



# The Marian

The Inaugural Issue

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A Newsletter Published  
By St. Anthony's Guild

Dear Friends of The Blessed Mother,  
Welcome to our new quarterly newsletter: The Marian. On August 15th, The Franciscan Friars will be celebrating The Feast of the Assumption. This feast day, commemorating Mary's death and her Assumption into heaven, is viewed by many as Mary's divine birthday – it is not only a Holy Day of Obligation, it is also one of the most important Marian feasts that is celebrated every year. This feast day allows us to reflect on the divine nature of the Virgin Mary and serves as a reminder to

all that there is a place in heaven for God's truly faithful. The Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province will be praying for you, as always, on this special feast day. We hope you enjoy celebrating the feast wherever you may be and please enjoy our special newsletter honoring the Blessed Mother.

Yours faithfully,  
Fr. David Convertino, OFM  
Executive Director, St. Anthony's Guild

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## Through The Lens of a Friar

*Fr. Michael Reyes, OFM was ordained in 2016 and is now ministering to the people of Sacred Heart Parish in Tampa FL. Here is his story.* "I first came in contact with the Friars at St. Francis Church in NYC. I was working in the city and often stopped in at St. Francis for daily mass and confessions. The welcoming presence of the Friars and their ability to bring Christ in the middle of the City inspired and encouraged me to answer God's call."

"I was professed and then ordained in 2016. But during those years of formation, I was lucky to be stationed at a few ministries of the Province: Allegany, NY; Boston, MA; Wilmington, DE; Silver Springs, MD; Tampa, FL; Roxbury, MA; all of them great bastions of Franciscan services. I am now ministering to the people of Sacred Heart Parish in Tampa, FL."



## A Marian Fact

According to various historical documents, September 8, 20BC, is the birthday of Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ.



"Being an artist, I always enjoy being able to share my gifts and talents in ministry. Whether it is leading a retreat using sacred images/icons or giving a presentation about liturgical art, or teaching a painting class for groups of parishioners, I always feel grateful and fulfilled whenever I can incorporate art with my ministry."

*You can read more about our Friars each month in our monthly Novena's to St. Anthony. Each month a new Friar will be your Partner-in-Prayer and you can send him your special intentions for that month.*



## Our Lady of Lourdes, The Grotto at Siena College

Back in the Fall of 2014, The Grotto at Siena College was officially opened. The Grotto is modeled after the famous shrine in Lourdes, France where, in the 19th century, the Blessed Mother appeared to a 14-year-old peasant girl who would later become St. Bernadette. Siena's grotto incorporates the spirit of the original with a miniature stream and candles sheltered under a stone arch. The water feature is intended to remind people of the constant need to be refreshed, renewed and cleansed, while the candles symbolize light and the search for truth.



The Grotto at Siena College includes a statue of Mary from the original Siena grotto that was dedicated in 1947 in remembrance of veterans and those

who had fallen in World War II, including 36 Siena men who made the supreme sacrifice. Statues of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi and St. Bernardine of Siena are also included in the new Grotto's design.

The creation of this sacred space for prayer, contemplation, healing and peace on the Siena campus took 15 years to complete, and could not have been accomplished without the generosity of alumni and friends of the College.

Fr. Larry Anderson, OFM, the Siena College chaplain, spoke about the significance of the Grotto on the Siena campus. "The Grotto has become a beloved and important place of focus for students, faculty and the



entire Siena community. It is a place for people to pray and reflect either on their own or as a group.”

Siena College regularly hosts special events and observances at the Grotto, including a Freshman Orientation prayer service, Blessing of the Athletes, an annual All Souls Day reading of the names of deceased friends and relatives; an Earth Day prayer service and other events throughout the academic year.

Last year’s Senior Class gift was the creation of a fund designated for the purchase of votive candles for the Grotto. (The Senior Class gift in 2014 was to help fund actual construction of the Grotto.)

The Grotto has also become a favorite spot for wedding

photos of Siena alumni who are married in the College chapel or elsewhere in the area. While Siena College students, faculty, staff and administrators can enjoy the peaceful setting as part of their Siena lives, the Grotto is open to the public. The Grotto at Siena College is located on Turchi Road directly across from the turf athletic field behind the Fr. Benjamin Kuhn, OFM House.



## Assumption Customs

There are a variety of local, regional and national customs associated with the Feast of the Assumption on and around August 15th each year. Here’s some history and a few European customs around the Assumption:

During the first millennium of the Christian era, the Feast of the Assumption was of enormous importance to most people, since it marked the crowning point of the agricultural year. For many centuries, before [farming produced two harvests a year], there was only one harvest which was reaped in July. The feasts of Lammas (the blessing of the first loaves at the beginning of August) and the Assumption (August 15th) therefore marked out the period of harvest festivities. These feasts, continued to be celebrated even after the harvesting period had been moved to slightly later in the year.

In Scotland, the Feast of the Assumption – St. Mary’s Day, or Marymass – was the most important of the Marian feasts, and the ritual Lammas bannock (the new bread) would be dedicated to Mary Mother. In some places people would make pilgrimages on August 15th to holy wells dedicated to Our Lady.

The cuisine of Ferragosto, the holiday of August 15th in Italy, reflects the simplicity of summer cuisine there. Dishes are quite fresh, with carpaccio, seafood, produce, and small plates of olives and cured meats and cheeses. Chicken with peppers is a popular lunch for Ferragosto, as well as a focus on numerous fresh vegetables.

At the traditional Festa dell’Assunta, to celebrate the Assumption of Mary, people would normally eat a traditional fish lunch in restaurants. Additionally, to celebrate the abundant harvest, typical dishes at

Ferragosto include wheat or spelt, as well as fresh fruit. My grandmother used to make an Assumpta Salad to commemorate the Feast. My mother still makes this salad today and I am sharing the recipe so that you and your loved ones can enjoy it at your table too on the Feast of the Assumption.

### Assumpta Salad

- 8 medium-size ripe tomatoes, sliced
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup pitted black olives, drained
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh oregano
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1 cup cubed feta cheese

#### Vinaigrette

- 1/2 cup plus 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 5 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

#### Directions:

Whisk the vinaigrette ingredients together until thickened. Let stand for about 1 hour before using to steep the garlic. For the salad, arrange tomato slices on 6 to 8 salad plates. Sprinkle the onion and olives among them. Sprinkle the herbs evenly, then add the cheese cubes in the middle of each dish. Whisk vinaigrette just before serving and drizzle evenly over each plate. Serve immediately.

## A Daily Reflection From Coffee With Mary

*I’m Filled with Gratitude.  
Mary, the weather is  
beautiful and I’m filled  
with gratitude for my  
good mood, my positive  
energy and the  
kindnesses that have been  
shown to me today.*



Alleluia! God’s grace works in large and small ways. Even on those days when everything seems to conspire against you, life is still a great gift. Cultivating a grateful heart can keep you going through hard times, and make

you even more appreciative of good days like today. Since today has made you aware of many blessings, I invite you to join with me in praying some of the words of praise I proclaimed when I visited my cousin Elizabeth, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name.” **Luke 1:46-47,49**

If you would like to read more daily prayers with Mary, you may order our book for a suggested donation of \$5.00 at [www.thefranciscanstore.org](http://www.thefranciscanstore.org) or order by phone at 1-(646)-564-3624.



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