

DECEMBER 2017



Welcoming our inquirers – Rene & John Roberts

### MINISTER'S MESSAGE

We all know that St. Francis, in his joy for Jesus, set up the first creche. As we prepare our homes for Christmas and when we unwrap our mangers from storage, to place it in its place of honor, let's think about St. Francis, the first living manger, and all the love that flowed from his heart for Our Lord. When we're at our parish churches and the nativity is set up, again let's think of St. Francis first creche.

May our love for Jesus be increased as we ponder all this in our hearts. At our December meeting please bring your Christian prayer book. If you ordered one please bring your checkbook. Our formation time will be spent learning how to pray using this book, and here in the village chapel we will start using this the next morning.

Morning prayer is prayed in the chapel Monday through Saturday at 8:30 a.m. If you come to Mass here occasionally, and if you are able, please come and pray with your fraternity.

Please feel free to bring some extra special Christmas goodies to our December meeting!

Merry Christmas to all of you and your families!

Let us keep each other in prayer. Pax et bonum, Sue



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#### FRATERNITY OFFICERS

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**Regular Meetings - Second Sunday of the Month – Starting at 2 pm in the St Francis Village Chapel**  
**Please feel free to bring a snack – if you are not able – come anyway as there is always plenty.**  
**Council Meetings – Second Sunday of the Month – Starting at 12:30 pm in the St Francis Village TV Room**  
**Formation Meetings – Second & Third Saturdays of the Month – Starting at 10 am in St Francis Village Dining Room**



## MONTH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The month of December (Overview - Calendar) is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "From all eternity God chose with infinite wisdom the woman who would be the Mother of His divine Son. To prepare for the Word Incarnate a spotless and holy tabernacle, God created Mary in grace and endowed her from the moment of her conception with all the perfections suited to her exalted dignity. St. Thomas teaches that through her intimacy with Christ, the principle of grace, she possessed beyond all creatures a fullness of divine life." — Liturgical Meditations, The Sisters of St. Dominic

This feast invites us to meditate on the virtue of purity.

"Mary alone — 'our tainted nature's solitary boast'— never saw her soul's purity darkened with the dust of any stain, nor did she see in any part of her triumphal course toward heaven any sin or trace of worldliness. By a unique and singular privilege from God she was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her Immaculate Conception; by another privilege derived from the first, the Lord did not permit her ever to be stained even with those unavoidable failings of human weakness." — Luis M. Martinez



## Novena of the Immaculate Conception

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which is profoundly influential among the faithful, is an occasion for many displays of popular piety and especially for the novena of the Immaculate Conception. There can be no doubt that the feast of the pure and sinless Conception of the Virgin Mary, which is a fundamental preparation for the Lord's coming into the world, harmonizes perfectly with many of the salient themes of Advent. This feast also makes reference to the long messianic waiting for the Saviour's birth and recalls events and prophecies from the Old Testament, which are also used in the Liturgy of Advent.

The novena of the Immaculate Conception, wherever it is celebrated, should highlight the prophetic texts which begin with Genesis 3, 15, and end in Gabriel's salutation of the one who is "full of grace" (Lk 1, 31-33) — Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy

EXCERPTS FROM [https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/overviews/months/12\\_1.cfm](https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/overviews/months/12_1.cfm)



## FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE (DEC 12)

In 1910 Our Lady of Guadalupe was declared Patroness of Latin America, and in 1945 Pope Pius XII declared Her to be the Empress of all the Americas. She appeared to an Indian convert named Juan Diego on December 9, 1531. She left a marvelous portrait of herself on the mantle of Juan Diego. This miraculous image has proved to be ageless, and is kept in the shrine built in her honor, the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

### Our Lady of Guadalupe

"Hear me and understand well, my son the least, that nothing should frighten or grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under my protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything." — Our Lady to Juan Diego

In the winter of 1531, a poor, 57-year-old Aztec Indian living five miles outside of Mexico City encountered a miraculous happening on his way to morning Mass. First he heard strange music coming from Tepeyac Hill, and then he heard a woman's voice calling his name. Juan Diego climbed the hill and encountered a young woman, appearing to be of his own people in physical appearance and dress. The woman identified herself as the Virgin Mary, and told Juan Diego to ask the bishop of Mexico City to build a church on the hill to assist in the conversion of the nation and be a source of consolation to the people.



Juan Diego obeyed the request, but the bishop was skeptical regarding the message, even though he perceived that Juan was a humble, and well meaning Catholic. Juan reported the bishop's doubt to Our Lady at Tepeyac Hill, and she asked him to return to the bishop once again, bearing the same message. The bishop once again heard the story, and told Juan Diego to ask Our Lady for a sign that it was indeed herself that wished for the church to be built.

When he returned to the hill, Mary gave Juan Diego such a sign. Miraculously, roses appeared on the hill in the middle of winter, and Juan gathered them in his tilma, or cloak. Our Lady arranged the roses in his tilma with her own hands, and Juan returned to the bishop's presence. When Juan released the tilma, allowing the flowers to fall to the floor, it was revealed that a miraculous image of Our Lady had imprinted itself on his tilma. The bishop immediately fell to his knees, and came to believe in Juan Diego's message. A church was built on the spot of the apparition, as Mary had requested, and 8 million people converted to Catholicism in a short period of time upon hearing of or viewing the miraculous image of Our Lady.

The tilma of Juan Diego has been the subject of much modern research. The tilma, woven out of coarse cactus fiber, should have disintegrated after 20 years, but although over 500 years have passed the tilma is still in perfect condition. The pupils of Mary in the picture reflect the Indians and clergy present at the time of the first revelation of the image. No paint was used, and chemical analysis has not been able to identify the color imprint. Additionally, studies have revealed that the stars on Mary's mantle match exactly what a Mexican would have seen in the sky in December of 1531.

EXCERPTS FROM <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2017-12-12>



## REASON FOR THE SEASON

The month of December is filled with expectation and celebration. Preparation is the key word for the first 24 days of December. Everyone is getting ready for Christmas — shopping and decorating, baking and cleaning.

Too often, however, we are so busy with the material preparations that we lose sight of the real reason for our activity.

Christmas is a Christian feast — and we must reclaim it as such! In the same way that a family eagerly prepares for a baby, so in Advent should we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child.



We should keep Advent as a season of waiting and longing, of conversion and of hope and keep our thoughts on the incredible love and humility of our God in taking on the flesh of the Virgin Mary. Let us not forget to prepare a peaceful place in our hearts wherein our Savior may come to dwell.

The best person we can turn to for help during Advent is Mary, Christ's and our Mother. She awaited the day of His birth with more eagerness than any other human being.

Her preparation was complete in every respect. Let's crown our preparation and borrow something of Mary's prayerfulness, her purity and whole-hearted submission to God's will..

*Excerpt* <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/overviews/months/12.cfm>

## Franciscan Connections

### NATIONAL FRATERNITY SFO

<https://www.nafra-sfo.org/>

### LOS TRES CAMPAÑEROS REGIONAL

<http://lostrescompaneros.org/>

### INTERNATIONAL FRATERNITY

<http://www.ciofs.org/>

### FRANCISCAN RULE

<https://www.nafra-sfo.org/OFSrule.html>

### GENERAL CONSTITUTIONS

<https://www.nafra-sfo.org/GC2000.doc>

### NAFRA STATUTES

[https://www.nafra-sfo.org/OFS\\_National\\_Statutes\\_FINAL\\_07\\_24\\_13\\_OFS\\_withSignatures.pdf](https://www.nafra-sfo.org/OFS_National_Statutes_FINAL_07_24_13_OFS_withSignatures.pdf)

### NAFRA GUIDELINES

<https://www.nafra-sfo.org/NationalOFSGuidelines/>

### TAU – USA (SUMMER 2017)

[http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/summer17/Issue\\_Num\\_92\\_sum\\_17.pdf](http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/summer17/Issue_Num_92_sum_17.pdf)

### VOX – INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

[http://www.ciofs.org/portal/images/Circ\\_PDF/VoxFranciscana/EN\\_Vox\\_Franciscana\\_2\\_Spring\\_2017.pdf](http://www.ciofs.org/portal/images/Circ_PDF/VoxFranciscana/EN_Vox_Franciscana_2_Spring_2017.pdf)

### THE FRANCISCAN ARCHIVE

<https://franciscan-archive.org/index2.html>



## Franciscan Calendar – December /Advent / Christmas

- 01. Blessed Charles de Foucauld
- 02. Blessed Rafal Chylinski
- 03. Saint Francis Xavier
- 04. Saint John Damascene
- 05. Saint Sabas
- 06. Saint Nicholas
- 07. Saint Ambrose
- 08. **Solemnity of Immaculate Conception**
- 09. Saint Juan Diego

**Formation Meeting – Dining Room @ 10 am**

- 10. Blessed Adolph Koplring

**Council Meeting – TV Room @ 12:30 pm**

**Fraternity Meeting – Chapel @ 2 pm**

- 11. Saint Damaus I
- 12. Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 13. Saint Lucy
- 14. Saint John of the Cross
- 15. Blessed Mary Frances Schervier

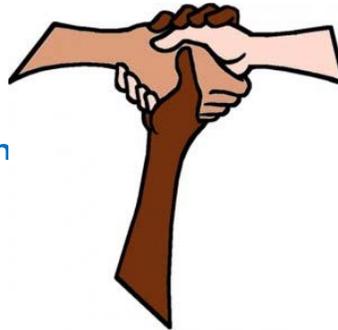
- 16. Blessed Honoratus Kozminski

**Formation Meeting – Dining Room @ 10 am**

- 17. Saint Hildegard of Bingen
- 18. Blessed Anthony Grassi
- 19. Blessed Pope Urban V
- 20. Saint Dominic of Silos
- 21. Saint Peter Canisius
- 22. Blessed Jacopone da Todi
- 23. Saint John of Kanty
- 24. Christmas at Greccio

- 25. **Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord**

- 26. Saint Stephen
- 27. Saint John the Apostle The lesson will be Freedom to Love on page 216.
- 28. Holy Innocents
- 29. Saint Thomas Becket
- 30. Saint Egwin
- 310. Saint Sylvester I

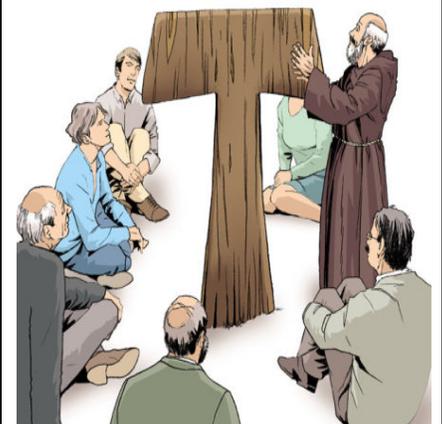


### INQUIRERS

The Inquirers class will be Sat December 9, at 10 AM in the dining room. The lesson is Writings and stories of St. Francis and St. Clare on page 59.

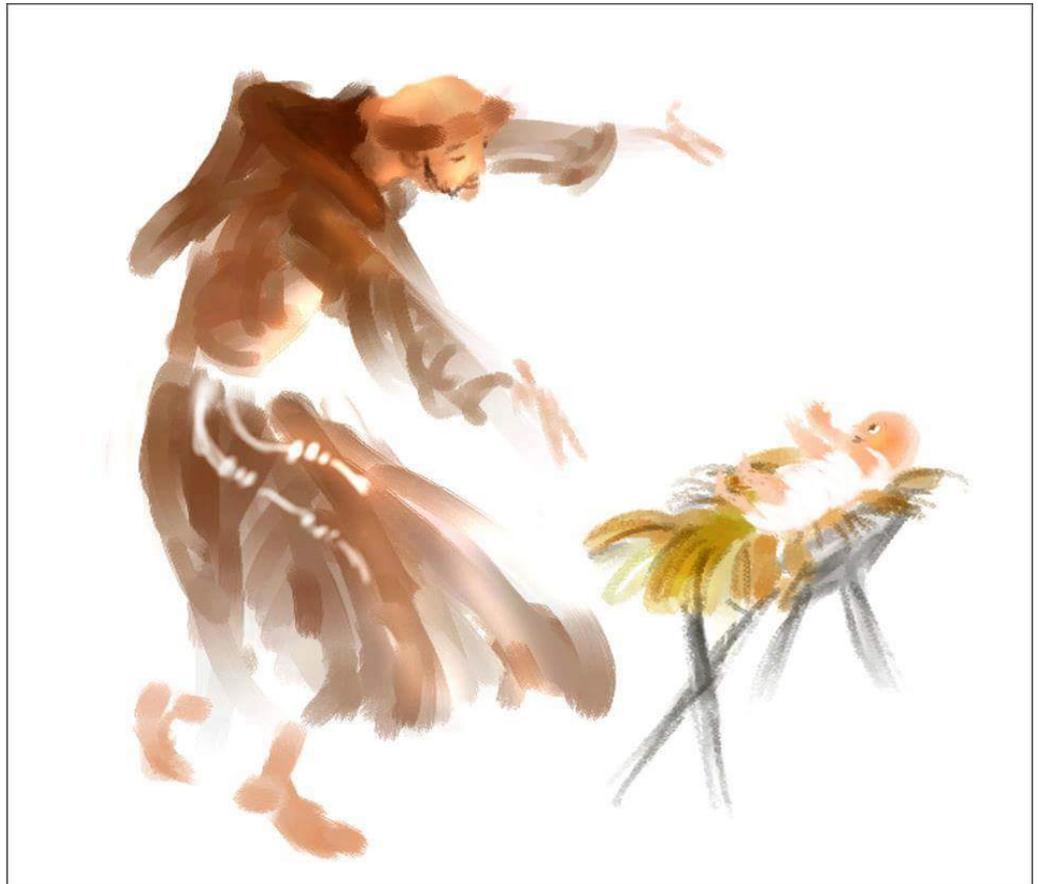
### CANDIDATES

The Candidates next formation class will be Sat December 16, at 10 AM in the dining room. The lesson will be Freedom to Love on page 216.

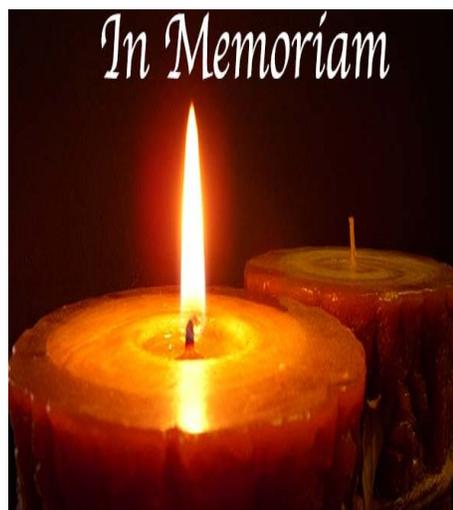


## PRAYERS FOR THE MONTH

Please remember all of our fraternity members in your prayers; for all those that are sick; for all those are in need; for all those that are traveling for a safe journey there and back; for all those that may be conversing with Sister Death; for all those that are dealing with crisis and suffering in their lives; for all of the intentions we hold deep within our hearts; for all our loved ones and for all the souls in purgatory; for our communities; country and our world – may we add these to our prayers throughout the month.



*AS YOU SEE FRANCIS ABOVE IN JOY OF THE BABY JESUS  
AS SEE THE JOY IN THE BABY JESUS OF FRANCIS  
MAY THAT JOY BE WITH YOU THIS CHRISTMAS TOO!*



IN MEMORIAM

MARIA RIVERA-GARZA

embraced Sister Death  
on November 20, 2017



## The Holy Father's Intentions for the Month of December 2017

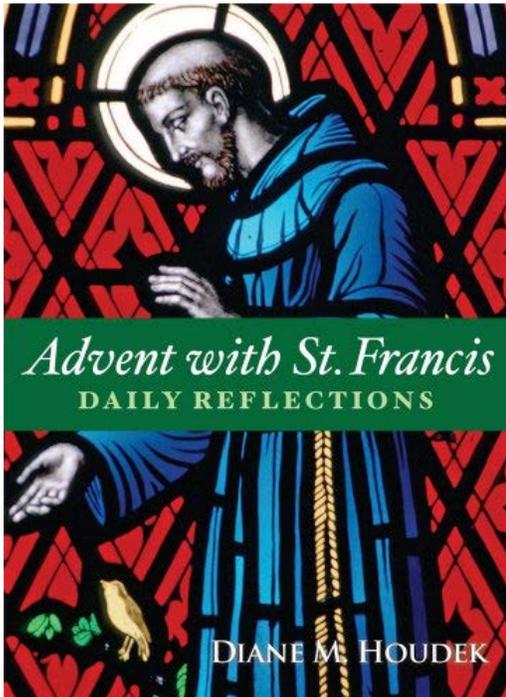
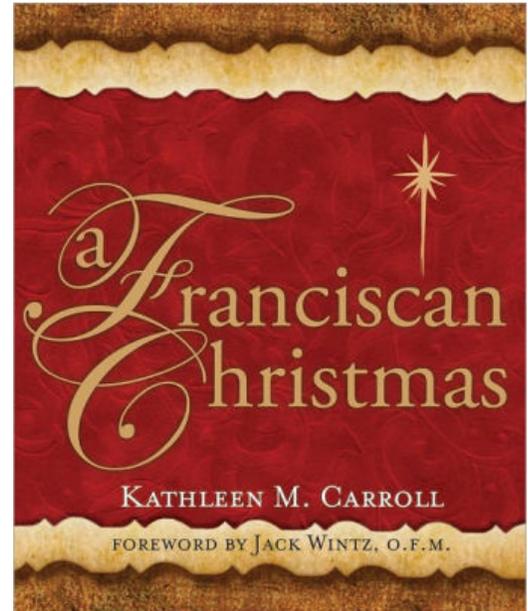
**The Elderly:** That the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations.

### FRANCISCAN CHRISTMAS

The true meaning of Christmas isn't found in the glitter and gifts. It's not on the tree or tucked under it. It won't be served with the cookies and eggnog. But it can be found in a place of honor in most Christian homes: the Christmas creche.

Francis of Assisi first recreated the scene of the Nativity nearly eight hundred years ago, but it has endured as a favorite holiday tradition. Small creches grace humble homes and ornate versions appear in grander homes--even the White House. Families flock to life-size manger scenes with rustic timbers and live animals. Most feature elements from the gospel stories, and some add their own creative touch.

Each piece of the Nativity has its own story and meaning in Franciscan history and Christian spirituality. Take a closer look at the creche and learn why Christmas is central to Franciscan spirituality and how you can find a deeper meaning in the simplest of seasonal decorations. (ISBN 978-0-86716-986-7)



### ADVENT WITH ST. FRANCIS

One of the most beloved saints in history, Francis of Assisi had a special insight into the importance of the Incarnation. From his love of the humanity of Christ, to his celebration of the first Christmas crèche at Greccio, Francis is an ideal guide for prayer and reflection during the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

The liturgical readings and the example of Francis combine to offer a unique contemplative experience. By pairing the words and deeds of St. Francis with the Scripture readings for Advent, *Advent with St. Francis: Daily Reflections* helps readers explore how they, too, can live the Gospel in the circumstances of their daily lives.

It is written in a simple and engaging style that will draw readers in to the life of Francis as they grow in their faith and spiritual practice through the inspiration of this beloved saint.

(Print ISBN 978-1-61636-705-3 / Ebook ISBN 978-1-61636-706-0)