

Capuchin Friars - Morgon, France
Letter to the Franciscan Tertiaries - US Translation
+Pax et Bonum+
April 2013

A word from Father

Towards the Consecration of the Franciscan Family to the Glorious Patron of the Universal Church

Very Dear Tertiaries,

In a few days, the Reverend Father Anthony will consecrate the whole Franciscan Family (the Three Orders, the Cord bearers, and the faithful of our three Convents) to Saint Joseph Patron and Protector of the whole Church. It is with joy that we follow the example of the Priestly Society of St. Pius X. in this serious and solemn act in the "Year of Saint Joseph". The children of Saint Francis can't let this occasion pass by to manifest their confidence in Saint Joseph and to place themselves all the more under his influence and protection. Some extracts from old Franciscan revues which we found will follow. They call to mind the very special devotion of the Seraphic Family in regards to the Chief of the Holy Family and this in the first centuries of its existence. Each can also read with profit out of their Third Order Manual (Pages 390-393 in some) how this devotion has spread in the course of time. We must then remain faithful to our Family's tradition.

In addition, this Consecration to the Supreme Patron of the Church seems to have become a necessity and an act to accomplish as soon as possible. In the frightening storm which shakes the Church, it is more than ever urgent for us to turn towards Saint Joseph and to say with our Tertiary Pope Leo XIII. "We have recourse to you in all our tribulation, oh Blessed Joseph". And how much more so now in 2013 than in 1889!

By this Consecration, prepared as well as possible and recited on March 19th in union with the Father in charge of all our Franciscan Family, we will gather ourselves more resolutely under the protection of the first and most powerful Protector of the Church. Saint Joseph will then be as it were "forced" (and he will be so of course graciously and willingly) to protect us from the immense perils of the present hour. We can at the same time keep a supernatural and divine calmness of soul as was that of Our Lord sleeping peacefully in the boat agitated by the furious waves, and, at the same time, Saint Joseph will help us to see clearly, give us courage and the humility necessary for working and striving with efficacy and modesty at the post of combat, the place Providence has assigned us.

But we must remember that a Consecration is efficacious and fruitful only if it is prepared generously and then lived faithfully. A favored way to live (and to die...one day) under a special dependence of the Patron of the Universal Church, is by wearing the scapular of Saint Joseph, a devotion born in our Franciscan Family and which we must, more than ever, practice and propagate. Our Poor Clare Sisters continue to make them (at 2 Euros without tax if one orders them at the 'Procure Saint Jean' and a free will offering if one orders them directly from the Monastery of Saint Clare in Morgon), and a booklet recounting the origin of

this scapular and the graces attached to wearing it was edited this year (available at the 'Procure Saint Jean' in Morgon at the price of 6 Euros without tax).

Our confidence in Saint Joseph will never be disappointed.

“Because Saint Joseph is the Patron of the Universal Church, when we pray to him, ask him for great graces, and pray to him for the entire Church. Those who are not Catholic, in their prayers when addressing themselves to Saint Joseph, have not understood that this great Saint is the Universal Patriarch, the Patron of the whole Church. If you ask of him some small thing, even temporal, things you have at heart, that is not to be blamed: his goodness and tenderness calls for much simplicity; but we do him as injury if we limit ourselves to such prayers; it is not only for these sort of things, but for the eternal interests of our soul and of the souls of those dear to us, for the interests of the entire world, that he is ready, at every instant, to hear us. (Taken from Father Sauve, in 'Jesus Intime', III, 20th elevation).

May the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, perfect models of devotion to Saint Joseph, help us to be more Catholic and more Franciscan, and may they inspire in each of us the concrete ways of honoring Saint Joseph in his glorious Patronage over the Church.

We invite all our readers to make this solemn Consecration with us on March 19th. May you have a Holy Feast of Saint Joseph and a Joyous Easter at the end of the month of Saint Joseph!

Consecration of the Franciscan Family To Saint Joseph Patron of the Universal Church March 19, 2013

O Saint Joseph, most glorious Patron of the Universal Church, on this thy blessed Feast Day, we desire, as much as it is in our power, to honor thee, with all the joy of our heart and to give thee the greatest homage possible to a Saint. We come to express to thee our faith, our confidence, our filial love, and to consecrate ourselves solemnly to thee, supreme Protector of Holy Church.

We firmly believe all that Divine Revelation teaches us on thy role and thy prerogatives. We believe that thou art the “Husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus” (Matt. i.16) and we believe all of the marvelous consequences of this affirmation of the Gospel. We believe that being the chaste Spouse of the Mother of God and the virginal Father of Jesus-Christ, second Person of the Holy Trinity, thou hast the right to honors without equal among all the Saints. We believe that being destined in the Divine decrees to be the true head of the Holy Family, thou have received because of this, the role and title of Patron and of Protector of Holy Church, which is non other than “Jesus-Christ spread and communicated” and than “a extension in space and in time, of the home of Nazareth”. We believe that the Heavenly Father has confided to thee the two most precious treasures that one can imagine, Jesus and Mary, and has also confided to thee the role of Guardian of the great treasures of the Holy Church. Thou art the “Master and the Steward of all his goods”, and especially the Guardian of the Faith and of Catholic Doctrine in its integrity, of the authentic Magisterium, and the defender of the Holy Traditional Catholic Mass and of all the graces of which it is the incomparable source.

We have an invincible hope in thy help in these hours of darkness where, by a mysterious design of Divine Providence, the demons have unleashed themselves terribly against Holy Church. We have recourse to thee with an immense confidence.

The same as the holy Popes of modern times have lifted their eyes to thee, understanding that thou art always “the temporal providence of the children of God held at bay”, we make our cries of distress and of supplication mount towards thee in the trials without precedent that are going through the Church today. Despite thy silence and thy effacement, we know that thou dost conduct, with the hand of a master, all the events which regard the Holy Church and the entire world. One day, we will marvel at noting with how much efficacy thou hast worked in the smallest details of the life of the Church, despite thy extreme discretion. Thy patronage, we are certain, is universal and embraces the whole Church as well as each of our souls, and thou dost occupy thyself with all and everyone with an extreme care.

We love thee as a tender Father. We want to become, each day more and more, thy children that thou dost protect. We want to progress and grow in this way of spiritual childhood in thy regard, understanding that this would be for us a special title and a right to attract thy fatherly protection. The Divine Child has Himself given us a perfect example in this submission that He desires to see us imitate. Receive especially the filial homage of our whole Franciscan family. Remember that the children of Saint Francis have always professed a true devotion to thee. Remember that the Holy Pope who had the joy and the privilege to declare, in the face of the whole world, thy Patronage over the Church, belonged to the Third Order of Saint Francis; as well as the humble Religious who had the honor of getting approved and spread everywhere your scapular as one of the glories of the Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception.

Also, in order to be more faithful to our Seraphic traditions and by reason of the extreme dangers of the present hour, we come today, to confide ourselves with much joy to thy high Patronage. For that, we consecrate ourselves solemnly to thee, Saint Joseph Protector of the Universal Church. We consecrate to thee our three Franciscan Orders, our cord bearers and all the souls of which the salvation or the sanctification depends on us. We entrust ourselves to thee. Jealously guard this little portion of Holy Church which makes up our Franciscan family. Protect our growth in the interior life. Communicate to us thy purity, thy modesty and thy humility. Keep us as far from liberalism as from a bitter zeal, as far from the spirit of the world as from that presumption which is the beginning of a great fall. Conduct us to be workers of peace, without compromising with Catholic principle or the necessity of present doctrinal combat. Obtain for us all the calm, necessary to our sanctification. Help us to contribute, in subordination to thee, to the edification of the Mystical Body of thy virginal Son. Help us to generously offer thee the sufferings of soul and body that thou await from us for the exaltation of Holy Church. At last, conduct each one of us to make our own the prayer which was addressed to thee by another holy Third Order Pontiff: “All for Jesus, all for Mary, all in imitation of thee, O Patriarch Joseph, such will be my motto in life and in death. Amen”.

Saint Joseph and the Franciscan Order

For a century, the cult of Saint Joseph has expanded considerably, thanks to the impulse given by the Sovereign Pontiffs; but the glorious “Patron of the Universal Church” has already, for a long time, been the benevolent and venerated “Protector of the Seraphic Order” (The

Seraphic martyrology, in use with the Conventuals, gives this title to Saint Joseph: *Peculiaris universi seraphici Ordinis tutelariorum ac patroni* ~ Protector and special Patron of the whole Seraphic Order). He received, in the intimacy of the Franciscan cloisters, the testimony of a particular and filial devotion.

Let us conserve the tradition, the Franciscan spirit concerning the cult of Saint Joseph; let us stand under the standard of this Holy Patriarch, following all our Saints, in the middle of the Franciscan family; let us be guided by this word of order:

“Ite ad Joseph, Go to Joseph”, respect it, make it our own, live it, because to go to Joseph, is to find Jesus. (Extract from the Annals of the Third Order 1918, pages 63-64)

The cult of Saint Joseph, Protector of the Universal Church is spread throughout the entire Catholic world. His Feasts are solemnized: during the month of the Rosary, he is invoked after his holy Spouse, and in answer to the desires of the Sovereign Pontiffs, Christian souls never cease invoking him.

It hasn't always been like this. While the Church focused all its attention on Jesus and Mary to place in plain view the Divinity of the one and the admirable role of the other, she allowed the foster father of the Savior to remain discretely in the shadows. It was prudent and wise. But the hour must come where, according to the order ruled by God, devotion to Saint Joseph would be born, grow and progress more and more. The first devoted to Saint Joseph, as the first Apostles of his cult, were the Brothers Minor.

The glory of being the propagators of the cult of Saint Joseph goes to the Franciscan Order. Those not of the Order themselves admit it. In the martyrology of Arturius, we read that the Franciscan Order always had an extraordinarily affectionate devotion to the foster father of Jesus. In his turn, Father Patrignani, S.J., wrote: “The Order of Saint Francis has distinguished itself by the devotion which it has had since its beginning for Saint Joseph. This devotion is that of the whole Order sanctioned by the General Chapters. In 1399, that of Assisi ordained the celebration of the Feast of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Most Pure Virgin.” Another held in Salamanca fixes the Solemnity on March 19th: the day considered, it says, by serious authors as being that of his death.

Theologians, preachers and the Saints of the Order have zealously rivaled to celebrate his Glory. (Taken from the Priestly Review of the Third Order 1932, page 71)

The Seraphic Order of Saint Francis was one of the first to fix its regards and affections on Saint Joseph. How many resemblances are there between these two Saints, who so loved Jesus and Mary, and who each practiced supernatural love for humility and poverty, to such an eminent degree!

The Order of Saint Francis also distinguished itself since its beginnings by a filial devotion towards a Patron who would be so kind to it: “A General Chapter, held in 1399, says Father Patrignani, established the Feast and regulated the Office. Several other Chapters would successively add to the Solemnity of this Feast. It suffices to read that which Saint Bernadine of Sienna has written, with his tender devotion, touching Saint Joseph, to appreciate the veneration which the Order of Saint Francis held since then and has always nourished for him. But although the cult of Saint Joseph was already so flourishing in the Order, no one contributed more to spread it than Saint Pascal and Saint Peter of Alcantara during their work

in the reformation of the Province of Castile, in Spain. The holy reformer, wishing to give to this plant, still feeble, a teacher capable of sustaining and defending it, placed it under the patronage of Saint Joseph, to which he gave it the name, and he recommended his religious to honor him and invoke him as their Patron. Thus, while Saint Teresa of Avila worked for the glory of Saint Joseph in the Carmelite Order, Saint Peter of Alcantara obtained equal glory for him in the Franciscan Order.”

The Franciscan legends abound in marvelous traits of the protection of Saint Joseph towards this Order which is so dear to him. We must limit ourselves to citing one of the most remarkable:

Here is the story, such as it has been reported by the author of “The Glories of Saint Joseph” with touching naivety:

Two Religious of the Order of Saint Francis, traveling by boat (not far from the coast of Flanders), were surprised by a storm so violent, that in a very short time it broke the vessel which carried them into pieces, without leaving them any debris other than a piece of wood, to which they attached themselves as to the only source that Heaven gave them, with hope to prolong their life a little in order to prepare themselves for death, which seemed to them inevitable in this extremity. They passed three days and three nights in this danger, abandoned to the mercy of the waves, among other terrors which it is difficult to conceive without having experienced them: the thunder which sounded without ceasing over their heads, the flashes of lightening which surrounded them on all sides, the noise of the irritated waves which menaced them continually, gave them strange apprehensions; they believed that each moment would be the last of their life, and that the sea, which had already sunk their companions in its waters, would bury them in the same tomb. And truly, they would hundreds and hundreds of times have sunk to the bottom if Heaven, which had set them aside to be the subject of the great mercy of Saint Joseph after having been the object of his compassion, had not inspired them to ask the help of him who had too much goodness to reject them. Here they were then a little less overcome from the fear that had taken all other thoughts away but that of death. The first movement of their soul gave itself then to their protector Saint Joseph, who would not have left them so long in danger, if not to have soon remembered them; they prayed for his mercy, which they had experienced several times in the past; and if they asked life of him, it was not but to employ it from now on in his service with more fervor than they had ever done in the past.

Hardly had they finished their prayer than it was granted; the storm dissipated in an instant, the air became serene, the sea was appeased, the hope that these poor Religious conceived for their deliverance entirely chased away all fear; their spirit was reassured, they felt themselves to be fortified with an extraordinary vigor; but that which almost made them die of joy in this calm, after having been almost dead from fright in their torments, was the view of a perfectly beautiful young man, who presented himself to them with such courtesy, and who offered to serve them as guide and to bring them to safety.

As soon as they had arrived on land, their first care was to cast themselves at the feet of their liberator, whom they did not know and who they believed was an Angel dressed as a sailor. The respect that they gave him, the tears with which they showered his feet, the signs of affection that they made appear in his regard, the inviolable promises with which they engaged themselves to serve him and to publish everywhere his benefits, showed their

extreme gratitude, and were the sure testimony of the obligations which they felt they owed him. At last they pleaded with him to let himself be known by something other than his charity; their joy would not be complete, nor their gratitude perfect, as long as they were ignorant of his name; the ardor with which they sought to know who he was was born of the desire of loving him more, and to procure even more glory for him. This prayer was too civil and too just not to have been favored, and our Saint too good to have refused them a happiness much less than that which he had just given them in saving their life, said, "I am Joseph; if you desire to do something pleasing to me, let not a day pass without reciting seven times the Our Father and the Hail Mary, in memory of the seven sorrows with which my soul was afflicted, and seven other times in consideration of the seven joys with which I was greatly consoled, during the days that I passed on earth with Jesus and Mary." That said, he disappeared, leaving in the soul of these Religious his beautiful image, the sweetness of his name in their memory, and in their will a very ardent desire to serve him.

These poor men, who would have given more than their very selves, if they had anything more precious, not being able to offer him, after their selves, any greater tasks than that which the Saint had asked of their gratitude, started at once to do as he had prescribed to them, and ever since, they have spread this practice with a diligence equal to their affection. (Father Jacquinot of the Company of Jesus).

It was thus that the devotion to the Seven Sorrows and to the Seven Joys of the faithful companion of Jesus and Mary was revealed to us through the intervention of these disciples of Saint Francis. (Taken from the Story of Saint Joseph Patron of the Catholic Church, his life and his cult, by J.M. de Gaulle, 2nd edition 1877)

A little known document of the antiquity of the cult of Saint Joseph in the Order of Saint Francis:

Our readers will be happy to read this extract of a letter written from the Convent of Saint Francis of Mexico, on February 15, 1552, by the celebrated Peter of Gand, relative of Charles V and lay Brother in the Order of Saint Francis. This Religious, one of the first three who gave themselves to this Mission as soon after the conquest of Fernand Cortes, persevered in an extremely edifying life and, all alone, Baptized several hundreds of thousands of Indians.

"In this City of Mexico, he wrote to Charles V, in the interior of the cloister of our Convent of Saint Francis, there is a Chapel consecrated to Saint Joseph. It is the first Church which was built on this Continent. It was there that the Indians have not ceased, since the beginning, to receive Religious instruction that the Franciscans have given them. For myself, behold about thirty years have passed that I have been here working day and night in the midst of them. I hold myself continually at their side in a school next to the Chapel, and it is there that I teach them music and Gregorian chant, at the same time as the Catechism, because it has always been myself who has been more particularly given the charge to care for them. This Chapel of Saint Joseph has just been restored and put in a better condition..."

The fact that this was the first Chapel constructed on Mexican soil and on the American Continent, in honor of Saint Joseph, by the first Franciscan Missionaries of the New World, has appeared to us to be of interest to our readers and we are happy to be able to tell them. (Taken from "The Rosebush of Saint Francis of Assisi", 1912, page 70)

Retreat of the Month of April

Patron Saint of the Month:

Solemn Commemoration of Our Holy Father Saint Francis

Feast Day: April 16th

On this day Saint Francis of Assisi made his Profession, along with his twelve companions, from the hands of Pope Innocent III., in the year 1209. The Pontiff confirmed the Rule of Friars Minor, conferred the Deaconate on the Holy Founder and named him Minister General of the new Order. The Seraphic Order was thus approved by the Successor of Peter.

For the celebration of this sweet Anniversary, Pope Benedict XV. conceded to the sons of Saint Francis of Assisi, a special Feast, called the Solemn Commemoration of Our Holy Father Saint Francis.

Let us profit by this Anniversary by renewing ourselves in the spirit of Saint Francis. Let us ask our Father to make known to us his heart and to help us read therein what the love of God has put there of holy generosity.

Meditation

The Franciscan Spirit of Faith

It is at the feet of Our Lord, ever in adoration before His Father, that we go to prostrate ourselves to ask Him the secrets of a life constantly in God and with God; of a life all of Faith. We pray also for the help of Our Holy Father Saint Francis “the great believer”, the soul of whom Saint Paul speaks: “The just man lives by Faith”.

Under their gaze we reflect:

1. On the nature of the spirit of Faith.
2. On the Franciscan manner to practice it.

1st: The Nature of the Spirit of Faith.

The spirit of Faith is the supernatural habit that one’s soul contracts to see all in God, to live always with Him, to search for Him everywhere, never to forget Him; to appreciate everything from the Divine point of view only, all in charitably making place for human frailty, and never allowing oneself to escape from the action of the Presence of God, be it in the interior movement of one’s soul, or be it in exterior activities of one’s life. The acts of Faith in God are passing, rare or frequent; the life of the Faith or the spirit of Faith consists, on the contrary, in the continual fixation of this regard; it is a life realizing the words of the psalm: “Oculi mei semper ad Dominum - My eyes are ever towards the Lord.” (Psalm 24, v.15).

Human sensuality, always feverish to be satisfied, has found the ingenious way of keeping penetrated with the perfumes that she loves the most; she knows how to extract these perfumes from flowers which hold them, then, thanks to a long work of preparation, they are condensed, arranged in such a way that it is possible, because of their subtlety, to spread them everywhere, and to find everywhere their aroma: such is the spirit of Faith. Of all the dogmas of Faith, of all the Divine perfections, of all the mysteries of our Holy Religion, the soul extracts continually the stronger and more consoling truths; she carries them always in her, has them always at heart. On everything she casts its light, and these illuminations which are none other than rays of the beauty of the Truth of God penetrate everywhere, as the most subtle perfumes, gliding everywhere and thus God is recognized everywhere, always felt. It is the spirit of Faith, "the essence of Faith", I would say, if these two words could be united, which makes this prodigy.

Yes! Prodigy! It is a true one, given the peace and the happiness in which the soul that is filled with the spirit of Faith lives. Men can be disagreeable to her, the circumstances of life troubling; all can be reunited against her and impose on her incredible sufferings; in all this she sees nothing but the justice of God which avenges itself, and she generously submits to this expiation. The thousand incidents of life will always have a supernatural explanation for her, and the profound peace in which she lives will not be equaled but by the transports of joy that she feels at certain times when the beauty and the Divine bounty will appear to her in the beautiful spectacles of nature or in the happy events reserved by God for this soul of Faith. (By the Rev. Father Augustine - Annals of the third Order 1912, pages 101-102)

~ English Translation by Tertiary Sister Mary of Immaculate and Eucharistic Heart of Jesus ~

***We are trying to update the TOSF mailing list, if you know any of these names below, please help us to get their updated addresses. Also, if anyone is not on the list that should be, please let us know.**

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