



# The Marian

A Newsletter Published  
By St. Anthony's Guild

Dear Friends of Our Blessed Mother,

With Spring and warmer weather upon us, we are going outside more providing us a much-needed respite after the long winter. We hope that you and your loved ones are well and feel some relief as more and more people are being vaccinated. Finally, we can enjoy seeing loved ones we have not seen since the pandemic began a little over a year ago.

May 23rd starts the season of Pentecost, which is the longest of the liturgical seasons. Pentecost concludes the Easter season and celebrates the birth of The Church. It is a celebration of a new beginning for all, whether for the new church, renewal of spirit within oneself, or a celebration of the Holy Spirit giving God's wisdom to the disciples. Now more than ever, we could all use a fresh start. The Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province wish all of our St. Anthony's Guild Members a wonderful new beginning and we will continue to pray for an ending of the ongoing pandemic.

To New Beginnings,

Fr. David Convertino, OFM

Executive Director, St. Anthony's Guild

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## *A Marian Fact*

The term for Mary, known as "Mother of God," appears within the oldest known prayer to Mary, the hymn known as the "Sub tuum praesidium," which dates back to around AD 250.



## *Through The Lens of a Friar*

### *Fr. Jacek Orzechowski, OFM*



Fr. Jacek Orzechowski, OFM shares his personal story of becoming a Franciscan Friar and being part of Holy Name Province. Here is his story: Born and raised in Poland, I grew up in an environment steeped in a rich Catholic tradition. I recall spending my summer vacation as a boy at my grandparent's house out in the country and waking up early in the morning to the sounds of my grandmother singing her morning prayers. I remember the Corpus Christi processions in my hometown and how I would walk with tens of thousands of people singing religious songs along the main street of this city. In my family life, in the popular religiosity and Polish patriotism, God began to sow the seeds of my Franciscan vocation.

In 1987, a few years before the collapse of communism, my family emigrated from Poland to Italy. We lived there as refugees for more than a year. I worked cleaning the cars' windshields at one of Rome's busy intersections with my squeegee and bottle of water in hand. In retrospect, that experience was significant in shaping my present Franciscan identity. It helped me to be more compassionate and more humble. More than once, an Italian man or woman would stop at the intersection and hand me a few coins without wanting to have their car windshield cleaned in return. I wouldn't say I liked it, but it taught me a lesson in accepting my vulnerability and poverty, and that I can count on people's goodness.

My family settled in Connecticut, where I entered a diocesan minor seminary. In my last year there, one of my fellow seminarians introduced me to the Franciscan friars at St. Patrick-St. Anthony Parish in Hartford. I was impressed by how down-to-earth and welcoming the friars were and by their outreach ministry.

Though I had a great experience at the diocesan seminary, in the end, I joined Holy Name Province. I guess you can say it was providence and that God's finger was guiding me. Why did I stay despite periodical self-doubts about whether I had what it takes to be a good friar? I stayed because I could lean on my Franciscan brothers in these difficult times, especially on my two classmates.

I have had lots of surprises in my Franciscan journey. One of the most amazing things is how powerfully I have been challenged to grow in the Franciscan way of life by people outside the Franciscan Order. For example, I have been involved in the Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation. This involvement has brought me into contact with people of diverse faith traditions.

Their witness has inspired me to know about the Franciscan view of creation and try to embody and live it. In a similar vein, I have been spiritually stretched and inspired by what I have witnessed through my participation in a Christian Peacemaking Team delegation to Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Among other things that have invigorated me on my Franciscan journey is being involved with other friars and lay Franciscans in addressing justice, peace, and the integrity of creation through public witness and advocacy.

Whenever I come across another Franciscan at a Respect for Life March in Washington, D.C., or at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days, or a rally in support of the immigration reform, I rejoice. What advice would I give to someone considering the Franciscan way of life? Join the Franciscan movement and allow yourself to be challenged by faith that is real. You will find a deeper meaning in life, joy, and the powerful touch of God's Spirit.

## 5 Reasons to Honor The Blessed Mother in May

It has been a long-standing Catholic tradition to honor The Blessed Mother in May. This tradition dates back to the ancient Greeks who dedicated May to Artemis, the goddess of fertility. Romans also claimed May to honor Flora, the goddess of blossoms. They celebrated "floral games" at the end of April and petitioned Flora's intercession for all that blooms. In medieval times, a tradition arose of expelling winter at this time of year, since May 1st was considered the start of new growth.



During the 11th century the idea of giving the month of May to Mary began with an old tradition, the "30-Day Devotion to Mary," which was initially held from August 15 to September 14. During the month, special devotions to Mary were organized, and this custom, which began in Italy, eventually spread elsewhere.

We honor Mary as Jesus' mother and the most important woman in our religion. Here are five reasons to celebrate Mary during May:

**Mary Is Jesus' Mother:** She is the Incarnation instrument and made it possible for our Lord to become the man who was crucified for our salvation.

**Mary Is The First and Most Perfect Disciple:** Mary was the first to hear the Good News and the first to follow Christ: Her entire life was devoted to Him and assisting Him, in whatever way she could, to carry on His mission. Unaffected by Original Sin, she was able to open herself to God's will perfectly.

**Mary Is Our Mother Too:** Since we are all members of the Body of Christ and she gave birth to that Body, then she's our mother, too. She may not have given birth to us physically, but she certainly has given birth to us spiritually.

**Mary Loves Us More Than You Can Ever Imagine:** If she did not, would she have endured the horror of seeing her Son tortured, scourged, crowned with thorns, carry the Cross to Calvary, and die a gruesome death on it? She did it for all of us because she understood that Jesus' Passion and Crucifixion was the way to our salvation.

**Mary Is An Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix:** Her role began when she conceived Jesus in her womb and continues until this Day. As the first and most perfect disciple, she is devoted to accompanying Him and interceding for us so that we may receive the gifts of eternal salvation. She is there for us all the time, whenever we need it.

## History of Children's Day in the United States

Mother's Day and Father's Day are well-known occasions celebrated throughout many countries, but did you know that there is a special occasion to celebrate our Nation's children in June? Children's Day is now celebrated on the second Sunday in June, but the history of this special Day dates back to the mid-1800s, before Mother's and Father's Day were observed.



In 1856 when Rev. Charles H. Leonard, D.D., the then pastor of the First Universalist Church of Chelsea, Massachusetts, set apart a Sunday to honor children and named it "Children's Day". He wanted this day to be observed as an occasion for Christian children to commit to their religion with a prayer service. Parents and guardians then promised to raise their children as proper Christians. On the second Sunday in June 1856, the first Children's Day service was observed.

By the mid to late 1800s many other denominations passed resolutions recommending Children's Day observance on the second Sunday in June. However, Children's Day didn't catch on despite many churches' efforts over the years and remained a dream. This changed when President Bill Clinton proclaimed November 16th as Children's Day in October 2000. He declared that it be held on this date henceforth.

On June 3rd, 2001, President George W. Bush proclaimed National Child's Day as a national holiday to be held each year in early June. President Bush said: "Every child in every neighborhood has unique gifts to offer. We must nurture our children's dreams, help them develop their talents and abilities, and ensure their healthy development to reach their full potential. Our success in this vital endeavor will affect the direction of their lives and the future strength and vitality of our Nation."

He encouraged all Americans to share in the mission of preparing young people for life's challenges and opportunities. He said, "by reading to youngsters, listening to their cares and concerns, and providing them with safe and loving homes, we can make a positive and lasting contribution to their health, happiness, and well-being."

Today, numerous churches observe Children's Day on the second Sunday in June, and Children's Day revives, celebrates, and commits to better the future and support of the children of the United States. This year, Children's Day is June 16th. Let this day serve as a reminder for parents and guardians to acknowledge the importance of spending time with their children and redirecting their lives as a family.



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