, cheer a lonely person or calm a frightened child. The Christmas candle is a special candle often pictured prominently inside the advent wreath. It creates awesome beauty amid the greenery. Even more than enjoying the Christmas candle, we must use it as a guide to shape our character, not just at Christmas but year-round. If we are to imitate Christ we are called to do. Then we must ask ourselves how do I bring light, warmth, beauty and wonder to my world, in imitation of Christ. ■



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St. Francis the Deacon

In many parishes around the country there is an additional figure on the altar during Mass, or working in the schools or helping with marriage preparation. That figure is the deacon. He is usually a friendly, knowledgeable, and compassionate person who is a jack of all trades, and often quite indispensable to parish life.

There are now more than 18,000 ordained permanent deacons in the Church – an amazing growth since the first 1,900 were counted in 1977. This salute from a deacon Ordination Liturgy indicates the importance the church places on this order. “My sons, you are being raised to the order of deacons. The Lord has set an example for you to follow. As deacons, you will serve Jesus Christ who was known among his disciples as the one who served others.”

According to the United States Bishops Conference deacons have three areas of responsibility.

“As ministers of Word, deacons proclaim the Gospel, preach, and teach in the name of the Church. As ministers of Sacrament, deacons baptize, lead the faithful in prayer, witness marriages, and conduct wake and funeral services. As ministers of Charity, deacons are leaders in identifying the needs of others, then marshalling the Church’s resources to meet those needs.”

Deacons, like priests, go where they are needed or where their



special talents or gifts can be put to the most use. Diocesan leaders place deacons and they soon become a distinguished part of the fabric of the parish. While often thought of as a stepping stone towards priesthood, that is not always the case. The Diaconate is permanent for some in that it is their final spiritual leadership place. St. Francis thought so much of the power of these orders that he chose to remain a Deacon, never accepting ordination to priesthood. St. Francis understood the differing roles in the Church; priest, deacon, religious, preacher, leader. He saw himself in life as a servant of God and how better to embody that role than in the robes of a deacon. We can ask St. Francis the Deacon to help us better understand our own deacons in the church as people accepted this supporting and significant order of wandering preachers. ■

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 people associate this time of year with endings. And while endings can be sad, these last few weeks of the calendar are, for Christians, filled with happiness. The liturgical year renews in Advent and that brings with it readings that include “tidings of great joy.” Joy is something we have been sorely lacking the past several months as we endure many global challenges, fears and even deaths. To find the joy inherent in our world, we must truly listen to scripture. “I will turn their mourning into joy, I will show them compassion and have them rejoice after their sorrows.” (Jeremiah 31:13)

In the darkness, we, as Christians, must find light. We must lean into our faith and when we do, we will realize we have the tools to fight the worst pain and sadness any earthly challenge offers. God is always there, always with us and will always know our true path. Together, on Christmas Day, we will rejoice in His coming, that is the beginning. And together at His second coming, we will rejoice and be with Him for eternity.

May God's joy be with you during this
Advent and Christmas season,

FR. Robert, OFM

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

THE SMILE OF VALLEY OF THE ANGELS NEVER DISAPPEARS – NEW FACES – SAME DEDICATION TO GOD

Fr. Joaquin, O.F.M.

“The poor always deserve the best,” was the motto of Father Rocco, who founded Valley of the Angels 27 years ago. Fr. Michael, O.F.M., continued his legacy until 2019, and now I have been entrusted to continue this beautiful work.

It would not be possible for me to do this work alone. I am blessed to have a team of professionals, from a variety of fields, who are able to educate, discipline, and provide religious formation for our children.

We began 2020 with high expectations and clear goals to fulfill the well-established programs within our school institution. However, we never imagined that all our plans would suddenly change.

In 2020 we were attacked by an invisible enemy that had already struck ninety-five percent of every country in the world, Guatemala was no exception, and COVID-19 hit us hard. We immediately took health precautions and established procedures to prevent the possible spread of the virus within our institution. We also followed the restrictions and regulations of the government and made the difficult decision to send all the children home for their health and safety.

This situation did not prevent us from continuing to support and help our precious ones and provided an opportunity for local benefactors to donate aid packages with necessary supplies for the families of our children at Valley of the Angels. We place our faith and trust in God that soon we will see our children studying, praying, singing, running, and playing around our beautiful grounds.

It is with a grateful and humble heart that I want to acknowledge the valuable

partnership we have formed with people like you, who throughout the years have supported the mission in Central America of the Franciscan Friars of our Province of the Immaculate Conception of New York. I believe it is in times like this that we need your solidarity and support more than ever. I understand the world will be facing an economic crisis, but I trust in God’s providence and in your hearts that you will not stop financial funding to support the important mission and formation of our children at Valley of the Angels. It is our challenge together to face and endure the legacy of Father Rocco in giving the best to our children.

From this place of blessing and on behalf of all the staff at Valley of the Angels, we pray to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary to protect you against this pandemic of COVID-19. ■





THE RESCUING OF LUCY – GOD ALWAYS PROVIDES

Fr. Guy, O.F.M.



It was January that Lucy, a Peace Corps volunteer, and a group of her fellow workers went mountain climbing in the hills of El Salvador. On their way back, as they were descending an inactive volcano, one of the climbers slipped and cut loose a set of huge boulders. Lucy being the most experienced mountain climber in the group had taken the lead and was in the direct path of the rapidly falling boulders. Without any warning she found herself tumbling alongside the colliding rocks. When she landed, she was trapped under several large boulders and had intense pain. The largest boulder was covering her abdomen and legs. It took the four men in her group to remove it.

It was obvious that her ankle was badly broken, and that it would be impossible for her to climb down the remainder of the volcano and out of the mountain range to safety. Lucy feared that if she did not get to a hospital soon she would suffer permanent dam-

age to her ankle and her overall health.

Being Sunday, she knew that the Red Cross would most likely not be at their post and that the police would be of no help. Their only shot would be to call the parish clinic. Luckily the group had a cell phone and received a strong enough signal to enable them to make the call. The volunteers at the clinic were ready and willing to come to their aid. About an hour after, when Lucy and her group were halfway up the other mountain-side, the volunteers arrived with a stretcher. They carried her the rest of the way up the mountain to where the ambulance was waiting. Then they took her to the American Embassy, who escorted the ambulance to the nearest best hospital.

In her letter to our benefactors, Lucy says, “I cannot convey to you enough my sincere appreciation for the services I was able to receive, thanks for your support and donations to the Parish Medical Services. It is such a blessing to have a terrific medical clinic, ambulance and volunteer staff in this community.”

Thanks be to God and to our wonderful volunteers, Lucy was saved, although she suffered many bruises and a broken ankle. About a month and a half later Lucy visited us to offer her services in appreciation for what was done for her. We are so grateful for the continued support so we may help those in need wherever and whatever the circumstances. Our ambulance has saved many people and we were very happy to have helped Lucy. I'm sure our benefactors feel the same way. ■



GOD'S WORK CAN'T BE DERAILED BY A PANDEMIC A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MISSIONARY DURING COVID - 19

Fr. Rafael, O.F.M.

We are still in quarantine here in El Salvador. We only go out for some purchases on certain days. We are already many more than 70 days of confinement. Hunger and poverty are great among our people. While we cannot fill the seats, here in private I have always celebrated the Holy Mass. Additionally, I have celebrated a repose – or funeral Mass – for more than 12 people, these are even done with the social distancing and hygiene requirements.

I want to share with you that together with some Marian volunteers, we took a trip out to the very poor marginal sector of our parish. We made some confessions and also a plenary indulgence for this community, then we celebrated the Word of God, we gave them some holy rosaries. We were blessed to bring them Holy Communion and some secular and necessary supplies including sugar, rice, oils, soups, sauces and some toilet paper. The whole community was so grateful to those who supplied everything.

May God bless you always, and thank you for continuing to collaborate with the Franciscan Missions because we need so much. ■



Words Worth Noting



Fishing largely consists of not catching fish.

Robert Hughes

When people are old enough to know better they are old enough to do worse.

Hesketh Pearson

All knowledge degenerates into probability.

David Hume

I do not mistrust the future or fear what is ahead. Our problems are large but our heart is larger.

President George H. W. Bush

I no longer listen to what people say, I just watch what they do.

Winston Churchill

An old broom knows the dirty corners best.

Irish proverb

Act and God will act.

Joan of Arc

No one heals himself by wounding another.

Saint Ambrose

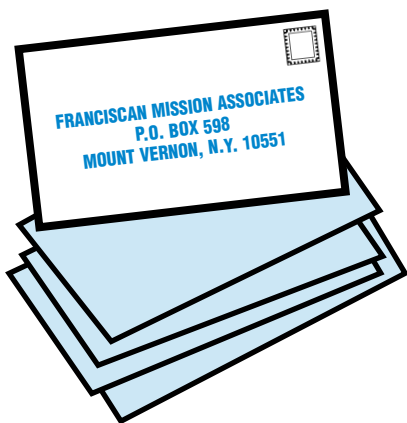
I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least.

Dorothy Day

Kindness is like snow, it beautifies everything it covers.

Kahlil Gibran

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father Robert,

Thank you for the inspiring letters of “thank you” that you sent to me. I would like to thank you with all my heart for them and their message. That you took my intentions and lit candles fills me with overwhelming gratitude.

Most sincerely,
L.S.
McLean, VA

Dear Father Robert,

Your letter about my prayer request brought inexplicable joy to my heart. It came at a time when my finances were not good, and I was almost giving up. Your ministry’s simplicity and beauty in Christ touched me deeply. Thank you so very, very much.

Truly yours,
H.J.G.
Eugene, OR

Dear Fr. Robert,

I enjoy reading the FOCUS newsletter from front to back page. Today I add my thank you with all the others. It gives me so much comfort reading it, as I live alone. Please pray for my three children to return to the 10 Commandments, their Baptism and Confirmation vows, so we can live in peace.

Thanks,
V.J.V.
San Francisco, CA

Dear Fr. Robert,

On my recent Marian Pilgrimage I met your friars Fr. Paul and Brother Angelo. They assisted us beautifully and I gained so much information about your Province. I enjoy FOCUS and the devotionals you send. I only began receiving your information recently and I look forward to what will come from you in the future.

My thanks, my regards,
R.F.R.
Cortlandt Manor, NY

Dear Father Robert,

Please publish my thanks to Our Blessed Mother, Our Lord, St. Jude, St. Anthony, St. Therese and also my guardian angels for favors granted. I’m enclosing a check. God bless you and the Franciscans for all your work and prayers.

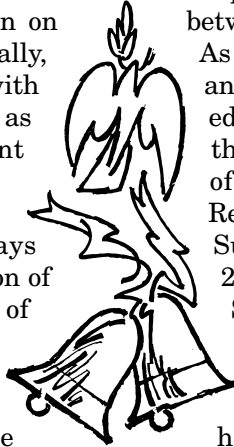
Sincerely,
K.B.
Harrisburg, AR

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

This season of the year is an end and a beginning in more ways than one. Of course, the calendar page flips and we are into a New Year starting with the countdown on New Year's Eve. Liturgically, also, the new year begins with the first Sunday of Advent as we move into a different rhythm.

The Advent season consists of the four Sundays directly before the celebration of Christmas. It is a time of preparation that allows the faithful to open our hearts to both the time Jesus spent on earth and the time he will come again in glory.

The readings we hear at the end of the ordinary year and during Advent also show an end and a beginning. In the story of the longing of the world for a Savior and the final ending of the world as well. The resonant common themes in Sunday, November 22nd readings (last Sunday of ordinary time 2020) and November 29 (first Sunday of Advent) are preparation. God is coming, both Gospel readings proclaim, one from Matthew one from



Mark. In each case the Lord asks, or rather warns, that we need to be ready. To be anticipating His coming and preparing. A mystical union between these two great events.

As the Jewish people waited and hoped for a savior, we waited for His second coming. And through it all we hope because of God's promises. The Responsorial Psalm for the last Sunday of Ordinary Time in 2020 is "The Lord is my Shepherd there is nothing I shall want (Ps. 23). Asking that the Lord keep us safe, and remind us God is our hope. Just the next week already, there is a small but significant change of tone. The readings give us some help in our journey to Heaven. "Lord make us turn to you. Let us see your face and we shall be saved." (Ps. 80) The Psalms remind us not just to hope, not just to passively expect salvation, but instead that it is our responsibility to work toward that goal. We must become a servant of the Lord and follow the path for our lives; only He knows and once on it, become the faithful followers we were born to be. ■

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. 2205, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

MISSIONARY ZEAL, OUR TRUE CALL

Being a Christian has always been a struggle. In the beginning we bore the enmity of Roman Conquerors of Jerusalem. In other times missionaries both misunderstood and feared were killed by those whose gods demanded human sacrifices. Modern day martyrs, including St. Isaac Jogues of France, who traveled to New York repeatedly, was killed by the people he believed he could save. He was not deterred even after being severely harmed in a previous missionary trip.

Today missionaries are still killed around the world, churches burned, Christian symbols desecrated. And even without the most tragic ending,



missionaries face obstacles many of us cannot imagine. Most are in harm's way, with secular war around. And almost all are in areas of deep poverty, so the missionaries are, like St. Francis, reduced to bare bones.

They live in conditions that would bring many of us to our knees. But at all times the hearts of Christians, especially our missionaries have been brave and strong as they stood up to the lions in Rome and the peoples who martyred Christians in almost every continent. In fact, joy is the constant at many of missionary parishes. The stripped-down life has its advantages. It creates an ability to truly see the path, the light and the true way. And it is this clarity that allows all of us to evangelize and be missionaries in our own right. Pope Francis likens our true faith to being in love,

“People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life-giving.”

You don't need to be an expert in Apologetics to defend and promote Christianity. It is our baptismal responsibility and one we know will allow us to grow in faith. So today we must be brave in the presence of evil (of whatever kind) and stand our ground. We are Christians, bringing God's Word. ■

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 2204, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

Customs, Traditions and Faith

We are seeing a revival in many customs surrounding Christmas. The Christmas tree and its association with the feast has become an almost universal symbol. But in addition to that festive family tradition, we should be sure we have these Christian symbols in our homes and our hearts this season. One of the overlooked customs is the decorating of the Jesse tree which helps us connect the custom of decorating a tree to the life of Jesus. The Jesse tree is “rooted” in scripture, from Isaiah 11:1 “A shoot shall come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” As we know from our teachings, Jesse was the father of King David. Families can decorate their Jesse tree with ornaments that represent the people, prophecies, and events that led up to the glorious birth of the Savior. Each week-day or Sunday scripture can be read and ornaments that tell the story of God in the Old Testament can be placed on the tree – making it a center piece of both the season and the enduring power of God’s love for His people. Another, perhaps, more well-known Christmas symbol to have is an advent wreath. Catholic school students make one out of paper each year. And quickly understand the reasons for the different colored candles, including the Rose candle that

signifies the joy of knowing we are more than halfway through Advent season. The Advent wreath also lends itself to family meditations and scripture readings. Often it is the centerpiece of the table and the candles are lit during family mealtime. And lastly, the manger scene complete with the Christmas Crib rounds out the important and beautiful Christian symbols. So many remember learning that the manger scene grows or changes each week as visitors come and go and Mary and Joseph await their son, our Lord. It is a glorious day when the baby makes an appearance and Jesus is finally with us. Accepting Christ in Christmas. Our Christian symbols can be a sign of our faith. ■



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

Special Novena Schedule Advent-Christmas 2020

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 1-30Novena for the Faithful Departed
- December 1-31Infant Savior (31 Masses)
- December 8-16Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- December 16-24Feast of Christmas (in Padua)
- December 24-January 1Feast of Christmas (in Assisi)
- December 25-January 2Christ Child Novena (in Bethlehem)

Additional Masses: One Mass is celebrated daily for our good friends and their intentions.

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 2201, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

Thank You Again!

We are very grateful to all our FMA sponsors, donors, and supporters who by their prayer, charity, and goodness enable us to continue to preach the word of God.

As a special mark of gratitude and appreciation, Father Robert will offer a special Mass of thanksgiving on November 24 for FMA sponsors and all our donors.

Please send any petitions you wish remembered and included. Mail your request to Father Robert today at

**Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 2206, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**