

FMA FOCUS

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



VIRTUE: FAITH

We often hear of people who have lost their faith as if they misplaced something they thought was in a pocket or dropped something they usually wear around their neck. We know faith is not that simple, and concrete. It is instead a gift. We can lose it though, not through forgetfulness but through neglect. It becomes lost when we spend our time and energy on pursuits that do not align with our faith and our beliefs. It is when we put ambition, money, and fame before God. We rely on our human selves and not our divine master to lay down a path for us. And when we rely solely on our mortal selves we are lost. Our faith, and our lives are lost. Alternately, when we place God before us, and we follow His design for us, we are in fact, found. We must practice our faith by expressing our belief through prayer and acts of faith each day. ■



Mary, our example of a Woman of Faith

From beginning to end Mary was a woman of faith. She faithfully practiced her religion as a girl in the house of her parents. It is almost unimaginable today to think that a child of this world would be as accepting as Mary. She accepted the husband selected for her, she had faith in her vision of the Angel and his Message. When she visits her cousin, her faith is evident, and she is already evangelizing. Elizabeth proclaims: “Most blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Lk 1:42-43) Mary wasn’t just willing, she truly believed, she put her faith

in the Lord, especially as she raised Jesus. “And Mary said, behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to thy word.” (Lk 1:38) Mary was ready, willing and with God’s enabling grace eager to do His will. If God has the first place in our lives all things are guaranteed to work for our good. One of the most striking examples of her faith evidenced in scripture is during the wedding at Cana.

“When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’

And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servers, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’” (Jn 2: 3-5)

Mary’s faith appeared even stronger than Jesus’ at this point in his public life. She, not just as a mother, but as a disciple, believed in him and truly understood that he is the Son of God.

She lived her life as the example of faith. She accepted her son as God, followed him, saw him crucified and with the apostles accepted, on faith His true role in our lives. Mary’s quiet place as exemplar of faith in the early church. We turn in our needs to Christ’s Blessed

Mother, Mary, because we know that our Lord as her obedient and loving Son, can refuse her nothing. Hence, we turn with confidence to our Blessed Lady as comforter of the afflicted, the virgin most powerful. Our Virgin Mother still stands by us as she stood faithfully by the foot of the cross, and she remained praying with His apostles and disciples. What pain, an enduring agony we can only imagine. She is our example of faith; our pure example and we can practice acts of faith each day, reaching out to her for strength. ■

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 1222
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.

ACCEPTING GOD'S WILL WITH FAITH (ST. FRANCIS)



In the final year of his short life, sick, suffering from the stigmata (a beautiful but painful sign of God's favor), St. Francis accepted the wishes and desires of his followers who were now in charge of the Franciscans. He asked for music on his deathbed, but his followers thought it not seemly so they denied him. St. Francis knew sickness and suffering in all its forms, physical, spiritual, emotional and psychological. He accepted all these as he accepted all his suffering as God's will.

We know from his writings and that of his fellow friars in the Franciscan Order he founded, that learning to do the will of God was an ongoing process for Francis, as it is for us. That is why it is important we don't give up when we are confronted with a challenge or a path that seems to be not what we expected.

How many times in the last three years have we wondered, sometimes aloud, why there is so much suffering and so much disruption of our daily lives? We watch the television every night and see the suffering, wishing we could look away. How often do we complain that our lives are not going as we want, as we planned or as we hoped? If the pandemic taught us anything it is that there are many aspects of our lives that are not in our control.

We know that nothing in our lives is an accident, however. God has a design, God's will is done each day. St. Francis lived to his dying day accepting God's will with faith. Nearly blind in his final years, he was unable to have the joy of reading scripture or writing his poems or songs that glorified God.

None of the disappointments, humiliations, and indignities deterred St. Francis. He knew, and believed, that God should be front and center in his life, and with that firm faith foundation, the path would be clear.

When he chose to devote his life to God Francis kept to the essentials, placing God first, becoming a servant of man, and reaching out to prayer when times got tough. Like Mary, the mother of Jesus, Francis lived what faith taught him: God would always be with us in happiness or suffering; God is always true to His word. Each of us should accept Jesus as our Savior and place our lives in His hands each day. ■

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. 1224, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

ANGELS AS OUR GUARDIANS – THROUGHOUT TIME

In the Church Calendar of Feasts drawn up as a part of the renewal of the Liturgy of Vatican II – September 29 is now the feast of the three Archangels mentioned in Scripture, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. Michael is perhaps best known, he was introduced in Revelations as the champion and leader of the faithful angels in their struggle against the rebel angels led by Lucifer or Satan. Archangels are no invention of fantasy or folklore. Michael is the guardian angel of the church. His Hebrew name translates into English as “Who is like God.” Often school children close out the day with the St. Michael prayer “defend us in battle, protect us from the wickedness and snares of the devil” giving them a spiritual shield for their evenings.

The angel Gabriel’s name is one that clearly depicts his importance, meaning “God is my strength.” Gabriel of course announced to the Virgin Mary that she would be the mother of our Lord. “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High.” (Lk 1:30-32) Gabriel also appeared to Zechariah, husband to Elizabeth, Mary’s cousin. He also announced to her that she would be giving birth. Her

son was John the Baptist. Raphael, “Medicine of God” is the Archangel who takes care of Tobiah on his journey in the book of Tobit. Raphael gave Tobiah instructions on how to dispel a demon.

Raphael protected Tobiah and his new bride. When Raphael revealed himself to Tobiah and his father they were amazed and continued to exhort the Lord’s praises.

They are often seen as universal guardian angels. And you can celebrate both the September 29 feast and the October 2 Guardian Angels feasts together. By showing our Lord how you honor him and coming together in prayer, with, for example the Guardian Angel Prayer.

“Oh, Angel of God my guardian dear, to whom God’s love commits me here. Ever this day be at my side, to watch and guard to rule and guide.”

Honoring these Archangels, and our guardian angels, indicate angels are a part of our faith. Their stories and history encourage the faithful to continue to do battle with the devil and use their own love of God as a shield. ■



The Ordinary Sundays – Where Do They Fit?

We call the liturgical season we are in now, Ordinary Time. It is the largest season of the Church year, 33-34 weeks surrounding the special seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. During this Ordinary Time, we are given a view of the church from Matthew, Mark, and Luke rotating from year to year. They are the so-called Synoptic Gospels because they bear many similarities. They seem to draw from a similar vocabulary and have much in common in terms of their structure, the way the story is presented. Scholars believe these Gospel writers are likely to have shared many of the same sources, in terms of the history and development of the early church. Although they tell the same story, the story of the life of Jesus, each is told from a distinct and particular point of view. Each is given a particular focus for a full year, in a three-year Cycle of Sunday Gospel readings.

This year we are exploring, celebrating, and presenting the Gospel of St. Luke. St. Paul called Luke “iatros,” a word meaning “physician.” Scholars say this indication, possibly a medical doctor, indicates Luke was a man of some education and cultivation. He seems to have joined St. Paul during his second missionary journey. His travels with Paul took him to Rome, to Ephesus and

to Caesarea. Of all the Gospels according to some authors, Luke’s is the least identified with anything regional or patrician in Christianity. Perhaps because of his mobile lifestyle as an adult.

Another distinct quality of Luke’s Gospel is its high literary quality. He presents Jesus’s ministry as almost a travelogue from Galilee to Jerusalem. Luke gives us a rich and deep look at the presence of Mary, the Mother of God. He draws attention to many other diverse and unforgettable characters who become a kind of framework for our living out our own discipleship.

In presenting the parables and stories Jesus used in teaching how to be close to God, St. Luke represents characters we recognize and welcome. The Good Shepherd, the loving father and prodigal son, Lazarus, faith and the mustard seed, the cleansed leper who returns to give thanks are just a few examples.

How fortunate we are that priests and deacons of our day who proclaim the Gospel and preach the Homilies themselves are rooted in scripture study and prayer. For these stories given realism by the gifted writer St. Luke, come to life each Sunday during Ordinary Time showing us the path and the way. ■

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 _____

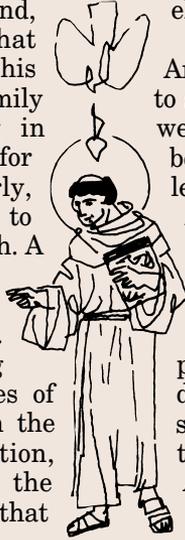
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Fr. Robert, O.F.M., Dept. 1225,
Franciscan Mission Associates, PO Box 598, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

SEEING CHRIST IN ANOTHER (ST. ANTHONY)

St. Anthony and St. Francis were contemporaries known to each other. But what was it that drew them together? They were both such different men from different backgrounds. I think we know what drew them together. Each saw in the other the image of Christ. St. Francis, the founder of the Order was an acclaimed mystic who enjoyed extraordinary gifts of faith and spirit. He was spontaneous, composer of song and poem, and even dramas, and saw those as ways to share his deep love of our Lord with others.

St. Anthony, on the other hand, was more of a “briefcase in hand, board meeting” person, if that type would have existed in his time. Born to an aristocratic family at the service of the king in Portugal, his early preference for things spiritual and scholarly, brought Anthony early in life to the highest circles of the Church. A natural scholar, he is said to have committed the Bible to memory, in word and spirit. Ordained early, this young priest moved into great circles of study, solitude, and prayer in the venerable Augustinian tradition, until he felt called to the Franciscan Order. We know that



St. Francis and St. Anthony enjoyed much in common. The speed with which each was hailed a saint, being one. St. Francis was canonized just two years after his death and St. Anthony canonized just one year after his death.

Each in his own way practiced the art of listening. They listened in prayer until God’s answer – his loving response – would be a help in their own personal path and the paths they set out for their followers. For both men the answer they awaited and listened for proved to be the face of Christ shining forth from someone else.

We too should imitate St. Anthony and St. Francis and seek to see Christ in others. In that way, we, like St. Francis and St. Anthony become instruments of God. We learn to do God’s will, not our own.

As we say “yes” to God as we learn to see Christ in our brothers, sisters and children, so does the Holy Spirit help us to be the Gospel to people and places of our own time. For Christ died to save all and if we do not see His love in another we should try to tell the other, as St. Anthony did, of Christ’s love for him or her. ■

St. Anthony’s Burse – Educating and Assisting Young Seminarians

Franciscan priests and brothers follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus and our Father, St. Francis. They accept the gift of poverty as a way of life. So they have nothing of their own, but share equally as brothers whatever God provides through your generosity.

It now costs over \$10,000 a year to educate and support these seminarians in their studies. Your family can have its “own Franciscan Father” by contributing to St. Anthony’s Burse, thus sharing the upkeep of a student.

**For more information write to me today. Father Robert, O.F.M.
Post Office Box 598, Department 1226, Mount Vernon, New York 10551**

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,

A few years ago, Pope Francis invited the faithful to pray the Holy Rosary every day during the month of October and to ask the Blessed Virgin and Saint Michael the Archangel to protect the Church from the devil. In the same address he reminded us that prayers, especially those like the St. Michael the Archangel prayer are a powerful weapon against the devil and evil.

The prayer begins with “St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil.” For some, those are harsh words, but the reality is we are battling evil and the devil each day, each hour, each minute. The prayer closes by asking St. Michael to protect us against “Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl around seeking the ruin of souls.”

The world is filled with temptations that can set us on a path to ruin our souls and the souls of those we love. Remember this month to strengthen your defenses by praying the St. Michael the Archangel prayer and spending the Fall also dedicating time and focus to saying daily rosaries. In doing these two acts we are keeping our angels close and protecting those who may need spiritual shields.

Thank you for supporting our missions. We simply could not operate without your generosity.

God bless you all,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "FR. Robert, OFM". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

SAFETY AND SNEAKERS

Fr. Guy, O.F.M.

*It is important to remember what our missionaries see as challenges every day.
God is good and blesses them with safety and grace in the face of danger.*

It was several months after a peace treaty was signed—by the government of El Salvador and the leftist rebel forces—that I was driving back to San Pedro Puxtla from Santa Ana. I had gone there for a three-day spiritual retreat. George, a friend of mine, came with me. As I was driving along, I suddenly saw two men standing in the middle of the road. I thought they were waiting for a bus or wanted a ride. Suddenly I saw that one of them had a rifle that he aimed at our jeep and then shot at the headlight.

The bullet went right through the mud-guard. It occurred to me that there might be more men further up the road. When I stopped, the one with the gun pointed it at me and said, “Let us in or else.” I had no alternative but to let them in our jeep. The man with the gun forced me to take them down a nearby road. “Drive down that road,” he said. A few more men jumped in the back of the jeep. I rode about a mile and arrived at a coffee plantation. We were forced to get out of the jeep. One of the men had a machine gun and he told a younger man who had a big bolo knife to tie my hands and George’s too. They forced us to lie down on the ground, and when we did they took our wallets and other belongings. I told them they could take everything they wanted and I wouldn’t squeal to the cops. The young one with the bolo knife said, “Let’s kill him—he’s a wise guy.” The older man with the machine gun said, “Don’t kill him!” What a relief!! I said to myself, “Thank God!!!”

They took off our shoes, my New Balance sneakers and George’s new shoes that he had just bought. After that, I heard

them getting into my jeep and taking everything they could and then running off. Once we knew they were gone, we got off the ground and untied our hands. Then we went to the jeep. It was still there—thank God! The keys to the jeep were on the driver’s seat. The bandits didn’t know how to start the jeep because they thought the shift was on the steering wheel. Thank God they left the keys on the seat.

I couldn’t drive the jeep without my sneakers because my feet are too small to apply the brake, so George had to drive. Luckily, George has bigger feet than me and so he was able to drive back to our place in San Pedro.

For the next couple of years when I would go to Santa Ana, I was on the lookout for whoever might be wearing my New Balance sneakers. No dice!!!

Thank God and Our Blessed Mother and all who pray for me and also for George. Keep sending prayers as well our generous benefactors, often it is all we have! ■



A YOUNG ARTIST AND A YOUNG COOK FOR FRANCIS

Fr. Jack, O.F.M.



My dear readers, as a Franciscan Missionary, one of my earliest assignments in Guatemala, back in 1977-79, was the formation of young men in the Franciscan way of life. I was called upon to be part of the novitiate staff at “Monte San Francisco.” The next call, and subsequent assignment, came to me once again for 2 more years (1979-80) of Franciscan formation training in Comayagua, Honduras. Together with Fr. Edgar Valladares, we were the first two priests to staff the newly (half constructed) seminary “Seminario Monseñor Bernardino Mazzarella.” Four of my first six years as a young missionary priest were dedicated to formation and providing the guidance and counsel for those interested in pursuing the path of St. Francis of Assisi. It was a wonderful experience, sharing community life in a learning environment of spiritual growth in the way of the Poverello. Many of those young men are today fellow friars who have

achieved the blessings and graces of the Lord to continue the work of the missionary Catholic Church in the spirit and testimony of our Seraphic Father, St. Francis of Assisi.

All along the way of their formation and my ministry in their preparation to meet the needs of Holy Mother Church as a Franciscan friar, sponsors, like those of you reading this brief article, have been there, very much present by your donations in support of their vocation. Your prayers and sacrifices are greatly appreciated.

Preliminary preparation called "Postulancy" gives the young man an opportunity to grow in his response to the call by developing various qualities of his personhood: human qualities, Catholic-Christian qualities and potential Franciscan qualities (prayer, fraternity and the apostolate). After a year or so, the candidate is evaluated as ready to begin the next level of formation called the Novitiate year.

Once again, after some 41 years (in 2021), I find myself taking on the responsibility of educating and preparing two young men for the life of our

Holy Father Francis. Fredy comes from a town about two hours away here in El Salvador called Cojutepeque. Fredy has the talent of being a cook. He loves working in the kitchen here in the friary. He wants to be a friar, and I sense that he will be an excellent religious, lay brother because of his humble service in the fraternity and at the foot of the altar. Luis comes from Comayagua, Honduras and is the gifted artist. He comes with a knowledge and abundant insightfulness about the Franciscans due to his relationship with friars in his home parish. He is very energetic and enthusiastic when it comes to design and decorations for the church. I asked him to paint a mural in our dining room of St. Francis and St. Clare. He went right to it without hesitation.

The Order of Friars Minor will soon have two more novices: one a potential brother cook and the other, a priest-artist. May the Lord and St. Francis strengthen the vocation of these two as they journey on to satisfy their dream of serving the mission of the Church in this modern day world with all its challenges. Peace and Good to you, Good People.



Words Worth Noting



A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just.

Pope Francis

Keep your face toward the sunshine and shadows will fall behind you.

Walt Whitman

It always seems impossible, until it's done.

Nelson Mandela

Teach us to give and not to count the costs.

St. Ignatius Loyola

Fools take to themselves the respect that is given to their office.

Aesop

The waste basket is the writer's best friend.

Isaac Bashevis Singer

Faith and Reason are like two wings of the human spirit by which it soars to the truth.

St. John Paul II

Don't be discouraged. It is often the last key on the ring that opens the door.

Unknown

I have never had clarity; what I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you will trust God.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

True life is lived when tiny changes occur.

Leo Tolstoy

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Fr. Robert,

I can't begin to tell you how many wonderful miracles St. Anthony has done. One of many the most amazing thing. A friend lost a diamond earring was looking everywhere. I said, ok, lets pray for St. Anthony to help and she looked on the ground and jumped for joy. Just as we began praying the diamond earring appeared. She was not of Christian faith nor was my husband but let me tell you they were astounded by that miracle plus a few other ones. I love St. Anthony so. God bless you father and all the missionaries.

J.C.W.

Lake Suzy, FL

Dear Fr. Robert,

On behalf of my brethren in Christ and the Chaplaincy of this facility please accept our most heartfelt appreciation for your donation to our library. The material will provide guidance and inspiration to those who make use of the resources provided. These items will be put immediately into service for all. We will look forward to our continued support to the ministry of the forsaken and the outcasts of society. May the Lord continue to watch over, abundantly bless, and protect all of you and our Franciscan Mission family.

O.C.L.

Draper, UT

Dear Fr. Robert,

Could you publish a great huge thank you to our Blessed Lady, Jesus, St. Joseph, St. Jude, and St. Anthony for blessings I have received regarding my recent mammogram test. All is fine and good. Also pray for my husband for a successful surgery on his eye. Thank you, Fr. Robert, and God bless you.

S.C.K.

Broadview Heights, OH

Dear Fr. Robert,

I received your rosary booklet – the ladies of Charity of the Holy Rosary wish to “thank you” for your kindness. Please accept our donation. The booklets will be distributed on a weekend in October. Our feast day is October 7. God bless. Please keep us in your prayers, as you are always in ours.

V.A.C.

Grindstone, PA

WHY EVERYONE IS NOT PERFECT (ST. DYMPHNA)

St. Dymphna's life was certainly not perfect, even though her soul was. In fact, her earthly life, although short, was filled with pain and imperfection. Despite being a high-born lady because of her desire to serve God she ended up a refugee. St. Dymphna knew the pain of a dysfunctional family. After her mother died at an early age Dymphna knew terror in her own home. Her father, the pagan king, had such mental disorders he believed he was supposed to marry Dymphna. His horrific treatment of her left Dymphna with no parent at all. She had to learn to trust others, like her confessor, St. Gerebernus.

Dymphna knew her home was not a safe place to be. In fact, her life was in danger. So, she fled across the sea, becoming a refugee in what is now modern Belgium.

How appropriate then that her faith led Dymphna to the care of other people who were treated like refugees and outcasts in their own homeland: the handicapped, the mentally disabled and those with other disabilities. Many of those outcasts came to the oratory Dymphna and her companions built in Gheel, where she, her confessor and companions lived as hermits before they were slain. Once their bodies were found almost imme-



diately the sick and disabled experienced miracles at those former hermitages in Gheel.

It is good to remember St. Dymphna in our world today with the millions of refugees that are fleeing from dangers and poverty in their own homeland. Now, as in Dymphna's time, refugees are universally regarded as a problem – rather than as human persons who can know the love and care of God through the ministry of compassionate people.

It is good to seek Dymphna's intercession and healing of hearts. For today especially there is a great lesson still not learned or understood: that God's plan includes a special place for the sick and mentally ill in society and in our hearts.

Her great gift to us is the association with the physically and mentally incapacitated. Dymphna's love of life, all life is an inspiration. We see so many people fleeing so many atrocities today: war, pestilence, violence, drugs. The world is such a scary place, with so much danger and fear and sorrow. Try to offer a prayer each day for the refugees, like Dymphna, and the less-than-perfect and those who care for them, following God's will demonstrating the value of each human life.

ST. ANTHONY'S BREAD

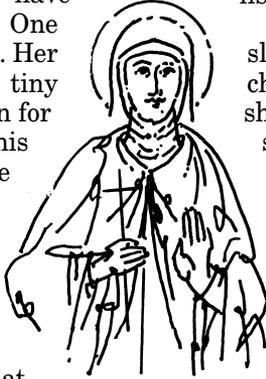
Offerings in honor of St. Anthony, either in petition for a favor sought, or in thanksgiving for a favor received, are used to assist the poor. Thus, they have received the name, St. Anthony's Bread. Such offerings are also used to help educate priests and religious.

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 1223, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

SMALL ACTS WITH BIG INTENTIONS – SAINT TERESA OF CALCUTTA

Many wonderful saints have feast days in September. One being St. Teresa of Calcutta. Her story is so familiar: the tiny woman who was a champion for the poor during her life. This powerful Saint's story is one that should illustrate that God knows us, he knows what we can do and he chooses us for lives we couldn't imagine for ourselves. St. Teresa was born to Albanian parents in what is now Macedonia. She lived a comfortable life until the death of her father. At that time, she was in public school but participated in a Catholic Sodality and spoke passionately about her desire to work with the poor in the missions. At just 18 she entered the Loreto Sisters of Dublin and was sent to Darjeeling, India. It was there she changed her name from Gonxha to the one that now is so known to the world, Teresa. Unlike her desire, though, she was assigned to a high school for girls in Calcutta where she taught geography to girls who came from well-off families. St. Teresa began to struggle with the two worlds in which she lived. Because while those she worked with were not destitute, she saw those who lived completely without means every day of her life. She began to listen closely to a different Call to Serve that she knew was the Lord. She described it as a "call within a call – asking her to give up her life with the Sisters of Loreto and instead follow Christ into the slums and serve the poorest of the poor." Like Mary, Saint Teresa said "Yes" to God. She received permission to leave Loreto and estab-



lish a new religious community in Calcutta. She lived in the slums and opened a school for children with no means. There she began to dress in a white sari and sandals, her iconic look now so recognized. But at the time it allowed her camouflage as it was the ordinary dress of an Indian woman. God provided, as He does, and soon many women flocked to St. Teresa to work alongside her becoming the Missionaries of Charity. For four decades Teresa lived and worked among those who had nothing. Her example today is one often forgotten by our material-based world. She was a beacon of light and love to those without that. She offered herself wholly to God. If we can emulate her even only a little, if we can put those without before our needs for another video game, bag, or new shoes we can continue that light. On her feast day September 5, let's pray together the prayer below to share God's love in spirit with those who need it.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, you allowed the thirsting love of Jesus on the Cross to become a living flame within you, and so became the light of His love to all. Obtain from the Heart of Jesus (here make your request). Teach me to allow Jesus to penetrate and possess my whole being so completely that my life, too, may radiate His light and love to others. Amen.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Cause of Our Joy, pray for me.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, pray for me. ■

RENEWAL – AN AUTUMN MEDITATION

When the first leaves change from green to brown and begin to fall we know autumn has arrived. Colder weather, darker days and less color are the new normal. What looks like death and dying in Autumn is preparation for renewal, a stripping away of the old leaves and branches to sleep during the Winter looking to the great revival of Spring.

Pope Francis in his first Mass as Pope, spoke of renewing our commitment to Christ. He said if we “build many things, but we don’t proclaim Jesus Christ, something is wrong. We would become compassionate NGOs and not a church.” The renewal of our own faith, the constant focus on Jesus is the core of who we are. Without that center, Pope Francis said, it would be like “when children make a sandcastle, and it all comes crashing down.”



What Pope John XXIII asked and prayed for in convening the Second Vatican Council was a renewal that would bring us back to our roots, to the essential purity of our faith. Like those

sturdy and enduring trunks and branches of the neighboring trees we take for granted in our lives, he prayed that we might know and experience the actions of Jesus and the Apostles, eager to bring the Gospel to a world in so much pain and hunger for truth.

This Fall take a look around your parish church, your books or magazines that speak to the faith. Look also to reputable online sources and podcasts. See how many examples you can find of this renewed faith. And don’t forget your own interior, your heart and soul which gives structure to your daily life. Pick up the pieces, so to speak of that inner heart renewed. And rejoice asking the Holy Spirit to find a willing and gracious reception within you.

Try as the days of this brief season wane away to reconnect with the Church. Make an effort each day to participate in some way in the ongoing renewal of the Church at large. Begin by asking the Holy Spirit to help you see God’s plan of renewal in your own life and to put that holy renewal into action.

The hope of life renewed touches the very mysteries of life, the gift of God to us in all its forms. It carries the expectation of new discoveries, wonderful aspects of creation to appreciate, to add to the joys of life. ■

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

Special Novena Schedule Fall 2022

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 Fall months the Special Novena schedule is:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| September 2-10/11-19 | St. Jude Novena |
| September 21-29 | Feast of St. Michael |
| September 26-October 4 | Feast of St. Francis (in Assisi) |
| September 29-October 7 | Feast of the Holy Rosary |
| October 7-October 15 | Feast of the Holy Rosary |
| October 25-December 20 | Novena to St. Anthony on the nine Tuesdays before Christmas |

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. Holy Mass is offered each day for all benefactors and for the intentions they request. Kindly forward your petitions for the Novenas scheduled to:

**Father Robert, O.F.M., Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 1221, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

Prayer of Thanks

Eternal and ever-gracious God, we thank You for the material and spiritual blessings with which You have enriched us.

We praise You for all that makes life worth living: for home, family, and friends; for food, clothing, and shelter; for all our joys, sorrows, and opportunities to help our fellowmen in Your name.

As we rejoice daily in Your manifold blessings, fill our hearts with love and gratitude, that we may make our whole lives one unceasing prayer of thanksgiving for Your countless mercies.

Amen.