

FMA

FOCUS

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



Virtue: Faithfulness

During our lives we strive to be faithful to our friends, our family, our church, our country and especially to God. Faithfulness does not mean obsequious subservience but rather straightforward love and devotion. Those who are truly faithful to God have a tremendous sense of peace. When we put our faith in the Lord and his plan for us the twists, turns and challenges of our lives make sense and can be considered with a heart full of love. We have faith that God knows, even when we don't, our true destiny. As we are faithful to God, He is also faithful to us, and merciful. He forgives our faults. Faithfulness of God to His people is a constant theme of both Old and New Testament. ■

See God with the eye of Faith



In St. Paul's famous phrase about faith, hope and charity, it is clear that faith and hope are lesser virtues. But that is only because Paul is looking to the eternal kingdom where experience will replace faith, since we will see God face-to-face and possession will replace hope. Charity, love of the Lord, will not be replaced but intensified so that is why Paul speaks so highly of love. Here on earth, however, faithfulness is of great importance. Because we cannot see God, except in the eye of faith, faithfulness is vital. Psalm 46 begins with a call for the faithful to put all their trust in the Lord and to know He is our strength and our salvation.

God is our refuge and our strength,

an ever-present help in distress.

Thus we do not fear, though earth be shaken

and mountains quake to the depths of the sea;

Though its waters rage and foam and mountains totter at its surging. (Ps. 46: 2-4)

And the Psalm closes with these words that assure us He will be our protector, if we put our unyielding faith in Him.

Be still and know that I am God!

I am exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth. (Ps. 46:11)

Being still is the key. How often do we allow ourselves to reflect, to reconnect with the Lord? Even during these many months inside, away from others, staying safe, everyone kept busy. But busywork without intention is not always going to allow for the time and focus to deepen our faith and our faith life. The question then becomes how can you have more faith? A personal way that needs no other interactions is to dedicate ourselves to our prayer life. Our prayer can be that of the saint who said: O believe, Lord, help my unbelief. Or choose a prayer from childhood that had a connection to a family member you can't visit now, a grandmother or grandfather. Build time into your day to dedicate to

prayer. Watch daily Mass on television if your parish is live streaming, or find one online that you connect to. It is a manner of community we must have during these times, but it is one that strengthens our love of our faith and our love of our Lord.

It is a virtuous circle; our faith grows because we trust God more; our trust grows because we have more faith. O Lord I trust in You; I place my faith in You. Help me be more faithful to You and what You wish for me. ■

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. 4212
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.

A life of Service and Devotion to our Lord

“I command you: be strong and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD, your God, is with you wherever you go.” (Josh. 1:9) That knowledge that God is always there, always a guiding force can make a life of service to our Lord one of great joy. Many of our Saints lived exemplary lives of service joyfully giving up all. One of our more modern saints was Saint Mother Maria Guadalupe Garcia Zavala. Her love for the Lord was so strong and she led a long life serving others.



ting herself in danger. From 1911 until 1936, the political-religious situation in Mexico became uneasy and the Catholic Church underwent persecution.

Maria put her own life at risk by helping priests and the Archbishop of Guadalajara by allowing them sanctuary in the hospital. Her service to others didn't just stop with those who were on her side. No, she ensured all God's children received sustenance, and through that non-believers saw the joy in

Even as a child in Mexico, Maria had a special devotion and frequently prayed to Our Blessed Mother. Her father, Fortino, ran a religious goods store situated in front of the Basilica of Our Lady of Zapopan. While Maria had early plans to marry, she felt a stronger call to the religious life and changed her plans.

Maria spent most of her time serving as a nurse and as the Mother Superior General of the congregation she founded in 1901, the Handmaids of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and the Poor.

As Mother Superior, María was known for her simplicity, humility and willingness to accept all that came from the hand of God, even if it meant put-

ting the truth of our Lord. She also gave food and care to the persecutors who lived near the hospital; it was not long before they, too, began defending the sick in the hospital run by the Sisters. In forgiving, and showing mercy to all, she was truly following the example of Christ who forgave his persecutors and died for our sins. She died at the age of 85 after suffering from bad health for a number of years. Maria left a legacy worthy of admiration. During her lifetime, 11 foundations were established in the Republic of Mexico. Today, the Congregation with 22 foundations exists in Mexico and four other nations; Peru, Iceland, Greece and Italy. She was canonized by Pope Francis in May of 2013. ■

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. 4215

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

THE STIGMATA... OR WHY DOES GOD WOUND HIS FRIENDS?

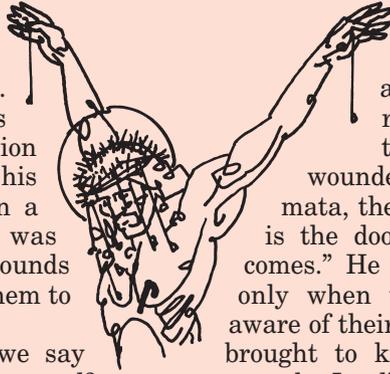
The Stigmata, the marks of the Cross in the hands, feet and side, have been given to a few followers of Christ over the centuries since that first Good Friday. In 1224, St. Francis of Assisi was meditating on Jesus' passion when he emerged from his vision of seraph fixed on a cross. St. Francis was "favored" with the five wounds of Christ and exhibited them to astonished friends.

But isn't it odd that we say favored when this is a wound? Isn't it odd we think of pain and tribulation as "marks of God's favor?" The answer is no, it is not odd. For it is through suffering often that we gain the humility and sight that we are not alone. Because such things draw us closer to rely only on God and not ourselves. How often do we allow our suffering to draw us away from God and from others? We take our pain, mental or physical, and blame others, or blame ourselves. We don't use the pain to reach out to God who is waiting for us. In looking outward, we also grow in humility, realizing we are not alone in our suffering. And often the pain we feel is minimal in relation to so many others. In seeking to follow

Christ we must listen to the pain of others. We must work to understand it and truly embrace it as our own.

In a recent address Pope Francis reminded Christians that everyone is wounded. "The Lord's stigmata, the Lord's wounds—this is the door from which mercy comes." He went on to say that only when the congregants are aware of their wounds that "we are brought to knock at the door of mercy; the Lord's wounds." By understanding our own wounds as sinners, we can draw closer to God "A 'wounded' sinner finds forgiveness, peace and consolation only in the wounds of the Lord, nowhere else."

During this summer spend some time focusing on your own wounds, or ones you have inflicted on others, ones that pull you away from God that create a gulf. Pray over it, ask God to forgive you. Find out when your parish, or a nearby parish is offering confession and avail yourself of that beautiful sacrament of mercy and forgiveness. I'll bet at the end of each week you'll be closer to God than ever before. That's what Francis did when he prayed. ■



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. 4214, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

DISCIPLINE DOES NOT TAKE THE SUMMER OFF!

If you've ever watched a fisherman cast or a water skier practice or a baseball player run for home you have seen the results of discipline at work.

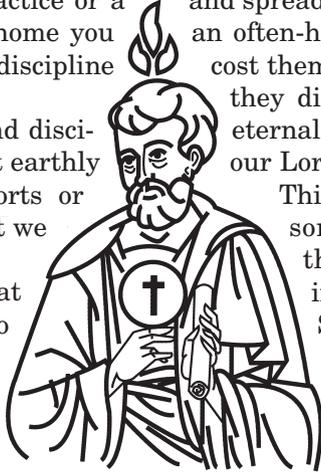
Somehow, we don't mind disciplining ourselves for that earthly crown of success in sports or work or hobby. Why can't we do it for God as well?

A simple to do list that we stick to is a way to begin to discipline ourselves in a more virtuous way. This summer why not do something you usually don't do, like picking up the dishes, or putting down your phone or making prayer a more important part of your day. If you think it's impossible to live like that you can ask St. Jude, the Saint of the Impossible, for help.

St. Jude, known also as Thaddeus, one of the Apostles is celebrated as a patron of hopeless cases, and in things almost despaired impossible. He is usually pictured with a book or pen, because of his epistle in the New Testament. He also is often holding a club which indicates his martyr's death and often there is a flame above his head, indicating the inspiration and assistance of the Holy Spirit. After his death pilgrims reportedly prayed at his grave and experienced intercessions resolving what they believed were insurmountable problems. He subsequently became known as the Patron Saint of the Impossible.

The early followers of Christ truly

did the impossible. They carried on and spread the Word of God through an often-hostile world. For many it cost them their lives on earth. But they died knowing they had an eternal life awaiting them with our Lord.



This summer, when you need some strength to get through a seemingly impossible task, turn to St. Jude with this prayer and know you will receive the support you need. For nothing is impossible with our saints as guides and our

Lord in our heart.

Prayer to St. Jude

Glorious St. Jude, with faith in your goodness, we ask for your help today.

As one of Christ's chosen Apostles, you remain a pillar and foundation of

His Church on earth. You are counted, we know, among the elders who always stand before God's throne.

From your place of glory, we know you do not forget the needs and difficulties

of Christ's little ones here, still struggling, like me, on the way home to God.

Please intercede for us all, gracious St. Jude, and be with us in our daily toil

and in all our necessities. In Christ's name, we appeal to you again today. Amen. ■

THANKS FOR THE SERMON, I REALLY LISTENED

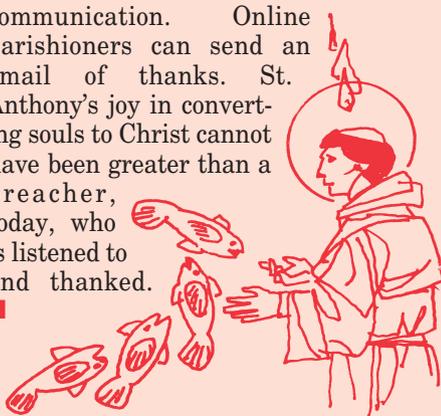
The kinds of sermons St. Anthony preached in France and Italy, converting heretics are probably not the kind we will ever hear, because we are already converted. Those in attendance however might have listened with a more focused intent than we do today. After decades of hearing the readings we know by heart, sometimes we have our own understandings and it is difficult to change those ideas. In a world of constant bombardment from advertisements, and sheer screen time, we don't have time to think, to slow down and really hear the words of the Gospel. Pope Francis has on many occasions reminded us that the noise of the world can dim our spirit. "That is why we need His Word: So that we can hear, amid the thousands of other words in our daily lives, that One Word that speaks to us not about things, but about life." A good way to start to concentrate more on the Gospel is to spend time before Mass, mentally and spiritually preparing. Open the readings, in a bible or on an electronic device in a quiet room and begin your own meditations on them.

And after you read them remember there are different, and perhaps more reflective interpretations. It is important to remember we need to listen to the experts on scripture, and not just decide ourselves what the Gospel means and ignore what is said from the altar. The men preaching, and offering a sermon each Sunday, are, regardless of

speaking ability, or charisma, preaching the Word of God. They are infused with the Holy Spirit and are delivering that grace to all of us. Humility on the congregant's part is critical. Especially at a certain older age, when a certain acceptance of the readings and understanding of them has settled in.

The ability to focus on the readings and the Mass itself for the last year has been even more difficult in the last year as we are often watching Mass on television. We may be sitting on the couch, comfortable not listening as we would be sitting in a pew. But we can work against that. We can be good listeners no matter what the quality of the preaching we hear, and what the venue. And when we hear a sermon we like or one that comforts us, we can speak directly to the priest after Mass if we are in person. If we are watching online that does not close the door on communication.

Online parishioners can send an email of thanks. St. Anthony's joy in converting souls to Christ cannot have been greater than a preacher, today, who is listened to and thanked.



DONATING ONLINE IS SIMPLE

Each day families in the poorest and most dangerous nations see hope and light because of your donations. And now you can offer your financial support online. The link below will direct you to our website. You can read about our work and see how a small sacrifice from you can make life-changing differences for so many.

<http://www.franciscanmissionassoc.org/support-our-work>

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,

June, for many, can be a month of reflection. The sun shines late, the days grow long and hopefully the weariness of the long, long winter is diminished. In a year when we have had to do so much alone, we are more in the habit of not reaching out, not asking for help. But this is when we should look to the Lord for comfort. In our darkest night He is there. He hears our prayers and guides us to places we alone could not see.

Too often we see building and sustaining our faith lives as a singular journey, an insular quest. One that we need to strengthen and perfect before we turn to Christ. That is not at all the case. Pope Francis reminded us that reaching out to our Lord is in fact the best way to support our faith life, "The first step of faith is to tell God that we need him, that we need him to be close to us."

We are not alone when we have faith. God is with us when we love Him faithfully and with abandon. And that love and faith sustains us and ensures there is no earthly challenge that can defeat us.

Welcome God's help this summer to reset and reconnect. He will be waiting for you with open arms.

Enjoy the peace of Christ in your hearts,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Robert, O.F.M." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

EVANGELIZING FROM SANDALS TO SMARTPHONE

Fr. Jack, O.F.M.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." (Isaiah 52:7)

As Franciscan missionaries, the work of our beloved province (Immaculate Conception of New York) has been to bring the Good News of Salvation to the poor, hungry and underprivileged people of God in Latin America. When we think of the Apostles of Jesus going to the ends of the Earth, baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; they did so with great passion and enthusiasm on foot. St. Francis of Assisi, in imitation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, moved throughout the known world of the 13th century (again on foot) with brothers, preaching the Gospel with actions (and when necessary with words). The disciples of Jesus and the followers of Francis happily heralded the love of God and the merciful gift of divine grace for all who believed in the Son of God and repented from their erring ways.

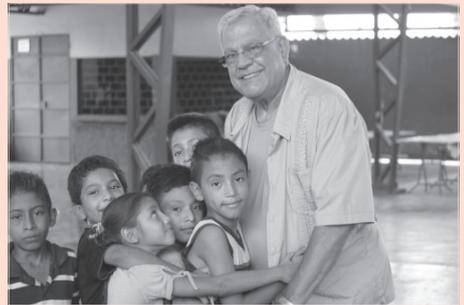
This "missionary" activity of the Church through the centuries has taken advantage of new forms of evangelization, but nothing has had a greater impact on the minimization of the world than the social media.

When friars arrived with Columbus in the New World and later when others touched the Americas from European cultures, the Word of God was carried to distant communities of native American cultures by canoes, horseback, wagons, ships or just on foot (like famed Padre Junípero Serra). This lifestyle is what inspired this author to become a missionary.

In the early 20th century in Latin America, one could appreciate the difficulties and hardships of the missionaries in their efforts

to communicate the Good News, the different hamlets and remote villages first by jeep, then by horseback and even on foot. But the mission was carried out much like the prophecy of Isaiah. This author was able to experience those wonderful moments arriving by horseback to such villages in Guatemala as a young, recently ordained friar priest. Our partially paved street main town didn't even have a telephone, only a telegraph to reach those in the capital. When the phone center did arrive, this young priest made a call home to wish his mother a "Merry Christmas."

Today the wonders of communication and the smartphones are found everywhere in the world, including these distant remote villages (even in churches). Applications are such that one can carry all of his or her personal information in the palm of their hand. Mass parts, liturgy of the hours and homiletic suggestions help the postmodern Christian, clergy convey the message of salvation. But also there is the plethora of other religions which add a new twist to the mission of the Church, opening the way to ecumenism, reli-



gious unity and appreciation of other cultural belief systems (right within the grasp of one's hand).

Let us never forget that the beauty of which Isaiah spoke (and speaks today) is the bringing, the publishing, the announcing the happy message of God's reign. Activity such as spreading the Word of God today has the assistance of many wonderful donors as you who read these words. In a very spiritual way, you too are the missionaries with the friars of Central America who are deeply grateful for your sacrifice.

This is what the heralds of St. Francis do today as they search the web and present God's message of peace and goodness which they carry in the palm of their hand reminding all who listen that God holds us in the palm of his hand. ■



NEWS FROM CANADA

Friar Joe, O.F.M.

The fields around the St. Francis Centre are heavy green after the spring rains. Wild turkeys prowl among the trees. The deer flies are back, but with their occasional annoying little nips, we get endless sunshine and the whispers of millions upon millions of leaves.

People come regularly in the summer months. Groups from parishes in the GTA and beyond spend most Friday to Sunday weekends with us. Legion of Mary associations, Mindfulness Meditation groups, the Toronto Youth Group leaders, all have gotten in their days of quiet and refreshment and discussion and prayer. The chapel smells like incense and the dining hall like penne a ragù.

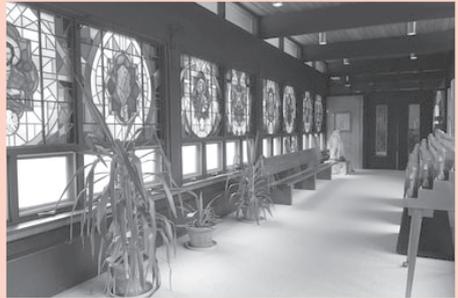
One new addition to the Centre, standing in the chapel, is a relic repository – a sturdy wood case with a glass top – housing a collection of new relics recently donated to the place. A metal cross with St. Francis' remains rests beneath the glass. Surrounding it are about a dozen small round reliquaries – a constellation of saintliness arranged on velvet – with the likes of St. Stephen the protomartyr, St. Thomas Aquinas, Sts. Joachim and Anne, St. Paschal Babylon, St. Rita of Cascia and others of equally varied stripes and stories. The faded Latin lettering marks each smudge of bone and wafer of cloth as a piece of the history, the living breathing ever-present history, which is the Communion of Saints.

It's this new repository that stands as a reminder of the Centre's mission: to be a place of Communion. Every week the Spirit beckons women and men from all backgrounds to gather here with their communities. Like our new sturdy little case, these groups are packed with all types. Mothers and fathers, doctors and lawyers, sisters and priests, all coalesce in a mysterious crystallization of the Body of the Lord. In the quiet they rediscover their own center. In the space and hospitality generated by those who work here, people can come and allow

the fruits of Communion to ripen just a little further in their lives.

This ministry of Communion reaches even to the practical and earthy. Last year the Canadian government offered grants to plant trees in a reforestation endeavor, and the Centre was able to use a sizable plot of its own land for new saplings and seedlings. The project is documented on the wall outside the dining hall. It's a modest presentation of something profound – that even the trees and fields rejoice and reap the bounty when we live communion; that the patient love embodied in a St. Francis or a St. Rita can dig deep into the earth to plant a seed.

Throughout the next few months we'll have our share of blistering afternoons, roaring thunderstorms, calm nights, clear mornings. The people will come. Tugged by the Spirit's gentle insistence, they come seeking communion. The Centre offers a place where we all can attempt to open ourselves to communion's enticing challenge. And not only we, but the very woods would shake for joy if it could be found. ■



Words Worth Noting



Whether you think you can, or think you can't, you're right.

Henry Ford

Be on the alert to recognize your prime at whatever time of your life it may occur.

Muriel Spark

Sometimes the only way the good Lord can get into some hearts is to break them.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

God never sent hunger without something to satisfy it.

Irish proverb

The great thing about getting older is you don't lose all the other ages you have been.

Madeleine L'Engle

The world does not need to know what you have, but who you are.

St. Edith Stein

If life were predictable it would cease to be life, and be without flavor.

Eleanor Roosevelt

I cannot imagine a Christian who does not know how to smile.

Pope Francis

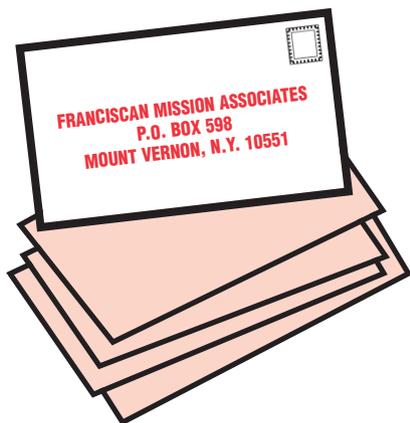
There's nothing I'm afraid of like scared people.

Robert Frost

He who complains, sins.

St. Francis de Sales

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father Robert,

I'm enclosing a check for \$20.00. please publish my thanks to St. Anthony for favors granted.

Thank you,
S.L.
Lilly, PA

Dear Father Robert,

Thank you for the beautiful St. Dymphna statue. It is so well made! And so well packed! What a blessing.

Sincerely,
I.E.
Madison, WI

Dear Fr. Robert,

After the difficult year I am so grateful for your kindness and spiritual support. Know that your booklets and the FOCUS newsletter give me such peace during a time when there is such strife. I know God is with me. I pray each day for you and for all the Franciscans and especially those in the missions. May God keep us all safe.

In Christ,
E. B.
Blacksburg, VA

Dear Father,

Enclosed please find my check for \$20.00. This is in honor of St. Anthony for a favor received.

C.S.
Seagrove Beach, FL.

Dear Father,

I prayed to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and the Holy Spirit that I would get good news about my heart tests. My prayers were answered. I am enclosing an offering of gratitude.

F.R.
Carlstadt, NJ.

Dear Father Robert,

Please find enclosed a check for five dollars in thanksgiving for many favors received. It is for St. Anthony's Bread with thanks to St. Anthony and Our Blessed Lord.

C.C.
Downsview, Ont.

MEDITATION FOR OUR TIMES

As we sit in our warm weather here in the northern hemisphere where it's summer, the southern hemisphere is experiencing winter. Their heat is on, they are bundled against the cold and there is snow all on the one planet. But we don't have to go below the equator to be confronted with the mysterious and strange, we can just look out our windows at the grass or the trees. In bloom they will die and sleep only to bloom again next summer. We live in that time cycle and yet, because we are Christians we live outside time with God. Our thoughts, our actions, our desires, our needs, our loves, are all caught up with God in Eternity. Jesus used simple things of Galilee to tell the story of God's love for us: sheep, fish, bread, grass, wind, water. All and God are with us still in a remarkable example of God's love and care for us. Do we take this all for granted, of course we do. We are human, we are busy, we aren't truly careless, just

distracted. It is overwhelming for our mortal minds to sit with the reality of all we have been given. Even when we work, truly work, to be grateful we slip, we falter and compare and ask Why God? Why am I suffering when he



isn't or she isn't? Gratitude is a muscle we must use to strengthen. And it goes hand in hand with mercy toward ourselves. We must move forward each day with forgiveness and a heart full of love toward God and our neighbor. God loves us, and forgives us. For this we all need to be grateful. Here is a short meditation to practice this month of June to strengthen that gratitude muscle and center us. Pray it this summer when we begin to slip, to forget God has a plan for all of us, individually.

Meditation

You watch over us, Lord God at every moment of the day. I know even when we are not thinking of you. Help us, then, to turn to You briefly from time to time as we pause in our work. Let us not forget altogether who You are, who we are, why we are here and that we are all, however slowly returning to You who made us for Yourself. Please teach us how to pray even when words won't come, when our spirits are heavy and our minds tired. By the merits of Christ our Savior, who knew times of tiredness and loneliness, we ask Your aid. Amen. ■



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

Our Displays of Faith

The proliferation of picture taking (especially in summer) catches moments of time, on the swing, in the tree, or on the beach. A beach picture is more than just nice to look at. We cherish it because it reminds us and actually transports us back to the time, the day, the hour, and most importantly, the feeling. That's why followers of Christ should have a picture of Jesus, His Mother, the Saints to help concentrate, to help focus attention, as the snapshot does.

We picture what we prize these are our values, evident for all to see. Holy Family displays and art are often heartwarming. They allow us to remember that Jesus was part of a true and real family. He existed in a dynamic we all know. Each of us comes from a family and exists as adult with family members we love. When we are at work, either at a home office

or away, we spend short moments of reflection on framed photos of our children or siblings or parents. God is our father and Mary, our mother. They love and guide us too. It is important to spend those off moments during the day, and some dedicated time also, in communion with God and Mary. In addition to the Holy Family, look into having some art depicting a favorite saint. Start with your patron. So many resources have information on saints, online is filled with information, as are your local bookstores. The more we read about the saints the more we realize we, too, can work toward that end, we can be more saintly. What better way to nudge ourselves toward sainthood than a physical reminder at home to strive for all that the saints did. To live a life filled with faith, and love and devotion to our Lord. Start small, one statue on the mantle of Mary or Jesus and perhaps a print of your favorite saint on a nearby wall. And don't consider it a static arrangement. Make it one you add to as you gain more pieces. A display at home of our Lord and of the Saints reminds those who visit what we cherish beyond our beach or ski vacation. ■



Visit us on the web
franciscanmissionassoc.org

Grandparents Day - the Faithful who lead the way

“Grandparents are often forgotten and we forget this wealth of preserving and passing on the roots. For this reason, I have decided to establish the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly.” Pope Francis



The relationship between Grandparent and grandchild is one that can foster a great love of Christ. With his own personal belief in the strength of that relationship, Pope Francis has designated the fourth Sunday of July as World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly. The date was chosen because of its proximity to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus. In choosing a day to honor those of advanced age, Pope Francis said: “The Holy Spirit ... arouses thoughts and words of wisdom in the elderly today: their voice is precious because it sings the praises of God and guards the roots of peoples. They remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between generations, to transmit to young people an experience of life and faith.”

This year the celebration will be Sunday, July 25, 2021 and Pope Francis will offer a special Mass. This past year when families were apart due to the pandemic it was difficult for many. Zoom

meetings and virtual meetings cannot replace face to face conversation and affection, especially for the elderly for whom the virtual world can be sterile and unknown. Grandparents hold a special place in the heart of

our Pope. He was so moved by an encounter with a grandmother in Romania he created a prayer card to memorialize it. Additionally, he has spoken often times, to young Catholics about their responsibility toward their elders. “As you continue to grow in every way – stronger, older and even in importance – do not forget the most beautiful and worthwhile lesson you learned at home. It is the wisdom that comes from age. When you grow up, do not forget your mother and your grandmother, and the simple but robust faith that gave them the strength and tenacity to keep going and not to give up. It is a reason for you to give thanks and to ask for the generosity, courage and selflessness of a “home-grown” faith that is unobtrusive, yet slowly but surely builds up the Kingdom of God.”

This July, let us pray we are together with our Grandparents and special elderly friends at Mass to honor them and be witness to their decades of strength in the face of so many challenges. ■

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 4213, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

Special Novena Schedule Summer 2021

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 summer months the Special Novena schedule is:

May 7-15 and May 16-24.....	Feast of St. Dymphna (May 15)
May 30-June 7 and June 8-16	Novena of the Holy Spirit
June 3-11	Feast of the Sacred Heart
June 5-13 and June 13-21	Feast of St. Anthony (June 13)
June 22-30	St. Anthony for a safe summer
July 18-26.....	Feast of St. Anne
August 2-10 and August 11-19	St. Anthony (in Padua)
August 7-15	Assumption of Our Lady
Sept. 2-10 and Sept. 11-19	St. Jude Novena

Holy Mass is offered each day for all Franciscan Mission Associates benefactors and for 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. 4211, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

BE THE CHURCH
Protect the environment.
Care for the poor.
FORGIVE OFTEN.
REJECT RACISM.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
EMBRACE DIVERSITY.
LOVE GOD.
Enjoy this life.