

FMA FOCUS

FEB 2022 / VOL 55, NO 3

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



VIRTUE: CHASTITY

The traditional vows which bind all religious are those of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They tend to be described negatively – the absence of riches, the absence of marriage and children, and the absence of freedom to choose for ourselves. This is not right, this is a negative view of positive and powerful commitments. Chastity means valuing God's gift of sexuality truly as God's gift and being aware of his presence in our lives and being manly or womanly according to God's design.

We know that the Lord calls us all to chastity, whether we are single or married. He calls us to presence not absence. Chastity is a lived virtue, calling us to be aware of God's great gift of sexuality in our own lives. ■

Blessed are the pure of heart



God often chose simple examples for his homilies, you realize that most of his talks were exactly that, giving life to the scripture of his time – the old testament. In the famous Sermon on the Mount, he listed those who would be blessed and chose the single hearted or the pure of heart for praise. "Blessed are the clean of heart for they will see God." (Mt. 5:8) It isn't easy, especially in today's world where distractions that pull us away from God are at our fingertips. To be pure of heart in a world like ours takes true dedication and commitment. And recall, God knows all. A person truly pure of heart may not be the purest of outward appearance. They are not

always matched. “God does not see as a mortal, who sees the appearance. The LORD looks into the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7)

We don't know the truth of someone else's heart. Better than to not judge at all. We don't know the pain they have had to endure, the loves they have lost or the challenges that have cropped up in their lives. Only God knows what is in our hearts. Because we know that, it is important to give of ourselves to others without judgement. By loving others, we move more toward a pure heart. This doesn't mean we fall prey to tormentors or charlatans. We still act with moral goodness and kindness but without naivety. We can protect ourselves and become the human in the likeness of God. There are a few simple ways to make more pure our mortal hearts. One is to go to confession. St. John Paul II was said to have gone to confession as much as twice a week. He encouraged all the faithful to partake in this sacrament, “From confession to confession, the faithful feel an ever-deeper communion with the merciful Lord, up to fully identifying with Him, that one has in that

perfect ‘life of Christ’ in which true holiness consists.”

Another way to purify our hearts is through prayer. In communing with God and the saints we receive grace. This grace compounds when we make prayer a priority in our lives. They don't have to be intricate or involved, the simplest of prayers will do. All during Lent this year practice this purity of intention; this single devotion. Tell ourselves that with each act each day. “God is with me, watching me, loving me. Am I happy to be doing this on God's sight?” ■

Remembrance

You can continue to carry on your own good work for the missions and the people they serve by remembering them in your will. To do so, simply make a bequest of whatever you wish to: FRANCISCAN MISSION ASSOCIATES, Mount Vernon, NY 10551. If you wish additional information about how to do this, please feel free to contact:

**Father Robert, O.F.M.,
Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 3222
Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**



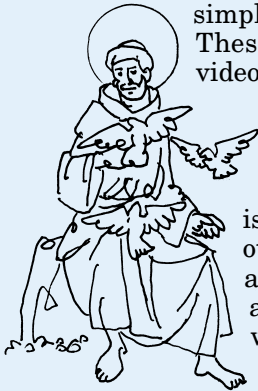
FMA Focus, official organ of Franciscan Mission Associates, is published quarterly in February, June, September and November.

FMA Focus is a member of the Catholic Press Association, the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers.

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.

ST. FRANCIS AND CUSTODY OF THE SENSES

It is an old spiritual practice to limit ourselves from good things (not merely bad things) as a kind of sacrifice of God's gifts in expiation for sin. It can be a simple thing. A story from the life of St. Francis can remind us of this. Custody of the Eyes was one of his practices. This is our own choice, our own learned discipline. Today our eyes can feast all day on anything we desire. When you carry the world in your hand, in your phone, the options are endless. Custody of the Eyes is a way for us to work into our day a bit of sacrifice. It doesn't have to be something we share with others, it can be between us and our Lord. It is the practice of quietly averting one's eyes even for a limited time from something that is unpleasant and not wholesome. Very



simple, and private. These images and videos tend to inundate us and leave us desolate.

Another way is to simply give others their visual space. We have all been at Mass when a child is acting up. Don't

stare, don't try to shame the child or parent into silence. Instead turn inward, pray for that family. You don't know what they are dealing with at home. Thank God silently that your burden, that day, doesn't match theirs. More than just eyes now there is discussion of Custody of all our senses. That means making sure we don't hear, taste, touch or use any of our senses in a way that would lead us to sin.

Those were kinds of things that Francis taught his followers. Francis is a good one to learn this from because we know he took great wholesome pleasure in all creation.

Pope Francis in a recent audience spoke of this. *"Saint Francis of Assisi bears witness to the need to respect all that God has created and as he created it, without manipulating and destroying creation; rather to help it grow, to become more beautiful and more like what God created it to be."*

But to be able to limit one's looking, even at good things, as a matter of spiritual practice means we all are that much stronger when we have to put down a phone, a laptop, or skip a TV show because it is not good at all but a mere waste of time. ■

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. 3224, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

MOTHER MARY AT THE BEGINNING AND THE END

Mary who was present at the birth and death of Jesus and shared his whole earthly life as no other did, is the ideal person for us to focus on each day during Lent to know better how to attend to Christ each day of our lives.

We know St. John Paul II had a special devotion to the Blessed Mother. It was a part of his Polish heritage, as a nation Poland has this special devotion.

“You who with the Church at the beginning of her mission, intercede for her, that as she goes into the world she may continually teach all nations.”

He is right, Mary is there every step of the way as Christ’s earthly life unfolds. First, of course, at his birth, when the wise men travel to see “the child with Mary his Mother” (Mt. 2:11). Mary is the one who speaks to the servants at Cana and urges them to listen to Jesus, “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn. 2:5).

And at the end of his earthly life on the cross, Mary is there, watching, weeping, unable to change the divine course.

“Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his

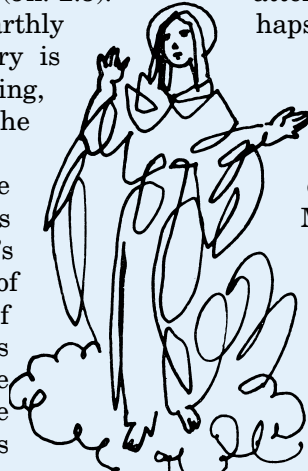
mother, “Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (Jn. 19: 25-27) Even after His death Mary, mother and disciple, stood with the other disciples at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit gave birth to the church.

St. John Paul II wrote about Mary’s devotion to Christ, and our devotion in turn, to her, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* in 1999, reminding the faithful that they encounter Jesus through Mary. “Mary is the sure path to our meeting Christ. Devotion to the Mother of the Lord, when it is genuine, is always an impetus to a life guided by the spirit and values of the Gospel.”

Mary gave human form to Jesus and shared his life on earth with an understanding impossible for anyone else. During Lent let us give attention to Mary each day, perhaps pray a decade of the rosary.

Hear her words and prayers in Holy Scripture, attend to her strong presence in the Gospels, powerful even in her silence; embrace Mary’s focus on the Lord first, last, and always.

Who better than she if we are to get to know the Lord, not just in Lent but with greater clarity and passion each day of our lives. ■



Hope in Him who died for you

In a familiar Gospel reading from John, we hear about the good shepherd and how he is truly guiding all, not just those who choose to follow him.

“I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd.” (Jn. 10:12-15)

This is our Lord, this is the one we emulate. We, as adults, many of us leaders in our fields, need to remember that all are redeemable. All can be brought back to the fold. All can be given the mercy of God and become saints. But none of that work can be done without our Lord. As followers, we need to remember that God is almighty – the true and almighty – in charge of his suffering and dying, it is something he chose to allow.

“This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.

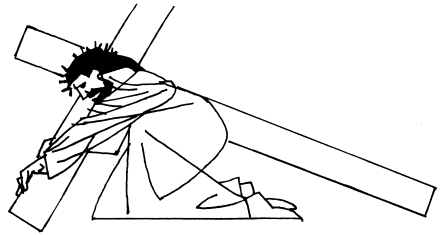
No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again.” (Jn. 10:15-18)

Really trust in our Almighty God. Trust in Him – that He will bring good things out of everything. As long as we

remain faithful he will bring us into the house of our father. We need to focus on the hope of this season. And not hope in the “hope I get a great present way.” But the true Christian Hope – which is trusting in the Lord. This virtue leads us to peace, in our daily lives. Pope Francis spoke of Christian Hope in this way:

“Hope is a virtue that cannot be seen: it works from below; it makes us go and look from below. It is not easy to live in hope, but I would say that it should be the air that a Christian breathes, the air of hope; on the other hand, he cannot walk, he cannot go on because he does not know where to go. Hope - yes, it's true - gives us security: hope does not disappoint. Never. If you hope, you will not be disappointed. We must open ourselves up to that promise of the Lord, leaning towards that promise, but knowing that there is the Spirit that works in us.”

Christian Hope is not a wish but a certainty. A trust in the Lord and that we will be with Him for all eternity if we follow His path for us. ■



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 3223, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

SHARING YOUR LOVE OF ST. ANTHONY

“It is not enough that you love St. Anthony,” Pope Leo XIII reminded us, “but you must make him loved.”

Certainly, one of the most beloved, St. Anthony’s life can inspire and lead. And our devotion to St. Anthony can bring those suffering to peace. His short span of 36 years of life became a succession of miracles. Even after 700 years he is loved and known among all God’s saintly servants as the “wonder-worker.”

There are many ways to put St. Anthony in the forefront of our lives and lead others to him. An easy way to begin is to tell others about your devotion to St. Anthony. Or why not invite someone to join you during a St. Anthony Novena at your local parish.

Do some research on St. Anthony and his life. Learn about the man who became the saint. He is known as St. Anthony of Padua because it was his last home on the earth, but he is truly a saint of the world. Since his death, countless miracles have been reported due to his intercession in many parts of the world. Padua wasn’t even his native city. He was born in Lisbon, Portugal and was a disciple of St. Francis.

Another way to grow in your love of this saint is to try to imitate St. Anthony’s virtues, particularly his love for the Word of God by reading a little from the Bible each day. Take part in Mass and receive Holy Communion when you can. Reach out to the needy and lonely, especially those in nursing homes.

Volunteer your time at your parish to give of yourself.

Perhaps the easiest way to share your love of St. Anthony is to include him in your daily spiritual life, ask his assistance. Here is one short prayer for you to weave into your daily practice.

O holy St. Anthony, gentlest of saints, your love for God and charity for his creatures made you worthy when on earth to possess miraculous powers. Encouraged by this thought I implore you to obtain for me (here ask your request). O gentle and loving St. Anthony whose heart was ever full of human sympathy whisper my petition into the ears of the sweet infant Jesus who loved to be folded into your arms and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours.

Anthony had the gift to be happy wherever he was. Part of his own purity of heart was his focus on God as the core of life and appreciate for God’s gifts. Like St. Anthony, we too can take time to discover God’s presence in the beauties of the world around us. Whether enjoying the gifts of nature in the passing of seasons, or the joy of being at home with friends and family or rejoicing in our own hometown’s beauty. ■



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 Friend of the Franciscans,

How difficult it is to lose a loved one. And these past few years our losses have been tremendous. One personal loss for our community is the departure from this earthly life of a pillar of support for the people of El Salvador, Fr. Flavian, who dedicated 54 years to the missions.

He was born in Boston, but he would tell you his true home was the missions that he shared with the beautiful families he served, thanks to you our benefactors.

On July 9, 1967, just a few years out of seminary, Fr. Flavian, arrived in Sonsonate, El Salvador. He founded the Association Agape of El Salvador, which grew from a small soup kitchen into one of the largest social and public services in that country, currently providing fifty-four social and religious programs. Agape includes clinics, a home for the elderly, educational centers, a restaurant, hotel, and television and radio stations. Through natural disasters and gang violence, Fr. Flavian remained steadfast in serving the poor of El Salvador.

It is no coincidence that the word Agape means love. Fr. Flavian would tell you his own personal, simple mission was to love the poor. That was it. The idea of loving and caring for the poor was his entire life, and a joyous life it was. His loss to us is profound, but we know he is with Christ. And here his spirit and the love he willingly gave to those who needed it will live on.

May God bless you and your families,

Fr. Robert, OFM

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS: A SHORT HISTORY

by Fr. Greg, OFM, Provincial Secretary of Our Lady of Guadalupe Province

When I guide Holy Land pilgrims through the streets of Jerusalem on the Via Dolorosa, the Way of the Cross, we usually share the crowded streets with pilgrim groups from around the world, people of other faiths going about their business, tourists from cruise ships and merchants standing outside their shops, doing business. We're part of everyday life in the Old City.

I remind the pilgrims that—except for the differences of 20 centuries—Jesus' ordeal of carrying the cross on that first Good Friday through streets crowded with people was similar: Some may have known this man being led leading to execution; some were his anguished followers; others could not have cared less. To many, Jesus was just a curiosity.

The route we take, and which the Franciscans follow every Friday, at three o'clock in the afternoon, has been established for centuries, but scholars dispute its accuracy. We believe the location of Calvary and the Tomb of Jesus are authentic, but today's route of the Via Dolorosa may not be Jesus' path from the place of sentencing to the place of crucifixion and burial. And we know as well that some of the events in the 14 stations aren't found in the Gospel at all. Christians from the earliest days no doubt visited the site of Calvary and the Tomb. A formal route, with set "stations," came much later.

In the fourth century, a Spanish nun, Egeria, described in her diary how pilgrims followed a route in and around Jerusalem to places associated with the Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. In succeeding centuries, various routes and processions are recorded. In fact, European pilgrims took the practice home, so their fellow Christians could

reproduce it.

After Pope Clement VI gave the Franciscans the care of the Holy Places in 1342, a ritual procession began at "Mount Zion," outside the city walls, where the friars had their headquarters and commemorated the Last Supper. It continued on to include the House of Caiaphas, the palace of Annas, the Mount of Olives and the Pool of Siloam. These devotions went beyond the events of Good Friday. A later route began at the Holy Sepulcher and included the Garden of Gethsemane. Because Jerusalem at the time was under Muslim rule, the friars led pilgrims in the hours before dawn, so as not to disturb others.

The sole focus on the events of the Passion only began in the 15th century, but early routes didn't include the model of our present-day 14th stations. It was pilgrims coming from Europe, who were familiar with a version of the Way of the Cross, popularized in well-known devotional books, who eventually led Franciscan guides in Jerusalem to begin leading the Way of the Cross largely familiar to us!

A Canadian friar working in the Holy Land, Blessed Frederic Janssoone, pro-



moted the custom of the Friday afternoon Via Dolorosa. The Franciscans—with young friars in formation usually leading the prayers by megaphone—begin near the Franciscan biblical school, and process through the streets to the final five stations within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. We're usually crowded and rushed, as we weave through the streets so we can finish within the time limits imposed by the Status Quo, the agreement which preserves order among Christians serving together in that great church, which shelters both Calvary and the tomb of Jesus.

For a friar, the conclusion of the Via Dolorosa sometimes permits a quick "official" visit inside the shrine over the Tomb, to venerate the place where Jesus was buried and rose from the dead.

Today the Franciscans have created a wonderful audiovisual experience for pilgrims. The program unfolds the history of Jerusalem and invites modern-day pilgrims to identify with the countless people before them who have walked the streets of the city as Jesus did on that first Good Friday. ■

NO GREATER GIFT

Fr. Jack, O.F.M.

Over the years, a missionary's life is consumed with spreading the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Savior, our Lord, our Brother. So much is given up in order to share one's life with God's people of a different lifestyle, and a whole new culture. Customs and language are added burdens to the package of a modern-day apostle in the Body of Christ. Those early disciples of Jesus, didn't need courses in language or theology or philosophy. All the

Apostles had was a three-year road trip with the Son of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to push them out into the world with lives thus fortified by the Spirit of God.

There were many people that soon became believers and followers of those early missionary disciples, adding to their motivation with prayers and treasures. Those good people gave all they had at times so that the Word of God and the mystery of Jesus would continue to spread and be a foundation upon which to maintain the church and her ministers. And today, nothing has changed in that regard. Many of you who are reading these words today are an extension of the same spiritually imbued witnesses of Peter, John, Paul, Barnabas and all the other disciples and apostles of the early days of Christianity. Today, the names are different but the commitment is the same: God's love, mercy, peace and good news to all who will hear.

You who believe in the missionary efforts of the church today come from all walks of life and are a special part of the ongoing ministry of the Franciscan Missionaries in Central



America. Your participation is noted by your thoughtful contribution to the efforts of the sons of St. Francis of Assisi. The development and growth of the little person's health, education, faith and social progress in Latina America is dependent on two factors: a missionary's love, dedication, commitment and zeal and the support of the home front Catholic Christians with a generous heart.

Jesus said: "The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them" (Jn. 15:13). How do we show that love in a foreign land? We sacrifice by establishing a clinic for hemodialysis patients; committing to programs that teach and instruct young people to perfect their skills in order to become entrepreneurs or technicians in the field of electronics, auto maintenance, or even as hospitality and tourism personnel with an attention on protecting the environment. We not only sow the fields with the Word of God from the pulpit, but cultivate the mind and soul with opportunities that will enrich those fields with love and progress of the whole person and thus, his or her whole community.

The Franciscan missionary dedicates his life, enriched and strengthened by your prayers and sacrifices, making each and every one of you a partner in his life-giving service to God and humanity. We are extremely grateful to God for all of you, because of you we can say: "There is no greater gift!" ■



Words Worth Noting



To change the world, we must be good to those who cannot repay us.
Pope Francis

We should love others truly for their own sakes rather than our own.
St. Thomas Aquinas

The God of peace is never glorified by human violence.
Thomas Merton

Act and God will act, work and He will work.
St. Joan of Arc

To be a servant of Christ is to be truly free.
St. Agatha

The secret of getting ahead is getting started.
Mark Twain

When humor goes so goes civilization.
Erma Bombeck

God will not ask us how eloquently we have spoken, but how well we have lived.
Venerable Matt Talbot

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father Robert,

I would like to share with you, recalling your inspirational words on the subject of gift-giving for the honor and glory of God and for His work. How in doing so it affected our lives. The gift we happily gave you toward the education of future friars has been rewarded a million times over.

Shortly after mailing our donation of to you, our son, a police officer and father of two, suffered cardiac arrest. He coded for eight long minutes. It is a miracle he is with us today and with only some memory loss. We are so thankful to Almighty God and want to show our deep appreciation, hopefully inspiring others. Know that God will truly bless whatever is done in His name.

God bless you Father Robert and the wonderful work you do.

P.W.
Las Vegas, NV

Dear Father Robert,

Thank you for all the prayers said on my behalf. I could use prayers very badly as I am on a fixed income and only work 20 hours a week. It is very hard to pay bills. A good health prayer is also requested. God bless you Father and be safe.

R.V.P.
Burlington, NJ

Dear Father Robert,

I pray all is well with you and the Friars. I always remember to pray for you, the Friars and those in formation, and also those in your office. Please include me in your prayers and Masses and my daughter who was laid off after 32 years of loyal service.

God bless you all.
M. S.
Mississauga, Ont.
Canada

Dear Father Robert,

Thank you for all you are doing to help the poor and suffering around the world. I can only imagine how COVID has impacted those in the missions. Please accept this offering to help in any way you deem is right. Know I am also keeping all of you in my prayers as we continue to battle through.

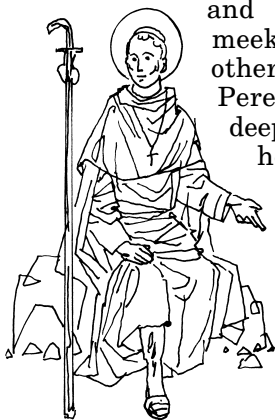
God bless,
T.D.
Burlington, VT

WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR OTHERS (ST. PEREGRINE)

The greatest gift we can give others is ourselves. But perhaps we can't get out or are unable to be with relatives who are far away or find ourselves housebound as with the recent pandemic. Then we can make prayer visits, especially for those who we know are sick. Why not spend each day of Lent praying to St. Peregrine, the patron we invoke against cancer, for the person stricken also for those who care for the person suffering, they too need our prayers and our comfort. The beauty of St. Peregrine is that his life, like ours, was filled with mistakes and missteps. And yet he found his way to the Lord and lead many others.

St. Peregrine was a native of Forli in Italy. As a young man he led a worldly, reckless and certainly unsaintly life. He was so hostile to the church according to one story, he punched St. Philip Benizi viciously

in the face. This good and gentle saint meekly turned the other cheek. St. Peregrine was so deeply moved that he immediately changed his ways. The blessed Virgin appeared to St. Peregrine in a vision and urged him to "go to Siena"



and join the Servites of Mary. For 30 years thereafter he led a life of repentance, prayer and whenever possible solitude and silence. For years St. Peregrine suffered from a painful cancer of the right foot. The night before the scheduled amputation, St. Peregrine was in the most pain. He prayed to the Lord to spare him the pain. That night, according to legend, St. Peregrine dreamed that Christ came and touched his foot. The next morning St. Peregrine was healed, and in fact St. Peregrine was in perfect health. He went on to live a long and healthy life, dying in 1345 at the age of 85. Others were healed of serious disease when St. Peregrine prayed for them or simply whispered Jesus into their ears.

Let us call upon St. Peregrine to intercede on our behalf for those we know who are suffering from physical or mental pain.

Dear St. Peregrine we come to you confidently to implore your aide with God in our necessity. You were converted instantly from a worldly life by the good example of one holy person. You were also cured instantaneously of cancer by God's grace and unceasing prayer. In your gracious kindness please ask the Lord to heal us also in body mind and soul. May we then also imitate you in doing His work with renewed vigor and strength.

Amen ■

Learn more by visiting online www.franciscanmissionassoc.org
or follow us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/FranciscanMissionAssoc

EXAMINING YOUR CONSCIENCE - PREPARING FOR CONFESSION

How lucky are we sinners that parishes make availing ourselves of the sacrament of reconciliation something we all can do during the 40 days of Lent? Some parishes have special extra days for this, most post it as "Leaving the Light On" for the parishioners. One of the first steps before you enter the confessional, or right as you do before the priest is available, is to complete an examination of conscience. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have created this guide based on the ten commandments. Each step allows you to take stock of your behavior and prepare to confess your sins.

Taken from A Brief Examination of Conscience – based on the Ten Commandments

published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me. Have I treated people, events, or things as more important than God?

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the Church, or people?

3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day. Do I go to Mass every Sunday (or Saturday Vigil) and on Holy Days of Obligation (Jan. 1; the Ascension; Aug. 15; Nov. 1; Dec. 8; Dec. 25)? Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper relaxation of mind and body? Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday?

4. Honor your father and your

mother. Do I show my parents due respect? Do I seek to maintain good communication with my parents where possible? Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have?

5. You shall not kill. Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind?

6. You shall not commit adultery. Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?

7. You shall not steal. Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse. Have I honored my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love?

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods. Am I

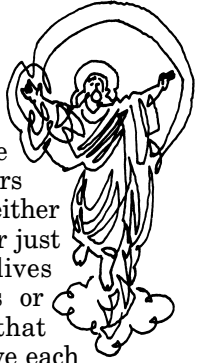
content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily?

Remember during Lent that Jesus gave himself to you, and you should be in service of others.

Also know Lent is not just a time to abstain from luxuries, but a time to look inward and see where you can follow Jesus more faithfully. ■



EASTER – THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE



It is almost impossible now to imagine what it must have meant for the apostles when they realized that they were a part of the promise of the redeemer. Their faith in Jesus laid the foundation of the church. This they did, when they went to the tomb and discovered that Christ was indeed risen – as St. Paul says “Your faith is not in vain.”

Paul needed faith, for he did not see Christ. The apostles needed faith to believe that this Christ whom they knew as rabbi was indeed the Christ they awaited as redeemer. What do we need? What is it that reminds us that Christ is our redeemer and that all the hardships and pain we are enduring he has endured and then some? His life on earth was glorious and also filled with pain and suffering. It is that suffering and the ultimate sacrifice of his death on the cross that redeems all of us. Do we remember that when we are thrashing about in our cars because we are late and someone has cut us off? Or our coffee delivery was not exactly what we ordered. Do we really remember in the moment that our inconveniences can be times to grow in faith, times to remember the little sufferings, all

allow us to turn to God? For some of us the suffering is anything but little. We have family members who are lost to us, either gone from this life, or just gone from our lives through family rifts or whatever it is that cleaves those who love each other. Our pain is real, it is true. But it is God’s pain and suffering that, especially during Lent, we focus on to remember there is hope. God is always with us, He is there when our crosses become so heavy we aren’t even sure we can make another step. His resurrection is a great source of joy for us.

Those who knew Jesus on earth felt pain when he was put in the tomb and the rock was rolled in front. But they also felt joy when they realized His life on this earth was but a prelude to everlasting life. We know that message. We live that as Christians. The Easter Message, the Easter celebration is the fulfillment of that promise and we live all our lives in the full sunlight of the promise fulfilled. No wonder joy is the key to our Easter celebrations. ■

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. 3225,

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

FMA Spiritual Exercises - Lent-Easter 2022

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:

- February 2-19Our Lady of Lourdes
- March 2 - April 10Lenten Masses (40)
- April 5-13Feast of Easter
- April 17-25.....In Thanksgiving - Risen Christ
- April 12 - June 7Nine Tuesdays to St. Anthony

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 3221, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

God Bless You

Dear Benefactors:

St. Anthony's Bread for the Poor! How better assist the Missionaries than by donating a mite to St. Anthony's Bread for the Poor. The great Doctor of the Franciscan Order yearned himself to become a Missionary. God decreed otherwise. Anthony was needed both to teach his fellow Friars to become missionaries and to combat the infidels and heretics at home. A crust given in his name, for the Poor Little ones of this world, is indeed aid that our Franciscan Missionaries in Central America will cheerfully accept.



**Mail all offerings to:
Franciscan Mission Associates,
PO Box 598, Dept F, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**