

FMA FOCUS

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America

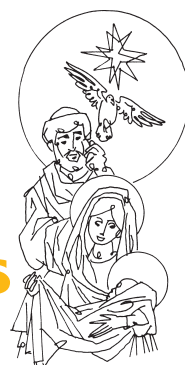


VIRTUE: DISCERNMENT

The gift of the Holy Spirit called discernment is found in Church teaching under many different names. In particular, we have heard this gift of the Holy Spirit mentioned in connection with religious life. But not only those considering a religious vocation are able to reach out to God. All should use the gift of discernment, on our most important decision-making processes. Our catechism reminds us that to discern when a decision needs to be made is a virtue and gift. "A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself."

We all use natural power of decision making, the more often we use discernment, really listening to God, the more we truly make good choices. ■

Spiritual support during Christmas season



Particularly in the Christmas season we are conscious of those who are alone or those who have lost loved ones. We go all out to assist them with food or help around the house. But while we feed the body and help the homeless and unwanted feel wanted, we can also be aware of those who are spiritually homeless or wandering, especially our young people. Refreshing our knowledge of the Spiritual Works of Mercy and practicing them can give us a guide on how best to support everyone during every season. The seven spiritual works are: to admonish the sinner, to counsel the doubtful, to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the

sorrowful, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries and to pray for the living and the dead.

Young adults and adolescents are certainly able to test our patience. Some would be shocked to think they would be called ignorant. But even the most mature young person doesn't have the wisdom to put much in context. Their world is their phone, their tablet, or laptop. They are fed images and ideas that truly need context. That is where adults can "instruct the ignorant" by their actions. By not being on your phone if a teenager is asking you a question or wants to share something, they see adults and mimic their behavior. Two other spiritual works that lend themselves to character building for adults and young people are – to bear wrongs patiently and to forgive all injuries. These two are actually better, not just for the wrongdoer but also for the person wronged. It isn't always easy to ignore the flippant or disrespectful behavior from teens, and certainly it should be corrected by parents or teachers. But forgiving the injury and bearing the wrong patiently, these are other ways adults can model for children how God truly wants us to love our neighbor. Adults can show teens that they are forgiven, and in that spirit of cooperation, perhaps, the young person

will realize they too can forgive a hurt or injury. Forgiving injury, bearing wrongs patiently, these are not actions young people often see in their shows or hear in their podcasts. It is up to us to model these behaviors and to practice the Spiritual Works of Mercy when dealing with all people, but especially those still forming their character. Our young people have the world at their fingertips, but it is our earthly world. Let's remind them it is not the only one. ■

Did You Know...

You can continue to carry on your own good work for 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.** 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 2223
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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.

THE CHRISTMAS CRIB IN YOUR HEART

This season there will be a Christmas Crib in church, perhaps even one in your home. Pope Francis has called the Christmas Crib the “universal symbol of salvation” and has said that “Jesus, in fact, came to earth in the concreteness of a person to save every man and woman, of all cultures and nationalities. He made Himself small so that we could welcome Him and receive the gift of God’s tenderness.” The crib with hay and figurines is important – it is something families can use as a focal point of evening prayer during Advent. But it is good to remember that the best place to build a crib is in your heart. Take advantage of Advent season and build a little time into your busy day to construct the spiritual crib to welcome the Lord Jesus.

The very first step is to go to confession – luckily parishes are usually offering extra time for this essential sacrament. Go – ask forgiveness of your sins and begin your spiritual Christmas Crib with a clean slate and a clear and willing heart. Next choose a dedicated time of day to start building your spiritual crib. Start with a scriptural foundation - the beautiful reading in the Gospel of Luke chapter 2, “Do not be afraid; for behold,

I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” (Lk 2:10-12) It is your time to be with Christ as he enters our world. Remember how He became human to save us all. Sense the joy that always accompanies a birth. After the Gospel reading – fill in the stable of your heart with support. A decade of the rosary each day is a way to welcome Mary also into your heart. “Holy Mary, mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.” We invoke our Blessed Mother and ask her to intercede as we prepare for Jesus. Finish your spiritual Christmas Crib with a personal prayer to our Lord. One you write with your own intentions and gratitude. Create your spiritual Christmas Crib each day – pray as you mentally build a place in your heart for Jesus this Advent and Christmas season. You can do it with your family, with family prayer, or by yourself, with individual prayer. Especially during this busy time, it is important to remember the reason for this season. ■



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. 2225, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

LOVE FOR MARY - A DEVOTION FOR ADULTS

Saint John Paul II had a special devotion to the Blessed Mother. Notice how often she is mentioned in his writings. He had the letter M for Mary emblazoned on his coat of arms and he was the first Pope to do that. Perhaps a good day to give special attention to Mary would be December 8, just before the hectic Christmas season becomes a blur. That is the special feast of her Immaculate Conception. Speak to Mary as a fellow mother, as a woman with a grown child, even as a daughter (as her parents Joachim and Ann did). The best way to speak to Mary is in prayer. The simple *Hail Mary* prayer is beautiful and is clear in its message to Mary from mortals, sinners, everyone. Additionally, it is one of the first prayers we learn as children. Reciting it, using it as an Advent devotional also brings us close to our parents, or memories of our parents if they are no longer with us.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Consider *The Angelus* also. This prayer, which incorporates the Hail Mary, commemorates the mystery of the Incarnation – that the Son of God assumed complete human nature and was born of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Angelus

The angel of the Lord declared to Mary: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary

And the Word was made flesh: And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection, through the same Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Whichever prayer or method you chose, make sure you spend December with Mary. She is always listening, always supporting us. ■



HE HAS KEPT HIS PROMISE; WE SHOULD TOO

If you are like most people, you likely have promised the Lord lots of things, especially when this life seems overwhelming. We've all done it – the last few years with a pandemic and all the other upheaval we have reached out to the Lord with requests, for peace and for rest. In that time, we promise to do better, if God will help us with our challenge. We will remember to pray for those less fortunate, we will put more in the basket at Mass, we will keep our unkind words to ourselves in a heated discussion. What we don't realize is even our reaching out, even our belief in the power of prayer and divine intervention is Him helping us. That is the virtue of hope. This virtue leads us to peace in our daily lives. 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. Pope Francis spoke of the virtue of hope 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. (Homily, October 29, 2019)

The simple Act of Hope we learned as children can be a special Christmas meditation.

Act of Hope

O Lord God,
I hope by Your grace for the
pardon
of all my sins
and after life here to gain
eternal happiness
because You have promised it
who are infinitely powerful,
faithful, kind,
and merciful.
In this hope I intend to live
and die.
Amen.

We should this year, be sure to do our best so that He can rely on our promises as well. When we promise to do better, to be better people, remember He is always with us, guiding, supporting. With God's help we can fulfill our promises. ■



Mother Cabrini: A Model of Charity

In November we celebrate the feast of the first North American woman proclaimed a saint. Seventy-six years ago, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini was declared a saint by Pope Pius XII, the first canonization in Rome after World War II.

Born July 15, 1850, one of 13 siblings, Frances Cabrini grew up in a small village near Milan, Italy. Her dream, even as a young girl, was to be a missionary. Her delicate health prevented her from joining the Daughters of the Sacred Heart who had been her teachers and those who encouraged her to also become a teacher. She persisted though and did not give up. Because of that dedication and call to serve God she founded the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She soon had a number of followers, and they petitioned the Pope at the time Pope Leo XIII to become missionaries in China. Instead, they were sent to the United States to work with the thousands of Italian immigrants already there. Missionary work in New York proved very difficult. She was not greeted with open arms and initially was homeless herself. But her dedication and unwillingness to give up on those who she believed needed her convinced the Archbishop of New York to let her stay. "I have started houses

with no more than the price of a loaf of bread and prayers, for with Him who comforts me, I can do anything." (St. Frances Xavier Cabrini)

She and her small group of followers organized catechism and education classes and established schools and orphanages. This allowed the Italian immigrants already in New York to continue to grow in their faith. In the next 30 years of her life Mother Cabrini, as she was known, founded almost 70 schools, orphanages, and other institutes dedicated to the poor, abandoned, uneducated and sick.

Today's church is similar to the New York where Mother Cabrini first worked. It serves a diverse fellowship on all continents and in a variety of countries. When we begin to retreat into our own comfort area or when we believe the faith and even God's love might not be for others we don't understand, let's remember Mother Cabrini's words: "As I see it the mission is this: Loving other human beings wherever they are in the world and letting them know there is a God who loves them unconditionally now as they are." Try to share with them our time and prayers with those who need the care and understanding St. Frances Cabrini gave each person throughout her 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 2224, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598**

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,

Preparation. That is the heart of Advent. These four weeks we are asked to prepare for the coming of Christ and do so with joy and humility.

Pope Francis reminds us the true meaning of Advent is about looking out not in,

“Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world.”

This FOCUS is filled with ways to prepare and celebrate this season, from assisting a neighbor to creating a Christmas Crib in your heart. We are reminded that, like Lent, Advent is an opportunity to serve others, to sacrifice both spiritually and materially, as the saints detailed in this month's issue do.

The scripture readings during Advent remind us not to waste our time with speculating, but instead always be ready. Make an effort not to be weighed down with earthly or mortal trappings. Remember our brothers and sisters in the missions. They have simple lives with little or no possessions and they radiate the joy and love of Christ, the best gift anyone can give or receive.

May God bless you during this Advent season,

Fr. Robert, OFM
Fr. Robert, O.F.M.

HONDURAS: LEARNING TO SMILE

St. Francis gave us something that attracts people to us. No doubt about it," says Fr. Albert.

Fr. Albert has served as a Franciscan Missionary in Honduras for over 50 years, working mostly with abandoned infants and the elderly poor. "We take care of two extremes, the elderly and little children. The two parts of life where we are all defenseless."

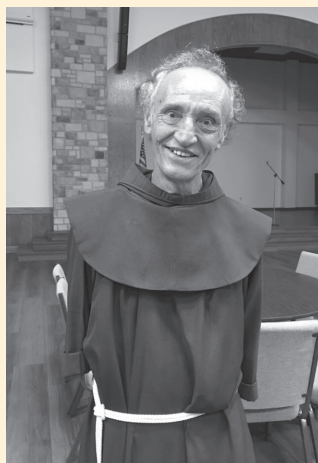
"I had always dreamed of being a missionary. I thought it would be an adventure. I wanted to be a Franciscan John Wayne." And Fr. Albert readily agrees that he found that adventure - and it was even more exciting than he imagined.

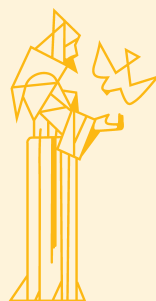
"The experienced missionary I was paired with when I first got here got ill and had to go home. I spoke practically no Spanish then and asked my superior what to do. He said, "You're Franciscan. You know how to smile. Go and smile and the rest will take care of itself. And it did."

"We don't really do huge things here," Fr. Albert claims. "We share people's poverty and way of life. They know, in their heart of hearts, that my fellow friars and I were not born here. We don't have to be here. But we came anyway. If we visit a village and someone has a bed for us to sleep in, fine. If they don't, we sleep on the floor. And this has an effect. Some people will travel 20 to 25 miles to attend a ceremony or celebration just because it involves a Franciscan."

Full of hope, he ends by sharing that "things are getting better. We are making progress, and it's all thanks to benefactors like those of the Franciscan Mission Associates."

Note: Some of the "not very huge things" in which Fr. Albert is involved include a home for elderly people, an orphanage, a soup kitchen that feeds poor children each day, a bakery, a kindergarten, and a children's medical clinic. ■





LIFE LESSONS AND OPPORTUNITIES AT VALLEY OF THE ANGELS

By Lusía

Azucena's family had nothing – no real way to keep her educated or even feed her. She though, did have the opportunity to enter a wonderful place, Valley of the Angels. She was 17 when she moved away from her family to live and work with us. It wasn't easy but she knew she had the blessing of her mother. Valley of the Angels has been a great blessing for Azucena, because it does not only help her financially, but instills values. She has three years of being at Valley of the Angels and her life has totally changed.

Valley of the Angels provides opportunities both professionally and spiritually, because it has the space, love, dedication, love to teach and provide tools for Azucena to have a good future. She is eternally grateful to Valley of the Angels because it has given her things that perhaps her mother has not been able to, like paying her tuition or giving her a stable education, Azucena has matured both emotionally and academically.

Moving away from her mother has been difficult but deep down Azucena knows that she and her mother are benefiting. This place was the best she could have known because she practices a lot of punctuality, responsibility and above all, humility. Valley of Angels has people who know how to educate children and help them grow in faith.

Every day is different as new things are done such as having sports afternoons, Zumba and time to meditate and

reflect on what we have done well and failed as people, and of course, the celebration of Mass every Sunday. At Valley of the Angels Azucena has the opportunity to study, receive extra courses such as bakery, sewing, crafts, karate, baseball and other things.

Every day Azucena seeks to give the best of herself. She has new friends, which are considered sisters. At first it was very difficult to adapt to the new life, but soon she learned to live with the other girls, make friends and live happily.

She always rules her life thinking that what is hard today, will be easy tomorrow. She is always smiling and that is her biggest characteristic and what makes her so special. She is so grateful for her home at Valley of the Angels and prays for her mother and all of her family each day. This life filled with love, kindness, and prayer is only possible because of the generosity of our benefactors. Your support makes the difference in the lives of so many children and adults just like Azucena each day. ■



Words Worth Noting



These two criteria are like the pillars of true love: deeds, and the gift of self.

Pope Francis

The strokes of the pen need deliberations as much as the sword needs swiftness.

Julia Ward Howe

The greatest glory in living lies not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall.

Nelson Mandela

You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.

Wayne Gretzky

Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.

Dalai Lama

You were created by God to love and serve.

Sr. Yelitza Ayala

You never know how the tough times you are going through today are going to help someone else tomorrow.

Tim Tebow

If you wish to forget anything on the spot, make a note that this thing is to be remembered.

Edgar Allen Poe

He who laughs...lasts!

Erma Bombeck

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father,

My thanks to St. Jude for all he has done for me in the past as well as lately. I prayed the Novena for nine days for my business to pick up. It has been terrible for years. And things are getting better. Please accept this small monetary gift and keep me in your prayers.

Sincerely,

P.M.

Sedalia, MO

Dear Father Robert,

I just thought you should have a gift along with a great "Thank You!"

Thank you for FOCUS. It is my spiritual nourishment.

May the LORD bless you abundantly!

P.G.

Columbia, SC

Dear Father Robert,

Thank you for the lovely TAU cross and for your prayerful remembrances. This was a beautiful Christmas present, and I truly appreciate your thoughtfulness. Be assured of our prayers for you all at the Franciscan Mission Associates in your noble work. Blessed and healthy New Year wishes.

Gratefully,

S.P.M.

Bronx, NY

Dear Father,

We thank you for your generous donation to our community. We hope the Lord blesses your generosity and your community. Happy Christmas and New Year's celebration.

With sincere appreciation,
J.P.

Oxnard, CA

Dear Father Robert,

Here is my thanksgiving to St. Jude, and the Blessed Virgin Mary for favors received.

D.P.

Warren, MI

Dear Father,

I want to thank you for the birthday card you sent me. It was the first one I got, and it made me so grateful that I've been part of giving and praying prayers to and for the Franciscan Mission Associates. I believe in you and want to give to you.

N.G.

North Reading, MA

FEASTS OF THE CHRISTMAS DAYS

The December calendar is rich with saint feast days. Each singular in its personality and history. While we do spend Advent focusing on the Virgin Mary and our Lord and Savior, this year spend some time with some other December saints.

First, let's focus on St. Stephen, the First Christian Martyr, whose feast day is December 26. He was among the first deacons ordained by the Apostles to minister to the early Church in Jerusalem. Listen and learn as he brilliantly proclaims the heritage Jesus left to us all. And hear him, like Jesus, praying for his killers' forgiveness – with his last breath. Indeed, a great patron for young adults, especially any “Stephen” in the family. Try reading the full account – Acts 6,7, 8, 22:6-20. Look for the mystery man among the accusers and killers – someone who returns later in the Acts of the Apostles, after God gives him a miraculous “make-over.” And please pray for today's Deacons and those preparing for the diaconate. Next, we can pray to St. John the Evangelist, December 27. The youngest of the Apostles, John was a Galilean fisherman by trade, until called by Jesus. We know that the Lord, dying on the cross, entrusted Our Lady to his care. Brilliant, fearless, the mystic of mystics, St. John was the only Apostle to die of old



age, preaching, teaching, evangelizing, and writing – the Fourth Gospel, three Epistles, and Revelation. To learn more about him, read and pray with the final Gospel, John 1:1-18.

And lastly, spend some time in December with Thomas Beckett, Bishop and Martyr. Born to a powerful 12th century family in England, he would be martyred on December 29 of 1170. As a deacon his brilliance and skills pulled him into the Royal Court, ultimately as Chancellor of England. Yet, God had greater plans. Thomas was elected, ordained, and consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. From top bureaucrat to top servant of God in the Realm – a role leading to his murder at the altar that cold December day – a scene reminiscent of murdered bishops in our own times.

Most of us will not be called to witness Jesus as martyrs, as were Saints Stephen and Thomas. Nor do most people live into their late 90's as did St. John the Evangelist. But we must all pray for the grace to know God's will for us. Then, like Jesus emerging from John the Baptizer's baptismal waters in the Jordan, we too, can be about God's work – making the most of the days God has given us. ■

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

LISTENING – A PURE PATH TO FAITH

The gift of faith is nurtured in us by listening; a creative, prayerful, and active discipline. This is the listening skill that God worked hard to bring to the Hebrew people as they were invited to make a Covenant with the Almighty. It was the same skill which allowed them (and their Prophets) to hear God's promise of the Messiah. We recall that before his Ascension, Christ instructed his followers to "go... and make disciples of all nations. Teach them to observe everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20) We are all living proof that the Disciples did just that – but first, they were schooled by God Himself in the art of listening. They had to listen if they were to learn in those three historic years of Christ's ministry on earth.

True listening, as the Church teaches, is far from the paused, passive politeness that we call "listening" in our culture. Prayerful listening clears the way for us to "hear" others, up to and including God Himself. Even in the 13th Century,

St. Anthony of Padua was acclaimed as a great preacher. He converted thousands, settled arguments that would have grown into wars, and returned whole cities and regions to the practice



of Christian peace and justice. In hindsight, we can see how God prepared Anthony for these ministries even while a young cleric in Portugal. There God led him to seek greater solitude and quiet, the better to hear and understand God's promptings in his heart, mind, and life. Anthony brought these monastic skills to his Franciscan vocation. Once settled in as a friar, how did Anthony hear the will of God for him? Certainly by listening

to his life's great love, the Holy Word of God in the Bible. And surely by listening to his superiors, his friends, other preachers – and to Jesus speaking to Anthony in the quiet of his own soul. We can best learn to find the will

of God for ourselves by imitating Anthony and developing our own prayerful listening skills.

This fall, try putting it at the top of your life-long learning list. Ask St. Anthony's help. And don't hesitate to ask your pastor or some other trusted guide for help and direction. Then, you too will be able to be more aware of the voice of the Holy Spirit. The better to share your faith and speak up for it when the time presents itself. Perhaps beginning in your own family life around the dinner table. ■

A SPIRITUAL CHRISTMAS GIFT

If you wish to give a spiritual gift for your loved ones or for special friends at Christmas, may we suggest a gift enrollment in Franciscan Mission Associates.

Those you enroll at Christmas will share spiritually in the Masses and prayers of all our Franciscan friars during the next year and in a Solemn Novena of Masses to begin on Christmas Day.

You will receive beautifully engraved Christmas gift cards well in advance. Each card is designed to show your name as the donor and the name of each person you decide to enroll. You may mail the gift announcements or give them as you choose.

To obtain additional Christmas enrollment cards, please write today to:

Fr. Robert, O.F.M., Box 598, Dept. 2222, Mount Vernon, NY 10551

ADVENT - A TIME TO SLOW DOWN AND HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

It is hard isn't it, to slow down during Advent? A time of waiting becomes a time of hustle and bustle as hundreds of voices remind us Christmas is only a few weeks, days, hours away. You can't put on blinders to shield your eyes; wear sound-proof earmuffs to quiet the voices – we live in a busy world. Waiting and anticipation are important parts of our lives. Although we live in the present, the future is always in view. This long view, and how we prepare, are important to remember during the busy season of Advent. For the Christian the years revolve around the Gospel story of sin and forgiveness; sorrow and redemption; joy and gladness.

The scripture readings for the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2022, remind us to be aware and prepare. The second reading is from Romans:

"it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand.

Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." (Rom. 13:11-12)

Christians can get lost in the shopping and party atmosphere of Advent. But slowing down, reading scripture, and offering ourselves to

the Lord remind us that this fleeting few weeks is not about material goods.

The Gospel reading from Mark, gives the faithful a way forward and a focus.

"...stay awake!

For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." (Mk 24:42-44)

God is waiting for us as we wait for Him. His arms are open – each Mass He offers Himself to us in the Eucharist. Right now is the Advent of our lives. We listen and pray, we work and study, we hope and await the final coming of Jesus. This is an important time for us. Our lives are not simply meandering along

their own path. God has a vision for us, He has a way for us to truly live an everlasting life. This Advent make the most of your days, pray more, attend an additional Mass, sacrifice something every day. Move others with the joy of your faith, encourage anyone and everyone to prepare for Christ – not only Christmas. ■



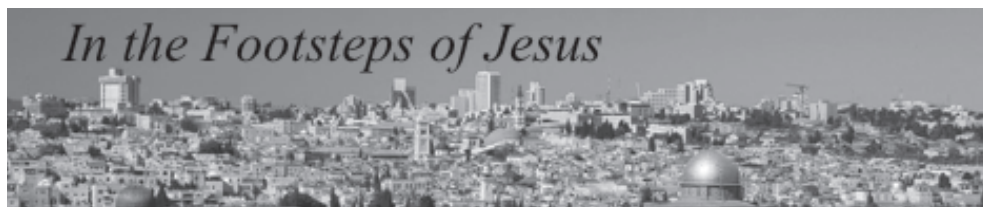
Special Novena Schedule Advent-Christmas 2022

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 Winter months the Special Novena schedule is:

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

All Franciscan Mission Associates, sponsors, and benefactors are asked to join in prayer for the intentions and petitions of those taking part in the exercises. Please pray also for our Franciscan missionaries, for the people they serve, for an increase in vocations and for all our associates. Kindly forward your petitions for the Novenas scheduled to:

Father Robert, O.F.M., Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 2221, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598



Franciscan Mission Associates Invites you to a **10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land** **on April 30-May 9, 2023**

Nazareth • Cana • Sea of Galilee • Jerusalem
Bethlehem • Ein Karem • Emmaus

Dear Father, Please send information on this Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TEL. NO. _____ EMAIL _____

Space is LIMITED. Send for a brochure or contact us for assistance:

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