

SPRING



# troubadour MAGAZINE

2025

Connecting Secular Franciscan Fraternities throughout our region.



Frances Acosta, OFS Editor

St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, Charlotte, NC

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## Bearing Spiritual Fruit

Lent is more than just giving up something temporarily. It serves as an homage to Jesus's 40 days spent fasting in the vastness of the desert. The overarching purpose of observing Lent is for Christians to prepare themselves for the joyful coming of Easter by fostering a closer relationship with God and sincerely repenting of their sins.

We are called to a deeper sense of conversion, a significant call to follow Christ with purpose, and a profound commitment to change our lives for the better. Lent possesses the remarkable power to radically reshape our priorities and focus in life, encouraging reflection and renewal. It is not merely about the act of abstaining from certain habits or items, but rather engaging in this practice with the sincere intention of nurturing spiritual growth and fostering a deeper understanding of one's faith journey. It is a call, a whisper, an action.

Francis heard this call, *"But when on a certain day the Gospel was read in [the church of the Portiuncula] how the Lord sent his disciples out to preach, the holy man of God, assisting there, understood somewhat the words of the Gospel; after Mass he humbly asked the priest to explain the Gospel to him more fully. When he had set forth for him in order all these things, the holy Francis, hearing that the disciples of Christ should not possess gold or silver or money; nor carry along the way scrip, or wallet, or bread, or a staff; that they should not have shoes, or two tunics; but that they should preach the kingdom of God and penance, immediately cried out exultingly: "This is what I wish, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart."*

Every single day presents a unique opportunity for us to serve and uplift others around us. Grab the towel and basin and take a moment to humbly wash the feet of another person, embracing the act of kindness and compassion that it represents. May this Lenten season bear great spiritual fruit and bring about profound transformation in our lives and communities.

*Jan*



Frances Acosta, OFS  
Founder of Stella Mundi Franciscan Ministry  
[stellamundi-ofs.org](http://stellamundi-ofs.org)



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**Regional Spiritual Assistant**



**Listen, Discern, Go Forth**

2022-2025 OFS-USA THEME



Minister

Our Lady of the Angels Region

cleoneofs@gmail.com

### Lent Through a Franciscan Lens

It's almost as if St. Francis lived his entire adult life as one continuous Lent with a focus on creation.

Scripture offers endless passages for us to contemplate God's creation. Genesis alone provides a wide picture of God as creator of man and of nature, and also a God who includes animals in the tale of redemption, as we see in Noah's Ark (GN 6-9).

For St. Francis, nature itself became a way to give glory to God. We can strive to see through the eyes of Francis, to view nature — the land, animals, resources and even the weather itself — as sacred and appreciate all of it, as he did.

In the spirit of Lent and of "Laudato Si'," and as Franciscans around the world celebrate the centenary of Francis' Canticle of the Creatures, we can listen for the voice of God. What does God want us to do to protect what he created?

St. Francis believed that he was a steward of creation, and he called all creatures his "sisters" and "brothers." We read in Isaiah 11:6-9: "Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them.



Graphic credit: Sisters of Charity Cincinnati

"The cow and the bear shall graze, together their young shall lie down; the lion shall eat hay like the ox ... they shall not harm or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea."

Franciscan spirituality views creation as a mirror of God's goodness. Lent becomes an opportunity to deepen a sense of interconnectedness with creation. St. Francis' "Canticle of the Creatures" celebrates all elements of creation—sun, moon, water, and earth—as siblings in God's family. In his Admonitions 2 and 5, Francis reminds us that we are created in God's image and likeness and are of considerable value in God's eyes, but he also chides us because we do not serve God as well as the other creatures do.

All of creation is special in God's eyes, but, for Francis, human beings often fall short of this mark. Why did Francis have a special relationship with the created world? Simplistically it is because God chose to walk this earth. It is because of the Incarnation that Francis feels a special affiliation with the created world.

During Lent, Franciscans may engage in acts of care for creation, such as planting trees, conserving water, or participating in advocacy for climate justice.

### Practical Actions for a Franciscan Lent Focused on Creation:

- Practice an eco-friendly fast (e.g., reduce energy use or avoid single-use plastics).
- Spend time outdoors in prayerful gratitude for creation.
- Support sustainable initiatives or donate to causes that protect the environment.
- Host or participate in community discussions about faith and ecology.

By living Lent through a Franciscan lens, believers embrace repentance not only in personal terms but also in how they relate to the created world, embodying St. Francis' vision of harmony with God, others, and nature.



Regional Spiritual Assistant

Our Lady of the Angels Region

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## Hope Springs Eternal

The theme for our 2025 Jubilee Year is "*Pilgrims of Hope*". At first glance we may quickly enumerate a list of hopes and dreams for a better world, society, family situations, and personal needs. But what about the **hopes** God has for us? What is God hoping we will do with the graces and opportunities that have been placed before us in our own particular time and setting? Every single man, woman and child in the world has a vocation, a unique calling from God to be fulfilled in the time given while on earth. Knowing our vocation, and striving to wholeheartedly respond to this calling is to embrace our truest identity. It is from this perspective that we derive our inherent dignity. To the extent that we claim our mission—our vocation—we align ourselves with the will of God and experience that inner peace and joy that the world cannot give.

There are three perspectives we can take—how others see us, how we see ourselves, and how God sees us. We tend to put great emphasis on the first. When pats on the back are many and words of support and acclamation surround us we bask in the light of attention. Riding the crest of human adulation may be exhilarating, but sooner or later we will find ourselves deposited on a sandbar. The crowd is forever fickle. We are foolish indeed if we invest our personal worth in the stock market of public opinion. The second, how we see ourselves, needs to be governed by the virtue of humility lest it be duped by exaggeration or shortsightedness to the point of being blind. Self-knowledge is a fundamental component in our spiritual and interpersonal life. The third, and truest, is how God sees us. To arrive at such a perception entails prayer, discernment, humility and a spirit of openness to the wonders of our Creator.

*In my Father's house there are many dwelling places; otherwise, how could I have told you that I was going to prepare a place for you? I am indeed going to prepare a place for you, and then I shall come back to take you with me, that were I am you also may be (Jn. 14:2-3). Now that is a hope sprung from the eternal!*

*Bro. Rod*





Regional Formation Director

Saint Anthony-Butler-NJ

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## Jubilee 2025 - Pilgrims of Hope



Throughout 2025, the Catholic Church is celebrating a Jubilee Holy Year, marking the 2,025th anniversary of the Incarnation of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Since ancient times, the Jubilee Year held great spiritual, ecclesial, and social importance for the Church. The concept of the Jubilee has its roots in the Book of Leviticus which describes it as a special year of reconciliation, pilgrimage, and returning home. Pope Francis has designated the Jubilee Year as an opportunity for us to renew ourselves as “Pilgrims of Hope.” It is a time of forgiveness, renewal, and spiritual revival, symbolizing a fresh start and a call to action. He has chosen the theme “Pilgrims of Hope” for this Jubilee Year, emphasizing the hope that we can cultivate in the face of global challenges such as war, poverty, respect for human life, and the pressing climate crisis.

The Jubilee Year officially began on December 24, 2024, when Pope Francis opened the Holy Doors at St. Peter’s Basilica. These sacred doors will remain open until the end of the Jubilee Year on January 6, 2026, inviting people from all walks of life to come and experience the spiritual renewal and hope that this special year embodies.

What is hope? Hope is more than naive wishful thinking, Deep within everyone’s heart, hope is a yearning and expectation of God’s love and providential care, even when the future remains uncertain. We often encounter individuals who are disheartened, pessimistic, and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them joy. For all Secular Franciscans, let the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope and “bearers of peace”, “bringing joy and hope to others”. We must “seek ways of unity and fraternal harmony” and trust in the “presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.” (see OFS Rule, Article 19)

How can Franciscans best celebrate the Jubilee? We can build up the Kingdom of God in our world. We can become messengers of hope to a broken and shattered world. We can discover hope in the signs of the times that the Lord gives us. We can recognize the overwhelming goodness that permeates our world, preventing us from succumbing to the temptation of feeling overwhelmed by evil and violence. We can gaze towards the future with hope, cultivating an enthusiasm for life and a willingness to share it with others.

During this Holy Year, Secular Franciscans can be beacons of hope for all people who face challenges. We can bring hope to the sick, whether at home or in the hospital. We can bring hope to migrants who leave their homes in search of a better life for themselves and their families. We can bring hope to the elderly, who often feel lonely and abandoned. We can “cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ” (OFS Rule, Article 17). In this Jubilee year, let us bring hope into the world and work together to strengthen the bond among all people no matter their situation in life. May we work together to make the world a place of genuine hope, eagerly waiting for God’s promises to come to fruition.

Pax et Bonum,

Ed



OBM-Pilgrims-Of-Hope-Shanil



Councilor, North Jersey

Most Holy Name, Little Falls NJ

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## “Prosperity Theology” vs. Franciscanism and JPIC

Amidst the flurry of executive activity since the presidential inauguration, there is one announcement you may have missed. President Trump has created a White House Faith Office and has appointed Pastor Paula White to lead this office.

In general, the inclusion of faith in public discourse is a good thing. However, in this instance, I believe that we as Catholics and Franciscans must be wary of this appointment. Because Paula White preaches a gospel that we would have a hard time recognizing.

The gospel of Paula White is known as “Prosperity Theology”. It was made famous by Oral Roberts and has since been popularized by modern televangelists such as Joel Osteen. Its practitioners cherry-pick specific scriptural passages, such as the Parable of the Talents, to arrive at the following principles:

- God wants us to be physically healthy and economically prosperous.
- Illness and poverty are curses that faith in God can break.
- The path to prosperity is through faith, petition (ask and you shall receive), and especially through donations to the church and its preachers. Oral Roberts used to preach that for any donations made to him, God would return to the donor seven-fold.

Prosperity Theology is a feature of many fast-growing Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations. It can be of particular allure to the poor. And no wonder! It is positive and upbeat. You can control your own destiny right here and now. Much easier on the digestive system than Catholicism, which deals with human suffering - one’s own suffering, and that of others. What fun is that?

Prosperity Theology is at odds with Catholic Social Teaching, which is at the core of JPIC. Here are just a few examples:

- A tenet of Prosperity Theology is that if you do something for God (through God’s self-appointed surrogates), God will do even more for you. It reduces God’s freely given grace to a purely transactional level.
- According to Prosperity Theology, anyone who adheres to its principles can be prosperous. If you aren’t, it’s your own fault.
- Since it’s your own fault, I have no obligation to help you. If I have any obligation to you at all, it is to correct your bad behavior, so that you may help yourself.

Clearly, Franciscans who are committed to work for justice (in other words, ALL Franciscans) have no room for Prosperity Theology in our spiritual lives.

It is uncertain what the scope of the White House Faith Office will be, and what role it will play in shaping government policy. But to the extent that it does have a role, I believe that as Franciscans, we have a duty to actively oppose it.

As Pope Francis has stated, “A good Catholic meddles in politics”.





## PROFESSIONS, ADMISSIONS & ELECTIONS, ETC

### Rite of Election

**The Little Portion Fraternity  
New Rochelle, NY**



**January 18, 2025**

Pictured are:

Virginia Ricca, Lisa Cornelius, Phil Papa, Diane Papa, Richard Spana and Fr. Andre Cirino, OFM, Spiritual Assistant

- Minister:** Philip Papa OFS
- Vice Minister:** Lisa Cornelius OFS
- Secretary:** Virginia Ricca OFS
- Treasurer:** Richard Spana OFS
- Formation Director:** Diane Papa OFS

Chris Leone OFS served as President of the Elections and Br. Rudolph Pieretti, OFM Cap served as Ecclesial Witness.

**Assumption Fraternity  
Wood - Ridge, NJ**

### Welcomes their Spiritual Assistant



**February 8, 2025**

*In the photo, left to right:  
Standing: Frank Catalano, OFS;  
Teresa Zito, OFS; Anna Buccini,  
OFS; John Buccini, OFS [behind  
Anna];  
Candidate Joan Van Lowe;  
Gerard Adubato, OFS [behind  
Joan]; Dr. Christopher L. Trause,  
OFS.*

*Seated: John J. Trause, OFS and  
Brother Rudolph Pieretti, OFM  
Cap.*

TAU-USA  
Winter  
2025

Hope

Hope

Hope

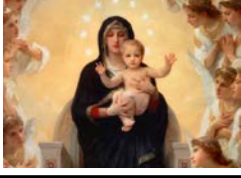
Hope

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**For the Winter Edition of the TAU-USA  
click on the image above**





## Hugo Bader

*Most Holy Name, Little Falls NJ*

### Thanks, Lord, for Listening,

I hate to complain, but it was just one heck of a day. I said to Jesus, it started out with a huge headache, and I felt like my head would explode. He said, "I had a pretty bad headache one day too." Plus, all the holiday shopping and frenzy, just made it worse. He said, "I remember one time when there was a lot going on for Me too". I shared that as I was getting into the car on the way to work, I picked up a branch in the driveway and got a splinter and boy did that hurt! He said, "I know the feeling."

As the day wore on and I was tiring, my back started to be really painful. He said, "Yup, I've been there." continued, did I mention that my Arthritis kicked in and I could barely move my fingers and hands? I heard Him sigh and He said, "I know exactly how that feels." And then because I'm on my feet a lot, I told him how they were killing me by the end of the day. He said, "my feet hurt a lot once as well."

Then, when I got home, I felt I deserved a little treat since I endured all these sufferings...right? And I was thirsty, so I opened a bottle of wine - a Chianti, poured a glass, said cheers, and took a delightful sip. He said, "I'm with you, I was really thirsty once too." So, I asked Him what he did to get through it all and without hesitation, He said "I thought of you."

## AFP Kozhipatt - 'Tony Paul'

*St Benedict the Moor Fraternity New York*

### Breadline to Living Bread



Last October, I stood on the altar of St Francis Church and professed to enter the St. Benedict Moor fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order. With me stood our minister, Paul Beelitz, and formation director Nancy and Doug Dugan, my fellow Franciscan brothers in this journey. A sense of joy rekindled in my heart as I stood amidst my fraternitas, family, and friends. The joy reminded me that moment of profession and acceptance as a Secular Franciscan was the end of the beginning in my lifelong Franciscan journey. A journey that entails living the gospel to serve the word incarnate in each of us. My mind flashed decades of memories of my journey that now led me to the altar of St Francis of Assisi and started at the St Francis breadline.

In 2001, my family and I settled in New York after my transfer from London, after years of job-related moves across the globe. My parents hailed from Kerala, India. The state of Kerala is where Christ's Apostle, St. Thomas, brought the Gospel after he traveled across the Arabian Sea spice route.

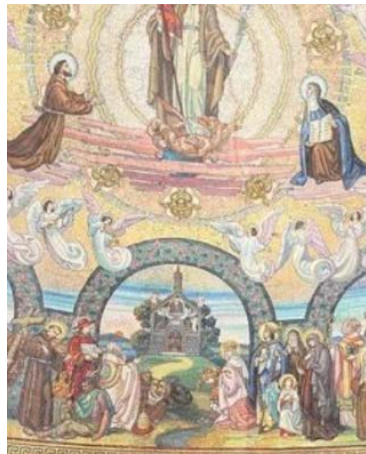
Continued on Page 8



(My grandmother is fourth from right)

Growing up as a cradle Catholic, my parents and elder sisters instilled and nurtured my faith. Jesuit school and college education strengthened my faith through their discipline and religious retreats. After our family moved to New York, I continued to experience the love of God at St Francis of Assisi parish on 31st Street. Over the years, it became a cornerstone for me and a much-needed stop before heading out to my evening suburban commuter LIRR train—my ‘chapel on wheels.’

At the urging of Fr. Lostritto OFM, one of my regular confessional encounters led me to the Breadline. St. Francis Breadline was my first stop before Mass and my subway ride to Wall Street for work for many years. On one of those cold New York mornings, I served at the PB&J station, sandwiched between Rob and Emily M. OFS. They discussed details of the Third Order formation and its connection to the Fraternity of St. Benedict Moor. As the world adapted to COVID protocols through online video sessions, Nancy Conroy OFS patiently and affectionately explained the mission and charism of the Secular Franciscan Order to me. The session offered a new perspective as I processed my grief over my sister Molly’s sudden passing. The dormant spirit of the Franciscan Third Order was kindled when my aunt, a Sisters of the Poor Clare religious order member, revealed that my grandfather and great-grandfather belonged to the Secular Franciscan Order. Additionally, my great uncles belonged to the Franciscan Capuchin order, one of whom became the first Catholic Bishop in the Kashmir region of India.



As I professed, I try to internalize the Franciscan spirituality and the rule. My aspirational goals are to:

- Live the Gospel and continuously draw inspiration to follow Christ in the path of St. Francis of Assisi.
- Be charitable in my own secular life in all encounters
- Remain obedient to the Holy Church, especially when challenged.
- Read the Gospel intentionally.
- Encounter each person as an extension of Christ in my brothers and sisters.
- Commune with Eucharistic fellowship as frequently as possible to become part of Christ’s living bread.

The fraternity has become like an extended family to me and is a vital part of my faith journey. The Breadline introduced me to the Living Bread, a secular fraternity that feels like home. We are the Body of Christ, united by the Eucharistic bread that nourishes and sustains each member, along with the beauty of nature and the Gospel that inspires us all.



AFP Kozhipatt – ‘Tony Paul’ is a published author and a member of St Benedict the Moor Fraternity New York, New York.





# SAVE THE DATE

## IMPORTANT REGIONAL DATES

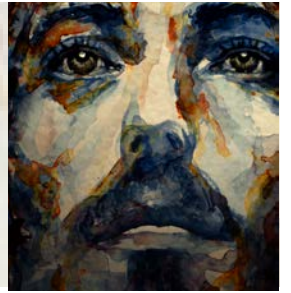
DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	GUEST SPEAKER
Saturday <b>March 29</b>	<b>Convivenza</b> 9am-2:30pm	<b>St. Francis Church Hall</b> 50 Lodi Street, Hackensack, NJ	Fr. Martin Schratz, OFM Cap
Friday-Sunday <b>August 1-3</b>	<b>Annual Retreat</b>	<b>Mt. Alvernia Retreat Center</b> Wappingers Falls, NY	Fr. Greg Friedman, OFM
Saturday <b>October 18</b>	<b>30th Anniversary of the Region</b> 11am Mass followed by a reception in San Damiano Hall	<b>St. Francis Church</b> 135 W 31st Street NYC	
Saturday <b>November 8</b>	<b>Regional Chapter</b> 9am - 3pm including a visitation from National	<b>St. Francis Church Hall</b> 50 Lodi Street, Hackensack, NJ	





# Lenten

## RESOURCES




### Arts & Faith: Lent



Enter into a visual prayer experience this Lent. Each week will bring a new video commentary about a work of art inspired by the Sunday Scriptures. Use these videos to take a new look at this season of spiritual renewal through the lens of sacred art.

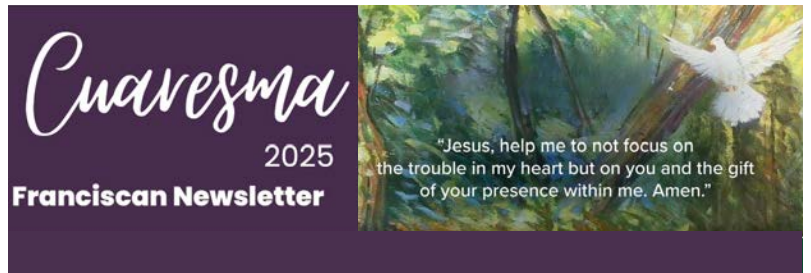
#### Cycle C: Lent 2025

- [Arts & Faith: Ash Wednesday III](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Week 1 of Lent, Cycle C](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Week 2 of Lent, Cycle C](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Week 3 of Lent, Cycle C](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Week 4 of Lent, Cycle C](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Week 5 of Lent, Cycle C](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, Cycle C](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Holy Thursday III](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Good Friday III](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Holy Saturday, Cycle C](#)
- [Arts & Faith: Easter Sunday III](#)

Click on the links 

LOYOLAPRESS.

Secular Franciscan Order



*Cuavresma*  
2025  
Franciscan Newsletter

"Jesus, help me to not focus on the trouble in my heart but on you and the gift of your presence within me. Amen."

A weekly newsletter compiled using various books and online resources to help you celebrate the season prayerfully.

**For a full experience of these Lenten resources, purchase the recommended books through the publisher or Amazon.**



FIRST WEEK OF LENT

"I turn myself over to you today, ready to receive what you have to offer me, which is nothing less than your very life. Amen."



SECOND WEEK OF LENT

"Heavenly Father, your image is impressed upon my heart. Everywhere I go, you are with me. Help me to remember that I am never alone. Amen."



THIRD WEEK OF LENT

"Give me courage to embrace the truth of my life that is revealed in the light of your love and to move with confident hope that you will help me become more like you. Amen."



FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

"Lord, it is only by your wounds that I am healed. Help me to see your glory in my wounds and to grow every closer to you. Amen."




FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

"Jesus, font of the Father's mercy, you are a life-giving stream poured out for the world. Open me that I might become a font of love too. Amen."



HOLY WEEK

"God of love, you sent your Son into the world so that we could be partakers in your divine life. Help me to enter fully into this mystery during Holy Week and to accept all that you wish to teach me. Amen."

For access click on the week 



STELLA MUNDI  
Franciscan Ministry



# ARE YOU A WEBMASTER?

The Regional Executive Council believes it is time to update our website – [ourladyoftheangelsregion.org](http://ourladyoftheangelsregion.org).

## WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

A person who manages a website, including its content, design, and technical aspects. They are responsible for ensuring that the website is functional, up-to-date, and meets the goals of the region.

## RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Content management:** Create, approve, and maintain content such as articles, photos, videos and resources
- **Design:** Recommend site design and functionality features
- **Technical management:** Site maintenance and error resolution
- **Performance monitoring:** Track the website's performance, visits, speed, and functionality
- **Updates:** Make updates to ensure the site aligns with the region's and Order's goals



**If you or someone you know has expertise in this area, have them contact Chris Leone, OFS at [cleoneofs@gmail.com](mailto:cleoneofs@gmail.com).**

# FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION



## Calling for articles, poems, event photos

THE TROUBADOUR is a quarterly communication vehicle published by Our Lady of the Angels Region. It is published digitally.

The electronic format of The Troubadour is published quarterly: Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. It is available for downloading on our Regional website.

To become a subscriber, you must be an active, professed member, or candidate in formation of our region, and your complete e-mail address must be registered in our database.

Wherever you see the spirit of Saint Francis at work in the world, in your lives, in your fraternity, in its members, and in your hearts we want to hear from you. Come, share with us.

### PUBLICATION DEADLINES:

All submissions for the next issue of The Troubadour, Summer 2025, are due to the Editor: [smfranciscanministry@gmail.com](mailto:smfranciscanministry@gmail.com) by **May 15th**.

### ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS:

- The right to copy all material printed in The Troubadour is granted provided you credit the Troubadour and author.
- When submitting articles for publication consideration, please state fraternity name and location, as well as your name and address.
- Photos are limited to 2 or 3. Some submitted photos will be used.

Because of our magazine article regional submission requirements, I am limited in the number of accepted submissions. Therefore, not all articles, poems or event images can be published in the current edition. I will give consideration for future publication.

## Franciscan Resources



Scan to visit our Region homepage



GOSPEL-TO-LIFE-Bookstore



OFS USA Website



TAU PUBLISHING Bookstore

Click on icon to visit webpage

## Inspirational SAINTS

### ST. FRANCES OF ROME



1384- March 9, 1440  
FEAST DAY: March 9

*Hope everything from the mercy of God; it is as boundless as His power".  
St. Frances of Rome*

Born into a wealthy family in Rome, was a devoted wife who, despite being married young, dedicated her life to serving the poor and sick, particularly during times of war and plague, eventually founding a lay order of women called the Oblates of Mary with her husband's support; her story is marked by her deep faith, ability to endure hardship, and a reported vision of her guardian angel who guided her throughout her life.

### Reflection (Franciscan Media)

*Looking at the exemplary life of fidelity to God and devotion to her fellow human beings which Frances of Rome was blessed to lead, one cannot help but be reminded of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, who loved Jesus Christ in prayer and also in the poor. The life of Frances of Rome calls each of us not only to look deeply for God in prayer, but also to carry our devotion to Jesus living in the suffering of our world. Frances shows us that this life need not be restricted to those bound by vows.*

