

FMA FOCUS

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

Missions in Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador, Central America



VIRTUE: UNDERSTANDING

We often speak of God and his attributes as “surpassing all understanding,” meaning that as mere humans it is difficult for us to “understand” all about God. What is important to remember is that He understands all about us and who and what we are. Understanding God’s ways requires a level of acceptance. We must accept God in order to understand His ways and His very special relationship to us. Our human ability is limited but our faith doesn’t have to be. As disciples of Christ, we are able to understand God and His place in our own lives by fulfilling His three requests for all of us: loving God above all things, loving our neighbor as ourselves, and going forth to spread the Word of God to all. ■

Understanding is a gift from God

There are a hundred references to understanding in the Scriptures. One example is God telling Moses that He has given understanding to those who will build the Ark of the Covenant.

“The LORD said to Moses:

See, I have singled out Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with a divine spirit of skill and understanding and knowledge in every craft.” (Ex. 31: 1-3)

Paul promising Timothy that the Lord will give him the understanding necessary to decipher the meaning of what Paul is telling him is another example. “Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.” (Tim. 2:7)



But perhaps the best reference to understanding God is in Isaiah where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are found,

“a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, A spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD.” (Isaiah 11:1-3)

This gift from God is one that can languish. Like a natural athlete who does not work to develop their skill, or a person who scrolls aimlessly on their phone all day, the gift of understanding can weaken if it is not used. God can give us the tools, the gifts, but it is our responsibility to use those tools wisely and to spread His Word.

One way we can increase our understanding is to be attentive and focused when we are at Mass or when we are reading the Bible. In Luke’s Gospel, while two disciples are on their way to Emmaus, Jesus appears to them. Luke tells us that along the way “He opened their minds to understand the Scripture” (Luke 24:45). Jesus knew that Scripture was one of the many tools that furthered His disciples’ understanding of God.

We know, however, that a truth can be explained to us and yet we may not work to understand it at all. If our life is going the wrong way, or if we are making bad choices, it is then that we tend to ask Jesus for

His help in understanding. The disciples in this passage focused on the Lord’s word and believed, and therefore came to understand. We must, during Mass or when praying, focus with intent and true desire. This will help to increase our faith, which leads to understanding.

Just as children can ask for gifts on their birthday God will be pleased if we “ask” for gifts of faith and understanding so that we may do His will and help others do so as well. ■

Did You Know...

You can continue to carry on the 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 you individual circumstances. Consider making a bequest of whatever you wish to: FRANCISCAN MISSION ASSOCIATES, Mount Vernon, NY 10551. Or, if you wish additional information about making a will, please feel free to contact:

**Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept 4232
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.

SUMMERTIME – WARM DAYS TO FOCUS ON PRAYER

Proposals to have children attend school year-round always crop up at this time of the year. Often it is folks who have little or no experience with how growth takes place who make these suggestions.

Many people work on building up their muscles these days. Science tells us that this is best accomplished by alternating exercise and rest. This, say the physical education experts, allows the muscles to rest and grow.

Wise farmers also know the importance of alternating planting a field and leaving it fallow. This is a long-held principle dating back to the ancient societies. When the land had a chance to rest and recuperate for a year, crops were more hardy and plentiful the next year.

Like the fields, our minds and hearts must be given rest, or they too can become overworked. The summer can be a time of “harvest” if we take advantage of it. Think of the activities you push aside all year when you rush, rush, rush. Two of the important things that you might find time for during the long days of summer are conversation and prayer. Perhaps you have a family member whom you haven’t spoken to in a while, maybe because of a falling

out, or because life takes people, even family members, in different directions.

Remember that God calls us to *love one another as He has loved us*, and that life is short. If you are experiencing a rift, or just a great distance from family and friends, praying to St. Joseph for his intercession is a great idea. Although he originally decided to divorce Mary quietly when he found out she was pregnant, after the angel’s visit and some prayer he became the head of the Holy Family, watching over Mary and Jesus and keeping the family together. If we are worried about our own families or about feeling distant, St. Joseph will be there to help us gain the strength to mend the rift or close the distance and continue on with an even stronger relationship.



The summer can also be an opportunity for us to grow in our prayer life. We need to exercise our soul as well as our body, and summer can be a time to reconnect with God. So, during these days, make sure that while you are tending to your day to day work responsibilities you are also making time to develop your heart, mind and soul. Doing so will bring growth and prepare us for everlasting life with God and the saints in heaven. ■

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. 4234, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

A special kind of prayer apostolate, St. Francis

While still a teen, St. Francis went off to war, dreaming of coming home a hero. Instead, he was taken prisoner and jailed. That was quite a change for the wealthy son of a silk merchant. Before his stint in jail, St. Francis knew nothing of sacrifice. He had more than enough of everything; everything that is, except faith.

Eventually he would be released and, at first, he resumed his carefree ways, but as a somewhat shattered young man. He neglected duties with his father's business, and even grew seriously ill. He even went back to war again. This time, after coming home, he was never the same.

It was said St. Francis became fervently religious after this second time at war. Upon his return he began wearing simple clothes. As a now older, more mature man, he made a pilgrimage to Rome and his life was forever changed.

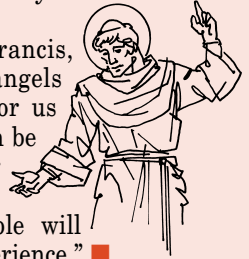
Returning home from Rome, Francis gave himself to a life of poverty and prayer, serving the sick, the outcasts, and the poor. In his father's eyes, Francis had lost his way. He did not see this latest turn of Francis's as a good one and he disowned him. He had held out hope that his son would be a partner, or at least have a hand in his business. This new life of poverty, however, did not coincide with that hope.

We know, however, that in God's eyes, Francis had not lost his way at all. He had grown into a man of tremendous courage. Acting on that courage, the Gospel became his only guide. This guide would draw thousands of other men who were likewise seeking something more than the secularism of their culture to vow themselves to a new kind of religious order, the Friars Minor.

Today, there are even more opportunities for youth to stray from God, and from the path to heaven. One good practice this summer would be to carve out time for prayer for all those seemingly losing their way— especially, our own young people.

Make such prayer a priority. Ask St. Francis – the Catholic saint who is revered worldwide in every culture and faith – for his help. It is the kind of prayer that will take courage, especially if you begin with the first line of the prayer attributed to St. Francis: “Make me a channel of your peace...”

Along with Francis, the saints and angels will surely pray for us and with us. It can be a first step in our becoming “the only Gospel some people will hear or see or experience.” ■



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.

We 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 4233, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598



THE MARTYRS OF UGANDA – JUNE 3

For Christians in America, the country of Uganda, in the heart of Central Africa, may seem very far away. And while we may never visit that country, we can still be united to the young men who were martyred there; as united as we feel to the saints we know so well. The Church celebrates the feast of these martyrs on June 3rd. It is an especially important day to African Catholics who claim them as an integral part of their family of faith.

In 1964 Pope Paul VI canonized these 22 brave and holy African men who gave their lives for their faith. These martyrs, whom we know as Charles Lwanga and companions, were judges, tribal chiefs, soldiers, members of the King's court and even young boys. All stood up to speak out against the corrupt and immoral practices of Uganda's leaders. Two young boys were burned to death with Charles Lwanga; others were speared, beheaded, tortured, and brutalized in different ways. Many of the men were recent converts to faith in Jesus, yet they would not be moved on their commitment to Christ. In total King Mwanga executed 45 men and boys between January 1885 and January 1887; 22 Catholic Martyrs and 23 Anglicans were the victims of his brutal regime. National Martyrs' Day is celebrated as a public holiday

in Uganda, giving nationals time to reflect and remember. There are Catholic and Anglican shrines to the Martyrs' in Namugongo. Millions of pilgrims, many of whom come from beyond Uganda, visit the shrines each year.

The 22 Catholic Martyrs were beatified in 1920 and canonized as Saints of the universal Church in 1964.

Pope Francis visited Namugongo in 2015 and celebrated Holy Mass.

Although the actual distance to Central Africa may be far, with today's technology, we are all "close" and have information at our fingertips. There are many ways to learn more about these brave men this summer. First, pray to the martyrs. It is a simple way to honor them and their sacrifice. Second, become more familiar with the church in Africa, from humanitarian aid to education and healthcare. Christians in roles of service are playing a big part in the growing number of faithful in Africa. Lastly, find out about who these men were; their lives, their faith and courage, and how they died.

The variety of Christian feasts from all centuries and all continents remind us that Christianity is universal. Christ came to save us all. Racism, hatred and discrimination should be as foreign to our lives and to the Church as they are to God. ■

GOD IS OUR CO-PILOT

“The Lord will guard your coming and our going, both now and forever.”

Psalm 121:8

Summer is the season of travel. Parents pack up their children and go east, west, north and south. While many love the hectic nature of travel, even with the recent trials at the airport some might need a little spiritual support. Something to remember always, wherever and however we travel, is that God is with us. Here are some traveler’s prayers you can pack with you to ease your journey.

Before you take to the air, or perhaps when you are waiting at the airport to board, here is a short prayer to share with your children, spouse or whomever is joining you:

Prayer for air travelers

O God, you are always with us in the sky as on the land and sea. Protect us by your power and might as we soar so far about the earth you have created. Kindly bless the crew and all the passengers flying with us and bring us to a safe landing. This we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Say the air is not your thing and you are instead going by sea. The coasts are beautiful, God’s gift. Here is a short prayer you can take as you embark on your marine journey:

Prayer for safety at sea

O Lord our God, who separated the waters from the dry land, your Son our Lord, sanctified the waters by being baptized in them by St. John, walked on water across the lake and changed water into wine at Cana. Watch over us on our journey across the water, help us to see your

steps in the merging sea, and carry us by your gracious assistance to a safe port. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Whichever way you go, and with whomever, here is a short prayer asking God to protect your family, and your traveling companions:

Prayer for Your Family

We entreat you God of mercy, to watch over this family of ours. Through the intercession of the all-holy Virgin Mary protect us from all harm. May every member of our family be wholly devoted to you and in your kindness keep us all from evil in Christ’s name. Amen.

And lastly when you reach your destination, or your midpoint, here is an evening prayer that reminds us that God is with us and that we will safely reach our destination:

An Evening Prayer

Almighty Father, you endure forever without shadow of change or alteration. Remain with us now as the daylight fades and walk with us in the cool of the evening to keep us safely in your sight as we continue on this earthly journey until we reach our everlasting destination with you. Amen. ■



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,

In today's world many believe humility is a sign of weakness. They could not be more wrong. Humility creates in us an ability to abandon ways and ideas that make us stray from our Lord. In other words, it strengthens our resolve to live a life centered in God.

Pope Francis told a general audience that Jesus showed us true humility, the true path to God.

"Specifically, because it leads us to Him, humility leads us also to the essentials of life, to its truest meaning, to the most trustworthy reason for why life is truly worth living."

Christian writer and scholar G.K. Chesterton called humility, "the mother of giants." These giants, many saints like St. Francis, knew the quiet power of humility to move mountains, create personal and public spiritual sanctuaries and build bridges to God.

It is within us, with the help of the saints, to be humble in the face of God and others and grow in faith and holiness.

May God grant you peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "FR. Robert, OFM". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Fr. Robert, O.F.M.



A REWARDING LIFESTYLE THANKS TO AGAPE

Fr. Jack, O.F.M.

One Saturday evening recently, I celebrated a Mass in thanksgiving for a young 15-year-old girl (the Mass is commonly known as a “Quinceañera” in Latin America and even in the United States). In AGAPE, Fr. Flavian had a custom of gifting the young lady a copy of the New Testament. I continue the custom of the New Testament, but added either a San Damiano Cross, a Rosary or the complete Bible for Young People. This particular celebration was moving for me because of what followed. Let me explain. I had no connection with the “Quinceañera” in said celebration. My encounter was with another young lady who had celebrated her sweet fifteen Mass the day I left to be with my sister who was in the hospital in Orlando, Florida and knew she was dying. Therefore, I was away from AGAPE, hoping to have a few days or more with my sister. However, my sister was gone from me, her husband and her daughters.

Three months later I was celebrating the above-mentioned Mass. A young lady

approached me and said that in her Mass of thanksgiving the priest (I was away) did not give any sort of gift: Bible, New Testament, Rosary or Cross. I was sorry to hear that. I thought of what I might do. She said: “Could I please have something to remember my Quinceañera Mass of thanksgiving, too?” I said I know I have one more Young People’s Bible, and if she would like to wait, I would go and get it. As I did so, I was still wondering who this person was and why she had wanted me to do the sweet fifteen ceremony for her in the first place. When I returned with the Bible, I gave it to her and she asked that I write something in it for her. She obviously heard me say that I add a message to each Quinceañera in remembrance of the day. I had done so to acknowledge the 15-year-old whose celebration we had just finished with my words of wisdom on the first page on the inside cover of the Bible.

I said that I would write a note for her and so asked her for her name. She said: “Don’t you remember me? My name is Carin. You first met me in “Anzuelo de Dios.” She was a five or six-year-old kid, active and so approachable and sociable. Now, unrecognizable as a young lady, but still pleasant and

gracious. I gave her a big hug and felt a sense of pride in the work that AGAPE had offered this child, now a young woman. To see her grown up, with her mom and younger brother, gave me an emotionally good sensation.

Anzuelo de Dios is one of our programs in AGAPE that cares for kids living in an environment which is not constructive for those who are alone at home while the parent works or when they are not in school. AGAPE creates for these elementary public grade school children opportunities to receive tutoring, possible psychological attention, and interactive games or play time. Many of the kids who have gone through the

“Anzuelo” process have moved on to a lifestyle that is positive and rewarding for them in life and work. **Anzuelo de Dios* (it means God’s Hook) - the concept is to keep the children hooked to God, protecting them from falling into drugs or gangs.

This program and others like it are possible because of benefactors like you, who are reading these stories about what our Franciscan Missionaries in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador experience on a daily basis. Your donations continue to make dreams come true for the youth of today, like Carin, who’ll guide and lead their communities to a prosperous future with values that will make a better world in which to live. ■

AN UPDATE FROM ROME – BUSY DAYS AND NIGHTS

Br. Daniel, O.F.M.

Your donations allow anyone who wishes to become a Franciscan Brother a chance to do so. This is a recent update from one of our Brothers in formation in Rome.

They say the best homilies are under five minutes and are straight to the point. After that people’s attention starts to drift. So, to save you the trouble I will keep it short and sweet, even though we had a month filled with different events, outings and fraternal gathering.

Those who have done their theology here in Rome know that the semesters here are a bit different. This leaves us with a whole three weeks to enjoy Christmas break and really “get into the spirit.” We returned to class after the Epiphany and finished the winter semester. Our vacation, however, was packed. The week before Christmas, we began our vacation with a two-day

retreat in the hills of the province of Avellino, Campania, in preparation for the celebration of the Incarnation of our Lord. Avellino is in the South, and it was a pleasure to participate in some formative events with some of the provinces of Southern Italy. Between the hospitality and the food, we are right at home.

For the Christmas festivities, we spent most of our time here in Rome, going to the General Curia for the “Midnight Mass” on Christmas Eve and animating/celebrating Christmas Mass down at the parish of San Gregorio VII. On the feast of Saint Stephen, which here in Italy is celebrated as a national holiday, we had a nice BBQ, which

brought us into a more “relaxed” schedule.

Out with the old and in with the new! For New Year’s Eve, in traditional fashion, we went to the Vatican for the “Te Deum” and vespers, more or less presided over by Pope Francis who does what he can with his health. Of course the night couldn’t go on without enjoying lentils made with “cotechino,” a common dish in Italy on this day, and a sign of favor for the coming year. Then we tried our luck at our annual “tombolata” – a real favorite among the Brothers. I don’t think anyone went home without a prize! All this in preparation for the New Year, which we brought in together as a fraternity, toasting all the good God has blessed our lives with. As I stated, we spent “most” of our time here in Rome, with the exception of our fraternal outing to Florence on the 4th of January. The guardian organized a really nice day trip for us to Florence, a city rich in church and cultural history. We all enjoyed it very much. On January 7th, for the opening of the Franciscan centenary celebrating the approval of the Rule and the Christmas at Greccio, several of the brothers from the Convento were invited by the General Curia to participate in the events participated in by multiple branches of our Franciscan family at Greccio. I actually had the opportunity to go, and it was definitely overwhelming to feel a part of such a beautiful, long-lasting tradition and also to realize we are all a part of a much bigger family.

We ask you to continue your support for us through prayer and solidarity while we do the same on our end for all of you. ■



Words Worth Noting



A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows.

St. Francis of Assisi

One cannot love without suffering or suffer without loving.

St. Gianna Beretta Molla

God's love for us is not greater in Heaven than it is now.

St. Thomas Aquinas

Anger is quieted by a gentle word, as fire is quenched by water.

Jean Pierre Camus

Time never takes time off.

St. Augustine of Hippo

It is magnificent to grow old if one keeps young.

Harry Emerson Fosdick

Don't bite the bait of pleasure until you know if there is a hook beneath it.

Thomas Jefferson

Patience will achieve more than force.

Edmund Burke

Things do not happen; things are made to happen.

John F. Kennedy

The most important thing about power is to make sure you don't have to use it.

Edwin Land

Our Readers gladly write...



Dear Father Robert,

I promised to thank St. Jude, I also prayed to St. Anthony, Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. My son lost his job a month ago. I prayed he would find a good job later and he did.

I also prayed for my husband who had cancer. He had treatments also and when he went to the doctor today the examination showed no more cancer. God is great and God is good. Thank you and God bless you and your ministry.

F. N.
Boca Raton, FL

Dear Fr. Robert,

Please publish my thanks to St. Jude, St. Anne, St. Joseph and especially to the Blessed Mother and her divine son Jesus Christ our Lord for all the favors I receive all my life.

Thank you,
J.P.D.
Fall River, MA

Dear Father,

Please publish this in your Focus booklet, in thanksgiving for all prayers received and answered. Thanks for St. Joseph, St. Jude, St. Rita, Blessed Mother, and our dear Lord Jesus Christ.

Bless you and thank you,
C.C.S.
Green Bay, WI

Dear Fr. Robert,

In gratitude for all your prayers and good works and favors received from St. Christopher. St. Blaise, St. Lucy and St. Anthony, I am enclosing a check. May God grant abundant blessings on the Missions and the people they serve.

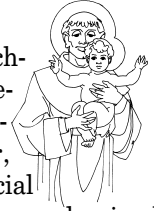
Sincerely,
A.V.
Monroeville, PA

Dear Father,

I am writing to thank you for all your prayers to St. Jude. I received a notice from you in February about two novenas to St. Jude that were going to be said in March. I sent my petitions and a contribution to you, and I am convinced that your prayers worked! I am very grateful for your help and many blessings to each and every one of you.

Sincerely,
M.S.T.
San Francisco, CA

ST. ANTHONY – ACCEPTED CHANGE WHEN IT WAS GOD’S WILL



St. Anthony of Padua is a beloved saint and scholar. He changed careers many times and was not afraid to change his life when he heard a different call from God. Clearly, he was gifted with understanding at an early age.

Anthony was born to a noble family in Portugal. He was well read and well educated and at 15 asked to join, and was accepted by, the Canons Regular of St. Augustine. While there Anthony felt called to a quieter more contemplative life. He wanted the freedom to deeply study the Bible and longed for a deeper prayer life. So, he moved again to a more remote religious house. There he would be ordained to the priesthood in 1219 or 1220 – at about 25 years of age, still young in today’s terms.

Perhaps Anthony’s greatest “skill” was seeking and accepting God’s will. This 13th Century young scholar was just a year ordained as a Canon Regular of St. Augustine, when he encountered the witness of a radically different Order serving God and the Gospel: The Franciscan Friars.

Transferring in 1221, he set out to be a missionary, even a martyr, in North Africa. But illness and a difficult sea voyage took him instead to Assisi and the General Chapter of the Franciscan Order. His skills were quickly noted and

put to good use: as preacher, chaplain, scholar, theologian, professor, convert-maker, confessor, and even champion of social reform; and yes, a renowned miracle worker.

He died just outside Padua in 1231. Today we would say he died in the summer of his years, only 36 years old. In fact, his feast day is June 13, the beginning of summertime. In contrast to the brevity of St. Anthony’s life is his vast appeal that continues undimmed today after more than 800 years. He is recognized as one of the most popular of all the Saints of God.

A fact that is undisputed is that Anthony, wherever he went, spent his life devoted to God, God’s holy Church and God’s holy people. Anthony’s holiness was so universally recognized that he was canonized a saint just one year after his death.

In our parishes and lives, we meet many who are looking for God’s help in making life decisions. Some may be family members, or it may even be we ourselves. Pray that all people may welcome life shifts and changes knowing, as St. Anthony did, that Jesus will be there, in those new experiences, waiting to help them. ■

DONATING ONLINE IS SIMPLE

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



https://www.franciscanmissionassoc.org/become_a_supporter/

DEDICATE YOURSELF TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Through Christ, and in Christ, the mystery of God's infinite love is marvelously revealed. Out of love for sinful humans, Jesus took on our human nature and became like us in all things except sin.

The annual Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a liturgical feast celebrated on the Friday after the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus (Corpus Christi). This year that falls on Friday, June 16, 2023. The devotion to the heart of Jesus has Christ's unconditional love at its center, exemplified in the blood and water which poured forth from Christ's heart in his sacrifice on the cross. According to historians, Devotion to the Heart of Jesus began in earnest in the 1670s. Jesus appeared to St.

Margaret Mary Alacoque, a visitation nun in France. In her visions, Christ asked that He be honored with a devotion to His Heart. Asking those who prayed to His Sacred Heart to focus on their own hearts, taking responsibly for transgressions and making amends.

Pope Francis, in a recent address, spoke of the importance of our focus, especially in June, on the Sacred

Heart of Jesus as a reminder of God's mercy,

"Do not be afraid to present to him all the intentions of our suffering humanity, its fears, its miseries. May this Heart, full of love for men, give everyone hope and trust. I invite you to discover the riches that are hidden in the Heart of Jesus, to learn to love your neighbor."

Pope Francis wants the faithful to remember we are recipients of God's mercy and in turn we need to open our hearts to our neighbors and to be humble as Christ humbled himself.

The faithful recite the Litany to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The long litany reminds us how Jesus's heart is so full of love for us.

Heart of Jesus, aflame with love for us, Heart of Jesus, source of justice and love, Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love, Heart of Jesus, wellspring of all virtue.

Later in the Litany we hear about God's forgiveness and how He is the ultimate consoler – once we atone for our sins and make our own heart ready for Jesus.

Heart of Jesus, pierced by a lance, Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation,

Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection, Heart of Jesus, our peace, and reconciliation.

With each line we ask for God's Mercy – which we know is ours for the asking.

Heart of Jesus most worthy of all our praise, in the tenderness of your heart watch over us all of our earthly days. ■



PRAY FOR SEEMINGLY HOPELESS CAUSES – ST. JUDE

“*Nothing is impossible with God.*” It is a statement of fact we hear from God often in the Hebrew Scriptures (Zechariah 8:6), and well into the New Testament. Our Lord had this to say: “*What is impossible for human beings is possible for God.*” (Luke 18: 27; Mark 10:27)

We know an invitation to prayer when we hear it. And we have a long-standing friend to help us deal with “impossible” matters: St. Jude – a relative of the Lord and one of the Apostles. He has been hailed down the centuries as the “saint of the impossible.” As one of the Apostles, he knew sorrow, particularly the death of Jesus through the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. (Matthew 27: 3-5)

Judas had lived and traveled with the Lord and the Apostles. Politically connected, he was the bursar for the group, focused on the needs of the poor, until Holy Thursday night. We know that when Judas left Gethsemane after Jesus’ arrest, he suddenly understood that the power structure intended to kill the Lord. And he despaired ... returned the 30 pieces of silver he was paid for betrayal ... and hung himself.

St. Jude, who died a martyr in what is present day Iran, likely never forgot the other Apostles, no matter how far his mission took him. Try, as summer

fills our days with light and joy, to pray for those suffering the darkness of despair, for their families, and the healthcare providers who today are saving lives.

Many people choose the Novena of Prayer to St. Jude – a classic prayer that asks us to keep such intentions in our hearts too, for at least nine days. Pray especially for the unknown teens and the elderly who have no one else to pray for them in this life. Reaching out to others in need is the hallmark of the Christian. With the time – and love – given to this prayer, we are all praying for one another, in this world and the next. Miracles still happen today, but we do not depend on them. Always given as a special gift of God, we don’t know why or how they happen. But they are usually given for the faith of the Church, to help others come to Christ. Just as many who go to the famed Shrine of Lourdes and come away unhealed in body but healed in spirit, so those who are hopeless can get spiritual refreshment even if their way is seemingly all uphill. Perhaps the temptation to give up in the face of debilitating illness is the last snare of the devil. Pray for final perseverance for all those who may face such temptations this summer that they may take courage, and benefit from the intercession of St. Jude on their behalf. ■

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. 4235,
Franciscan Mission Associates, PO Box 598, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

Special Novena Schedule Summer 2023

All year round Franciscan Mission Associates conducts a regular schedule of spiritual and devotional exercises in which all benefactors are invited to take part. During the summer months the Special Novena schedule is:

May 7-15 and May 16-24	Feast of St. Dymphna (May 15)
May 18-26 and May 27 - June 4	Novena of the Holy Spirit
June 5 - June 21	Feast of St. Anthony (June 13)
June 7-16	Feast of the Sacred Heart
June 22-June 30	St. Anthony for a safe summer
July 18-26	Feast of St. Anne
August 2-10 and August 11-19	St. Anthony (in Padua)
August 7-15	Assumption of Our Lady
August 19-27	St. Monica Novena
Sept. 2-10 and Sept. 11-19	St. Jude Novena

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

Father Robert, O.F.M., Franciscan Mission Associates
PO Box 598, Dept. 4231, Mount Vernon, NY 10551-0598

Honor Your Loved Ones with a Catholic Mass

The holy sacrifice of the Mass, our Lord Jesus Christ's saving sacrifice on Calvary, is the supreme form of Catholic worship. Offering a Mass for a personal intention or for a loved one, living or deceased, is a beautiful expression of faith and devotion with infinite spiritual benefits. The Franciscan Friars will be honored to receive your Mass intentions and offer them promptly.

The customary offering today for:

Individual Mass	\$10.00	Mass on a specific day	\$15.00
Novena of Masses	\$90.00	Novena on specific days	\$135.00
Gregorian Masses	\$300.00	Gregorian on specific days	\$400.00

While the minimum offering is appreciated, many give generously to support our Franciscan Missionaries. Your extra support sustains and furthers our mission. Thank you for considering a donation. Please note that Masses with specific dates require at least one month's advance notice. Contact us at admin@franciscanmissionassoc.org or (914) 664-5604.