

KOINONIA



One bread, one body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all. 1 Cor. 10:17, Eph. 4:5

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The Creator of Time was Born in Time!

Editorial

May the Blessings of the Babe of Bethlehem, the Son of God born for us, bless us all!

This year has given us many Blessings from the Lord; we have two Newly ordained priests in Fr. Sergio Gomez and Fr. Rodd Umlauf, both of whom have active ministry and both are Franciscans. We welcome Sr. Eloisa to her committed life as a Third Order Franciscan.



We welcome back Bishop Fray Juan Jesus Torres Pereira, Franciscan Bishop from Colombia.

And we are glad to announce the Bishop Elect for Ecuador, Rev. Fr, Fray Luis Alberto Almache Morales, another Franciscan priest to serve the pastoral needs of Ecuador. It is the dedication of the

Franciscans that continues the ministry and we thank them.

Bishop Elect will be consecrated on October 4th 2026 on the Feast day of St. Francis of Assisi in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

Congratulations to Bishop Luis Carlos Garcia Medina and his family on the marriage of their daughter Lurdes with Julio. May God bless them richly.

In this issue we will find the story behind the tradition of nativity originating from St. Francis of Assisi - story by Fr. Sergio Gomez,

Holly Michael's pilgrimage to Saints and Sacred Places in Italy, Chris Harris' article of St. Ignatius of Antioch and the bustling activity around the Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite.

We thank the Good Lord for all His blessings and pray that the coming year will be one of continued abundant blessings for all of our ministry in the Lord's service.

God bless all our Bishops, Priests, Deacons and Postulants. Bishop Leo and Holly Michael

Holy Trinity Anglican Seminary welcomes you!



Holy Trinity Anglican Seminary (HTAS) is owned and administrated by the Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite of the diocese of Holy Trinity and Great Plains. It's location in Kansas City, mid-America makes travel easy to meet the campus schedule. It forms part of a long tradition of the Holy Catholic Church of Anglican Rite and continues this important work of evangelization of the Kingdom of

Christ in the United States of America and beyond its mission territories.

With the advancement of communications, Holy Trinity Anglican Seminary will offer online and on campus training for its students. Holy Trinity Anglican Seminary firmly believes that Good Formation will ensure FRUITFUL Ministry. Keeping in mind the Great Commission of the Lord, HTAS will train its candidates in strong Scriptural foundation, Sacramental worship in the Apostolic Tradition as enunciated in the conservative Anglican Tradition. With qualified faculty and commitment to the cause of priestly formation, Holy Trinity Anglican Seminary is set to impart the traditional Anglican orthodoxy even in the emerging social and pastoral challenges. The seminary will also offer courses for lay students as well.

The Seminary primarily serves the Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite while students belonging to other denominations are welcome to participate in our program of study and reflection. The Holy Trinity Anglican Seminary will soon be accredited with a view to conferring the Bachelor's Degree in Theology.

Holy Catholic Church pays special attention to the formation of her ministers. Church directives require that candidate to the priesthood undergo a minimum of three years devoted to an intense and specifically priestly formation. These directives are implemented at this seminary, with particular emphasis on the Anglican traditions of the Holy Catholic Church.

Introducing New Bishop Elect of Ecuador

Reverend Father Fray Luis Alberto Almache Morales



Reverend Father Fray Luis Alberto Almache Morales was born on July 30, 1968, in the city of Guayaquil, Republic of Ecuador, in the San Martín and Los Zardo García neighborhood. He is the son of the late Francisco Roberto Almache Villalobos and María Jacinta Morales Márquez.

He completed his primary education at the República Dominicana School. He then pursued his secondary studies at the La Floresta Private School in Guayaquil, and at the Franciscan Private School in Azogues, Cañar province, where he obtained his high

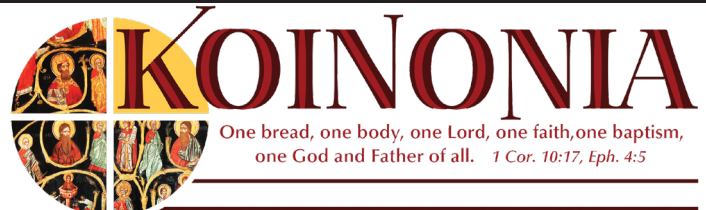
school diploma in Social Sciences.

In his youth, he was part of the Ecuadorian Scout Movement, Group "Dr. Judith Azing R. de González," an experience that contributed to his human, civic, and community development. He fulfilled his mandatory military service in 1986, in accordance with the regulations in effect at the time.

In 1989, he entered the Franciscan Minor Seminary (OFM), formally beginning his formation for consecrated life, which he completed in 1992. That year, he completed his postulancy at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guápulo in Quito. Subsequently, he completed his novitiate in Riobamba, Chimborazo province, and continued his studies in Quito and sacred music.

He pursued university studies in Educational Psychology and formation for the priestly ministry at the Salesian Polytechnic University and the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, both located in Quito, thus completing his academic, human, and pastoral preparation.

He exercised his missionary ministry in various ecclesiastical jurisdictions throughout the country, providing pastoral service in the Coastal, Andean, Amazonian, and Galápagos Islands regions. In 2015, he was admitted to the Franciscan Order of Divine Compassion – Our Lady of the Angels Province (OFDC), where he made his Solemn Profession, definitively joining consecrated life in accordance with the Constitutions and the Order's own laws. Throughout his religious life, he has been called upon to hold positions of responsibility, including that of Provincial Councilor, and currently serves as Provincial Minister, a position he holds to this day, in accordance with the legitimate mandate of the competent authority, in service to the fraternity, the Church, and the Franciscan charism.



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In the Koinonia masthead, the circle with the cross in the center symbolizes the paten and the diverse elements which form a whole. The Mosaic represents the great cloud of witnesses and the church tradition. The red in the letters represents the blood of Christ with the font comprised of individual pieces of letters that are not joined until the blood unifies them. Koinonia is the official publication of the Anglican Province of the Holy Catholic Church-Anglican Rite (HCCAR) aka Anglican Rite Catholic Church. It is published quarterly at St. James Anglican Church, 342 N Water Street, Liberty MO 64068. Phone: 816.361.7242 Fax: 816.361.2144. Editors: The Rt. Rev. Leo Michael & Holly Michael, Koinonia header: Phil Gilbreath; email: koinonia@holycatholicanglican.org or visit us on the web at: www.holycatholicanglican.org Cover picture: Bishop Leo Michael

St. Francis & the First Nativity Scene

Fr. Sergio Gomez OFDC



Each year at Christmas, churches and homes are filled with Nativity scenes—simple mangers, figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, shepherds, angels, and the Christ Child laid upon straw. For many Christians, these images are among the most beloved signs of the season. Few realize, however, that this custom began not as decoration, but as an act of prayer and preaching, born from the heart of St. Francis of Assisi.

Our earliest and most vivid account of the first Nativity Scene comes from Thomas of Celano, one of Francis' earliest companions and biographers. Celano tells us that Francis' entire life was shaped by a passionate desire to live according to the Gospel. Above all, Francis was drawn to the mystery of Christ's humility. Celano writes that *"the humility of the Incarnation and the charity of the Passion had so taken hold of his memory that he scarcely wanted to think of anything else."* (1 Cel. 84). For Francis, Christmas was not merely a feast to be observed; it was a mystery to be entered.

In the year 1223, Francis asked permission to celebrate the feast of the Lord's Nativity in a new way in the small hillside town of Greccio. His intention was deeply pastoral and wished to awaken faith and devotion by making the Gospel visible. Celano preserves Francis' own words, which reveal both his tenderness and his realism: *"I want to celebrate the memory of the Child who was born in Bethlehem, and in some way to see with my bodily eyes the hardships of his infant state—how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he rested on hay"* (1 Cel. 84).

On Christmas night, the people of the surrounding villages gathered at Greccio, carrying candles and torches. The manger was prepared with hay, and the animals stood nearby. There was no attempt to dramatize the scene or assign roles to actors. The simplicity itself preached the sermon. Celano tells us that Greccio became *"like a new Bethlehem,"* and then offers a profound summary of what the scene proclaimed: *"There simplicity is given a place of honor, poverty is exalted, humility is commended"* (1 Cel. 85). In a world that

prized wealth, power, and status, Francis placed before the people a God who chose poverty and littleness.

The Nativity at Greccio was inseparably linked to the Church's worship. Francis, who was a deacon, sang the Gospel at Mass with great reverence and joy. Afterward, he preached to the people *"about the birth of the poor King and the poor city of Bethlehem"* (1 Cel. 86). Celano adds a touching detail that reveals Francis' deep affection for the Christ Child: whenever he spoke of Bethlehem, *"he would lick his lips like a sheep tasting with delighted mouth the sweetness of that word"* (1 Cel. 86). His devotion was not out of sentiment, but out of devotion to the incarnation—rooted in the wonder that God had truly drawn near.

Later Franciscan tradition confirms and deepens Celano's account. St. Bonaventure, writing a generation later, emphasizes that Francis sought papal approval before arranging the Nativity, showing his obedience and reverence for the Church. Bonaventure also highlights the Eucharistic heart of the celebration, reminding us that the mystery of the manger always points beyond itself to the altar.

Celano concludes the story of Greccio with a striking symbol. Afterward, an altar was built over the place where the manger had stood, so that where animals once fed on hay, the faithful would now receive the Body of Christ in the Eucharist (1 Cel. 87). The Child laid in a manger becomes the Bread of Life given for the world.

Christmas and the Eucharist are revealed as one continuous mystery of self-giving love. This is why the Nativity Scene continues to speak so powerfully across centuries and cultures. It invites us to slow down, to kneel, and to contemplate the humility of God. St. Francis did not ask people merely to look at the manger, but to allow it to change them. As we gaze upon the Christ Child every Christmas, may we learn again the lesson Francis wished the whole Church to see: God comes to us not in splendor or force, but in love made small—so that every heart, no matter how poor or fragile, may find room for Him.<><

Two Newly Ordained Franciscan Priests



Fr. Sergio is in charge of the Mission of Ss. Francis and Clare in El Paso, Texas and continues to minister as a chaplain for the hospice and continues to serve His Kingdom. You would not miss him as he is always robed in his Franciscan habit. He is engaged to be married to Jaylan Rojas in the coming year and we thank his parents for offering their son in the service of God's Kingdom in the Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite



God's Gift to Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite



Fr. Rodd Umlauf has been serving as Franciscan, taking care of the poor and the disabled in his community of Lake Tomahawk, Wisconsin. Fr. Umlauf is an artist and paints icons and other nature scenes and has a community garden, besides growing ducks and animals on his farm. Fr. Umlauf often engages directing his fellow Franciscans in prayer and spiritual retreat. He is on call to serve his community. He is a wonderful gift to the community and also to Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite. May God continue to bless his ministry!



Saints and Sacred Places of Italy

Travelogue by Holly Michael

I boarded the plane with Bishop Leo with a heart full of anticipation. This journey—long imagined, quietly prayed for was a bucket-list pilgrimage, yes, but also something deeper: a hope that the trip would help return something to me that was nearly lost.

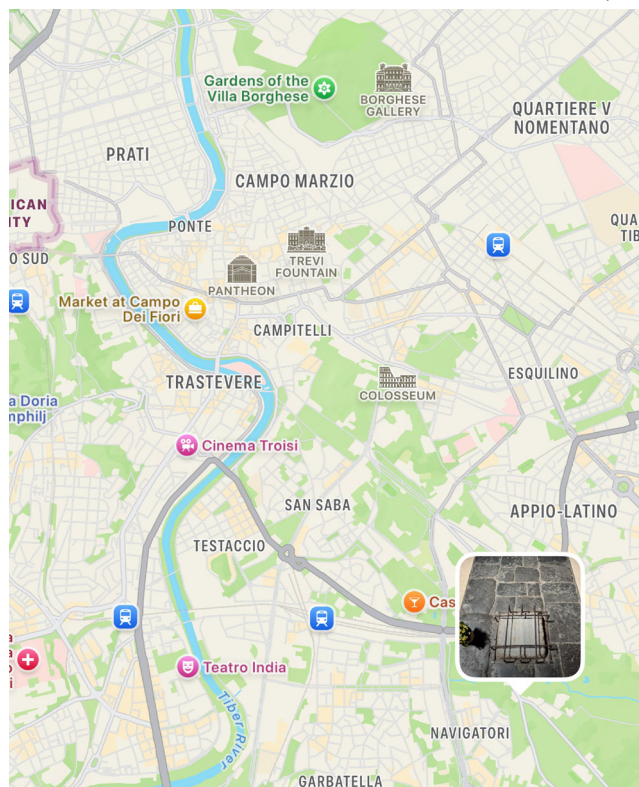
Scripture tells us to “consider it all joy,” yet somewhere along the way—amid the daily grind of running businesses, maintaining ministry and family responsibilities, and church challenges, the very joy the Lord placed in me from birth, once effortless and bright, now required vigilance to maintain.

As the plane lifted from the runway, I became aware of how much I longed to be re-centered—not just to visit holy places, but to the wellspring of joy God first entrusted to me. I was traveling toward the roots of Christianity, toward the stones and streets where faith was tested, preserved, and lived with courage.

ROME – Arriving in Rome, I was unaware it was the Year of Jubilee. Seeking joy quietly for myself, I found it greeting me instead in festive and exuberant crowds. St. Peter’s Square was filled from edge to edge — pilgrims, families, clergy, religious, and especially young people. Flags from every nation waved above the crowds. Drums echoed against stone. Voices rose in song. Groups marched and laughed and prayed, moving together with a joy that felt unforced and sincere. It was impossible not to notice how young the Church

looked. And that was exciting to see. The timing itself felt unmistakably arranged by God, joy arriving as a welcome I had not planned.

This Jubilee was marked by the canonization of a new saint — Carlo Acutis, a teenager whose short life was shaped by devotion to the Eucharist and a simple desire to bring others to Christ. He loved technology, loved life, and loved God without irony or reserve. We were able to see his tomb, the young saint in blue jeans. His holiness felt accessible, unguarded — a reminder that sanctity is not only ancient, but present and still unfolding. Joy was redefined by the celebration of a life lived wholly, even when that life is cut short.



St Peter’s Basilica welcomed us with light pouring through the dome, illuminating marble, gold and stone, an architectural proclamation of glory. The Sistine Chapel seemed to be its soul. Conversation hushed to silence. The ceiling rises, unfolding the story of creation, fall, redemption, and judgment in color and form. The grandeur of it, filled me with awe and wonder. In the Sistine Chapel, beneath that outstretched hand of God reaching toward Adam, Joy came into focus as a gift offered freely, where our Creator reaches toward us and offers us a choice to respond.

ROME - The Colosseum

I did not enter the Colosseum with joy, but rather hesitation

and reverence. It stands open to the sky now. What was once enclosed by noise and horrific spectacle is exposed—its walls broken open, its interior laid bare. Time has stripped it of its power to entertain violence. What remains is stone, silence, and memory.

The arches rise in solemn repetition, weathered and pale, their surfaces worn smooth by centuries of wind and rain. Grass grows where crowds once surged. Birds pass freely through openings that once held iron gates shut. Visitors



take selfies as sunlight pours into the arena, illuminating a space that was once shrouded in shadow and fear.

Inside, the floor has been removed, revealing corridors and chambers where animals were kept, where prisoners waited, where the machinery of death was prepared out of sight.

Early Christian writers like Tertullian spoke of martyrdom as a seed, and the letters of Saint Ignatius of Antioch speak of a longing to be united with Christ even through suffering. Though history does not mark every martyr's death to this exact location, the Colosseum has become a symbol—a visible reminder of the cost paid by those who refused to deny Christ.

“For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” (Romans 8:36)”

Tradition holds that many entered arenas like this singing hymns, praying, forgiving their persecutors, and entrusting their lives to God. These were real people, in real places, facing death and yet choosing joy in that moment. It reminded me of Chronicles 2:20 where Jehoshaphat and his people won the battle, meeting three armies coming against them by following God's prompt to enter the battlefield singing and praising Him.

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10)

What remains in the ruins is a testimony: that suffering endured for Christ is never wasted, and that joy rooted in faith

cannot be extinguished by death.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:10)

Standing there, I began to understand joy differently. Joy, in this place, was not relief from suffering. It was not the absence of fear, or fatigue. It was not optimism. Joy was fidelity. Joy was choosing Christ when every earthly reason said to choose otherwise. The martyrs did not walk into death rejoicing because they loved pain—they rejoiced because they

trusted resurrection. Joy is the settled confidence that Christ is worth everything—even when everything is taken.

ROME - Church of Domine Quo Vadis

Our intention next was to visit the catacombs, another sober reverent place. We wanted to see the hidden places of the early Church, to stand near the memory of those who worshiped in fear yet lived in hope.

But the catacombs were closed.

There was a quiet disappointment in that—plans interrupted, expectations unmet. We sat at a small café nearby, lingering longer than intended, wondering where to go next. No clear direction. Just a pause.

We called a cab.

And then—almost without realizing it—we arrived at the Church of Domine Quo Vadis (Santa Maria in Palmis)

I had heard the story before—Domine, quo Vadis—seen it portrayed years ago in an old movie, Quo Vadis. It had lived safely in my imagination then: faithful, dramatic, meaningful—but still distant. A story about Peter. A story about courage. A story that belonged to another time.

And here we were, at the very spot inspired by the movie.

The church stands along the Appian Way, about two kilometers south of Rome's center—modest, unassuming, easily

missed if you are not looking for it. First built in the ninth century and later rebuilt in the seventeenth, it marks the place where tradition tells us Peter encountered Christ while fleeing Rome.

The moment my feet touched the old cobblestone road from the cab, time seemed to collapse. These stones had carried Roman soldiers, apostles, martyrs, and believers fleeing per-



Rome, Italy - Inside the small Church of Domine Quo Vadis on the Appian Way, a stone marker bears a set of footprints traditionally believed to be a miraculous imprint of Jesus Christ's feet. While the stone itself is a copy—the original is housed in the nearby Basilica of San Sebastiano—it commemorates the legendary encounter between a fleeing Saint Peter and the risen Christ.

According to tradition, as Peter was escaping persecution in Rome, he met Jesus on this spot. Peter asked, "Domine, quo vadis?" ("Lord, where are you going?"), to which Jesus replied, "Eo Romam iterum crucifigi" ("I am going to Rome to be crucified again"). This encounter gave Peter the courage to return to Rome and face his own martyrdom.

Christ's answer was not gentle.

I am going to Rome to be crucified again.

Peter understood.

And he turned back.

And suddenly the question was no longer his alone. It was mine.

Where do I go when the weight grows heavy? When responsibility dulls joy? When endurance quietly becomes escape? Where am I willing to follow?

In that moment, joy did not feel triumphant. It felt honest and sobering.

The joy of knowing that faith has always required a decision. The joy of realizing that Christ does not ask us to choose ease, but faithfulness. Here, Joy revealed itself as clarity—inspired by a quiet strength to stop running



from weight and instead carry what matters. Peter's joy was not found in escaping Rome—it was found in returning to Christ, even when the path led toward suffering.

Scripture pressed in with unexpected clarity:

"Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will find it." (Matthew 16:25)

Back in Vatican City, moving through St. Peter's Basilica and then into the Sistine Chapel, our faith was proclaimed architecturally, in marble and beauty stretching heavenward. Beneath the vast dome built over Peter's martyrdom, and under Michelangelo's ceiling where creation, fall, and judgment unfold overhead, faith felt immense, enduring, and undeniably real.

And yet, as awe-filled as those spaces were, they stirred something quieter in me: a longing not just to behold faith's grandeur, but to understand how it is lived. The magnificence prepared my heart, but it did not satisfy it. It made me ready for something humbler—ready for Assisi, where faith steps down from marble and into stone streets, where obedience is learned slowly, and where joy and peace are discovered not in scale, but in surrender.

secution. The road felt worn not just by centuries of feet, but by fear, faith, and decision.

Stepping inside, light filtered gently across stone floors and white walls. The ceiling remains low enough that you are aware of your own presence, your own smallness.

A stone slab rests there, bearing footprints traditionally attributed to Jesus—marks said to have been left when Peter asked the question that still echoes through the centuries: "Domine, quo vadis?" Lord, where are You going?

There it became real. This was real ground. Real stone. A real



An inscription is carved into the marble slab around the footprints. While a full and clear transcription is not readily available, a partial version reads: "ADORIAMO IL LOCO DOVE (CHRIS)TO SPARVE DA SAN PIETRO ET STETERVIT PEDES EIVS (SEB)BENE LA VERA PIETRA STA NEL (CHIE)SA DI SAN BASTIANO TRA LE..."

This translates to: "Let us adore the spot where Christ disappeared from Saint Peter and his feet remained, although the real stone is in the church of Saint Sebastian among the..."

The church itself, officially named Santa Maria in Palmis (Saint Mary of the Palms [of the feet]), has also borne other inscriptions. A former inscription on its facade, which was removed in 1845 by order of Pope Gregory

decision made by a real man—afraid, responsible, torn between love for Christ and His church and survival.

Saint Peter was human—afraid, faithful, conflicted—walking this very road. His feet pressed into these stones. And his question was asked not in theory, but in flesh and fear and love.

Domine, quo vadis? - Lord, where are You going?

Assisi

After standing beneath the vast dome of St. Peter's Basilica, after walking through the magnificence of the Vatican City, Assisi seemed to receive us quietly. Stone streets narrow as you walk them, worn smooth by centuries of prayer and ordinary life. Buildings press close together, human in scale, as though the city itself understands that holiness does not need distance or display. The Umbrian hills cradle the town gently,

holding it rather than elevating it.

San Damiano — Where the Call Began Outside the Walls

Just beyond the medieval walls of Assisi, down a gentle slope lined with olive trees, stands the small stone church of San Damiano. It was here that Saint Francis of Assisi, still restless and searching, knelt before the crucifix now known as the

calling him into something far larger — the renewal of the Church itself, not through authority or power, but through obedience lived faithfully and visibly.

Inside San Damiano, the space is spare. Light enters gently through small openings. The stone walls are uneven, bearing the marks of age and touch. Nothing distracts. Everything invites listening.



The San Damiano Cross is a 12th-century Romanesque icon, famous for its role in Saint Francis of Assisi's spiritual calling. It is a painted wooden crucifix, originally housed in the dilapidated San Damiano church near Assisi, Italy, and is now a central symbol of Franciscan spirituality.

Historical and Spiritual Significance

The Vision (1205–1206): While praying in the crumbling San Damiano church, Francis of Assisi (then a young man seeking purpose) heard a voice from the cross saying, "Francis, go and repair my house, which, as you see, is falling into ruin." This moment, described in Francis's writings and early biographies (e.g., Thomas of Celano), marked his conversion from a worldly life to one of poverty and service.

Initially, Francis interpreted the command literally, rebuilding San Damiano and other local churches (including the Porziuncola). Later, he understood it as a call to reform the broader Church through the Franciscan Order.

San Damiano Cross and heard Christ speak:

"Francis, go and repair my house, which, as you see, is falling into ruin."

Francis understood the command literally. He gathered stones. He rebuilt walls. He repaired San Damiano with his own hands. Only later did he understand that Christ was

Standing there, placing my hand on the stones Francis himself rebuilt, joy returned quietly — not as emotion, but as recognition. God does not always call us upward first. Sometimes He calls us outward, away from prominence, so that obedience can be learned before fruit is seen. I was reminded of the move of our Cathedral of St James to Liberty and the work in physical renovations as well as the building of the congregation in a new .

(Portiuncula) The Porziuncola is a small chapel located inside the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi, Italy. It is a central site in Franciscan history, associated with Saint Francis of Assisi. **Historical and Religious Significance Origins:** The Porziuncola ("Little Portion") is a 9th-century chapel, originally in disrepair, which Saint Francis restored around 1205–1208 after receiving a divine call to "repair my house." It became the heart of the early Franciscan movement. **Franciscan Hub:** Saint Francis founded the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) here in 1209 and received Saint Clare's vows in 1211, founding the Poor Clares. It was his spiritual base, where he lived simply and died in 1226.



Portiuncula & The Tomb of St. Francis of Assisi



Above this humble church rises the great Basilica of Saint Francis, filled with frescoes, pilgrims, and honor. The contrast is unmistakable.

The renewal of the Church did not begin in splendor. It began in obscurity.

Saint Francis was not born a saint. He was born into comfort, ambition, and expectation. He desired honor and achievement yet remained restless until he relinquished control of his life entirely. Francis believed the Gospel was not meant to be admired from a distance. It was meant to be lived plainly.

Again and again, his prayers returned to surrender:

“Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally.”

Another of his prayers lingered deeply:

“Where there is poverty with joy, there is neither greed nor avarice.”

Francis did not glorify deprivation. He glorified trust. His joy was rooted in alignment — a life no longer divided between desire and obedience.

And perhaps most simply:

“Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

This rang true. So many things we want to accomplish for the church—promises to fulfill, tasks to carry out, changes to make—in each day, some insurmountable, some out of our control. St Francis is a Saint to be studied and followed. And Assisi showed us how we can accomplish so many things—

not through ambition, but through daily faithfulness.

Saint Clare — Where Faith Became Real

If Francis taught how joy begins, Saint Clare of Assisi taught how joy stays.

Born Chiara Offreduccio into a noble family, Clare heard Francis preach and recognized truth immediately. At eighteen, she left wealth, security, and expectation to follow Christ. She founded the Poor Clares, a contemplative order devoted to prayer, poverty, and enclosure, and lived at San Damiano — the very church Francis rebuilt.

What made Clare’s witness settle so deeply was not only her story, but its physical reality.

In Assisi, faith did not remain abstract. I could see where Clare sat. Where she ate. Where she prayed. Where she lived her ordinary days. And where she died.

Here in Assisi, Clare became real to me.

Her world was small in scale — stone rooms, simple furnishings, spaces shaped for prayer rather than comfort. There was no excess. No performance. Just a life ordered entirely toward God.

Standing in those rooms, it became unmistakably real: Clare did not imagine holiness. She practiced it daily.

Seeing the place where she died was particularly sobering. Death had not been dramatic here. It had been faithful. Clare’s life closed in the same posture in which it was lived — dependence, trust, surrender.

Joy here was not excitement. It was endurance.

Clare refused property or financial security even when offered protection by Church authorities, insisting that joy came not from provision, but from trust.

Tradition tells that when Assisi was threatened by invasion, Clare — ill and confined to her bed — held up the Blessed Sacrament, and the attackers fled. Faithfulness rooted in Christ carries real authority.

Clare did not travel widely. She did not seek recognition. She remained. And in remaining, joy learned to deepen.

The Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi rises above the city, luminous and expansive, its frescoes telling the story of a man who once owned nothing and sought no honor. Pilgrims move quietly through its spaces, drawn not by spectacle, but by witness.

Standing there, the lesson becomes clear:

Francis began in a forgotten chapel.

Clare lived in enclosure.

And the Church was renewed.

Assisi grounded me. And in that grounding, joy did not need to be reclaimed — it simply learned where it belonged.

name comes from lux, meaning light. And it was here, providentially, that we marked twenty-three years of marriage, years lived not only in companionship, but in shared vocation and leadership within the Church.

There could not have been a more fitting place.

Saint Lucy was born in Syracuse near the end of the third century to a wealthy Roman family. After her father's early death, she consecrated her life to Christ, inspired by the witness of Saint Agatha. She vowed virginity, sold her dowry to serve the poor, and refused marriage—not as rebellion, but as devotion.

Her rejected suitor denounced her during the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian. When ordered to sacrifice to pagan gods, Lucy refused, declaring her body a temple of the Holy Spirit. Early accounts describe attempts to drag her away that failed, fire that would not consume her, and suffering endured without surrender. She was ultimately martyred on December 13, AD 304.

Tradition later associated her with eyesight—stories tell of her eyes being taken and restored by God. Whether understood literally or symbolically, the Church has always recognized the deeper truth: Lucy teaches how to see rightly, how to remain fixed on Christ when faith is threatened.

Tomb of St. Clare



- Early Life:** Born Chiara Offreduccio to a noble family in Assisi, Italy. Inspired by Saint Francis's preaching, she rejected wealth and marriage at 18 to follow a life of poverty and prayer.
- Franciscan Connection:** In 1211, Clare fled home to join Francis at the Porziuncola, where he cut her hair and gave her a simple tunic, marking her religious commitment. She founded the Poor Clares, a contemplative order dedicated to poverty, prayer, and enclosure.
- Monastery Life:** Clare lived at San Damiano, a church restored by Francis, leading the Poor Clares in strict poverty (no property or endowments). She wrote their Rule of Life, the first monastic rule written by a woman, approved by Pope Innocent IV in 1253.
- Miracles:** Known for protecting Assisi from invaders (Saracens in 1240) by holding up the Blessed Sacrament, causing them to flee. Another miracle involved multiplying bread for her sisters. She reportedly had visions of Mass projected on her wall, earning her patronage of television.
- Death and Canonization:** Died on August 11, 1253, in Assisi. Canonized in 1255 by Pope Alexander IV. Named patroness of television in 1958 by Pope Pius XII.



Venice revealed through water and light.

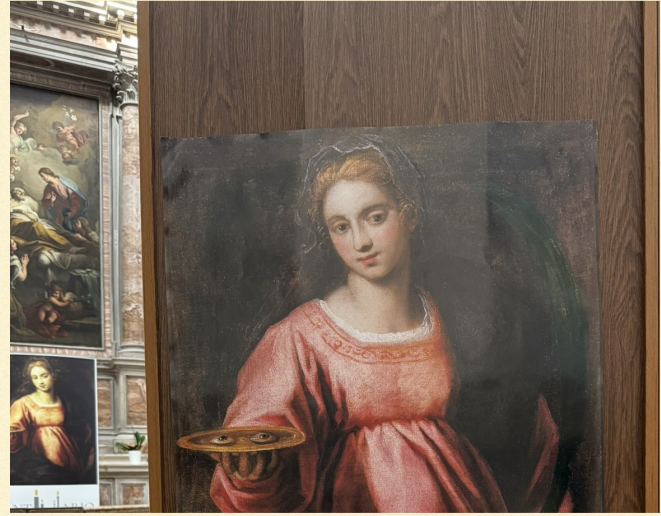
It is a city shaped by reflection—sunlight bending across water, lanterns trembling along narrow canals, stone façades softened by glow rather than shadow. Even as evening approaches, Venice does not darken so much as deepen. Light lingers here, as though reluctant to leave.

It was in this city—suspended between water and sky—that we encountered Saint Lucy of Syracuse the saint whose very

Her joy was not circumstantial. It was anchored.

The Church has guarded Lucy's witness not only through prayer and memory, but through her relics. From the outside, the Church of Santa Lucia is set near the water as if accustomed to reflection rather than attention. There is no grand threshold demanding awe. Instead, the entrance feels invitational, welcoming. Inside, the space opens gently.

The air is cool and hushed, carrying the faint scent of stone



Saint Lucy of Syracuse (c. 283–304 AD) was an early Christian martyr from Sicily, Italy, venerated in Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran traditions. Her name derives from the Latin *lux* ("light"), symbolizing her role as a beacon of faith during persecution under Emperor Diocletian. **Life and Martyrdom** Born to a wealthy family in Syracuse; her father died young, leaving her mother Eutychia. Lucy vowed virginity to God, inspired by Saint Agatha. She sold her dowry to aid the poor, enraging a rejected suitor who denounced her as a Christian. Tried by prefect Pascasius, she refused to sacrifice to pagan gods, proclaiming her body a temple of the Holy Spirit. Legends: Miraculously immovable when dragged to a brothel; flames spared her during burning. She was beheaded on December 13, 304. Traditions claim her eyes were gouged out (either by torturers or herself to deter a suitor), but God restored them—hence her patronage of eyesight. Relics: Scattered across Europe (Venice, Rome, Syracuse); stolen in 1981 but recovered.

and candle wax. Light enters through high windows, softened by age, settling slowly across the interior. It does not flood the space; it rests there, illuminating without urgency.

Stone pillars rise simply, unadorned, supporting a ceiling that feels protective rather than imposing. The walls bear the dignity of time—nothing polished to excess, nothing clamoring for attention. Sacred art guides the eye without overwhelming it, allowing prayer to remain central. Candles flicker alongside altars, each flame steady and deliberate.

Standing there at the altar, Lucy felt close—not distant, not idealized, but present. Her faith no longer felt like a story from another century. It felt lived. Chosen. Endured.

That evening, we celebrated twenty-three years of marriage.

To mark such an anniversary in Venice—within the witness of Saint Lucy—felt profoundly fitting. Marriage lived within ministry carries its own weight: shared responsibility, shared sacrifice, shared trust in God's sustaining grace. Joy within that calling is not accidental. It is gifted.

As dusk settled, we took a gondola ride through the canals. Lamps flickered along the water. Reflections shimmered, breaking and reforming with each movement. The city glowed softly, as if lit from within.

It felt like a benediction.

Together, we have sought to carry the light of Christ into the life of the Church—not as something we generate, but as something we receive and steward. Venice, Saint Lucy, her relics, and that quiet church made that calling visible again.

Light is not meant to be hidden. But neither is it meant to be blind.

It is meant to be carried—faithfully, gently, together.

And in Venice, joy took the form of light that remains.

Padua

We came to Padua to encounter Saint Anthony of Padua but what lingered most was not awe at miracles or reverence for relics alone. What remained was something quieter and more human: the recognition that joy, when it is real, often follows a life given fully to truth.

Saint Anthony was born Fernando Martins de Bulhões in Lisbon to a wealthy family. At fifteen, he entered the Augustinian Order, drawn to prayer and study. His life changed decisively in 1220 when he encountered the remains of Franciscan martyrs who had been killed while preaching in Morocco. Their witness awakened in him a clarity that could not be ignored.

Saint Anthony left the Augustinians to join the Franciscan Order founded by Saint Francis of Assisi, taking the name Anthony in honor of Saint Anthony of Egypt. He embraced a life of poverty, humility, and obedience.

He became known as the "Hammer of Heretics," not because of aggression, but because of clarity. His sermons were deeply rooted in Scripture, intellectually rigorous, and unmistakably pastoral. People listened—not because he sought attention, but because truth carries its own authority.

Tradition tells that when people refused to listen, Saint Anthony preached to the fish, who gathered attentively at the water's edge. Whether read literally or symbolically, the story reveals something essential: Saint Anthony trusted the power of God's Word more than human response.

What impressed me was that Saint Anthony did not pursue joy as an experience, he pursued truth with his whole life.

And joy followed.

The Basilica of Saint Anthony of Padua rises with quiet authority. Its domes suggest both shelter and proclamation—strength without force.

Inside, the atmosphere shifts immediately. Voices soften. Movement slows. Light settles across stone and marble. Pilgrims kneel, wait, and pray. This is not a place to move quickly through. It is a place to remain.

Anthony died here in 1231, only thirty-six years old. His impact was so immediate and profound that he was canonized less than a year later. But what draws pilgrims centuries later is not speed or spectacle.

It is faithfulness remembered.

The Relic — A Tongue That Still Teaches

Among the relics preserved in the Basilica is the one most often approached in silence: Saint Anthony's tongue.

When Anthony's remains were examined years after his death, his tongue was found incorrupt—intact, untouched by decay. The Church recognized this not as a curiosity, but

“The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, set the whole course of one's life on fire and is itself set on fire by hell.” James 3:6

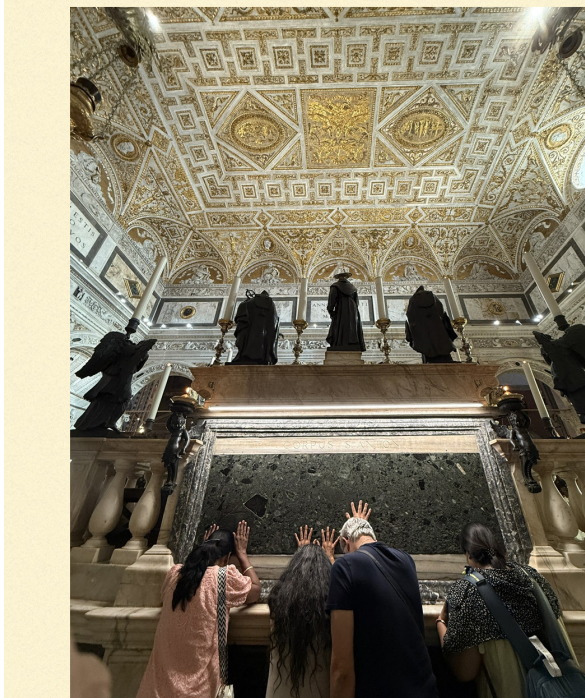
Strong words of warning and yet true words to consider.

Here, joy felt unmistakably present—not emotional or exuberant, but steady and grounded and rooted in truth and control and living a holy life by words we speak that come through our rootedness in Christ and His teachings.

This kind of Joy settles into the heart as confidence and peace.

Tarcento

There were many moments of light and joy along this pilgrimage, taught patiently by the saints through obedience, truth, and peace, and encountered in places marked by stone, prayer, and history. Yet one of the most quietly meaningful came at the end, away from basilicas and crowds, on a simple journey by train and bus from Venice—with its canals, churches, and lingering glow—north through Udine and then on to Tarcento, where my oldest brother lives. Nearly two decades had passed since I had seen Billy—not from dis-



The Tomb (Left) & the Incorruptible Tongue of St. Anthony

- Early Life:** Born Fernando Martins de Bulhões to a wealthy family in Lisbon. At 15, he joined the Augustinian Order but was inspired to become a Franciscan in 1220 after meeting martyrs in Morocco. He took the name Anthony in honor of Saint Anthony of Egypt.
- Franciscan Mission:** Anthony joined the Franciscan Order, founded by Saint Francis of Assisi (linked to the Porziuncola in Assisi). He lived briefly near the Porziuncola, embracing Francis's ideals of poverty and simplicity.
- Preaching and Miracles:** Known as the "Hammer of Heretics," Anthony's eloquent sermons converted many in Italy and France. His miracles include bilocation, healing, and the famous story of preaching to fish when humans ignored him. He's also credited with finding lost items, earning his patronage.



as a sign. The tongue that proclaimed the Gospel with such clarity had not fallen silent. It rests now in a silver reliquary, guarded not for fascination, but for reverence. It is a physical reminder that words spoken in obedience carry weight beyond a lifetime.

Standing before this relic, what impressed me was not the miracle itself, but what it revealed: that a life ordered toward truth leaves a lasting imprint. Anthony's words were not clever. They were faithful. And faithfulness, offered fully, endures. I considered my words—what comes out of my mouth and how I must guard my words.

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruits.” Proverbs 18:21

tance of heart, but from lives unfolding in different countries and seasons. Tarcento, nestled among gentle hills and winding countryside roads, offered no grand architecture or sacred art, only the grace of relationship renewed. That reunion belonged fully to the pilgrimage. It was joyful in the purest sense—uncomplicated, unforced, and unmistakably God-given. After walking ancient streets, standing beneath soaring domes, and learning from saints how joy and light are carried faithfully through obedience and peace, joy was renewed for me in the most familiar way of all: around a table with family, received again as gift.

In Italy, through saints, sacred places, and time with loved ones, I learned that joy is not something we chase, but something God gives as we walk daily, in the moment, faithfully with Him.

Church Father: St. Ignatius of Antioch

Greek: γνάτιος Ἀντιοχείας

by Christopher Harris



One of the early Church fathers was Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch. Not much is known on his upbringing. His birth date is unknown in history, and he was from Syria. He was executed in Rome between 135 & 140 [R. Pervo]. Ignatius is all known by the title “Ignatius Theophorous” (the God bearing). Tradition preserves that he converted to Christianity as a youth either by St. John or St. Peter. The exact date of his consecration is unknown during the reign of the Emperor Trajan (98 to 117 CE). Ignatius was the third Bishop of Antioch. He was known to be an associate of St. Peter, St. John the Apostle and St. John’s student, Polycarp, who was the Bishop of Smyrna, Greece.

Being the Bishop of Antioch had importance as being the place where the believers in Jesus were first called “Christians” as the Acts of the Apostles chapter 11 says. “So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found them, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with

the church, and taught a large company of people, and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians.” Acts 11:25-26

Ignatius began his ministry at a critical time in Church history. The church was still in its infancy and still closely aligned with Judaism. For a couple of centuries after Pentecost, Jews and Christians worshipped together in the synagogue and observed the Jewish holy days and festivals. The Roman Empire however made no distinction between the Jews and the Jews who became Christians.

During Ignatius’ time as Bishop, Emperor Trajan began persecuting the Jewish Christians initially and then he began persecuting the Christians. This came about due to the Jewish tax imposed by Rome, the Fiscus Judaicus. It was a poll tax on the Jews to help support Rome. Roman did not differentiate between the two in the beginning. At the same time, gentile believers in Jesus were converting from paganism to Christianity and thus were seen as traitors to the Em-

pire. They were accused of tax-evasion, Judaizing, atheism, because they no longer worshipped the gods in Rome. The Jews also began to distance themselves from Christians as they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. All in all, it seemed that the Christians were “orphans.”

To escape the Roman persecution under Trajan and his successors, the Christians were to offer a sacrifice to one of the gods. If this was not done, the individual was to be put to death. This period was recorded by the Church historian Eusebius.

During his ministry, he was brought before the local authorities and asked to sacrifice to one of the gods, proving he was loyal to Rome. He refused and was sent to Rome as a consequence and martyred there. His words on this trip are comforting and encouraging to the churches he visited along the way.

Ignatius is recorded as desiring martyrdom, “Ignatius rejoiced over the peaceful state of the assembly when the persecution ceased for a little time, but he was deeply troubled that he himself had not yet attained a true love of Christ nor reached the rank of a disciple. For he believed that the confession of martyrdom would bring him not a more intimate relationship with the Master [Jesus]. - *Martyrdom of Ignatius 1*.

“As he made the journey through Asia Minor under strict military guard, he fortified the assemblies (churches) in the various cities where he stopped, with oral teachings and exhortations. He warned them, above all to guard against the heresies that were then beginning to prevail, and he exhorted them to hold fast to the tradition of the Apostles.” *Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History 3.36.4 (4th Century)*

During the trip to Rome, Ignatius stopped at Philadelphia. His encouraging words to that congregation were, “Do nothing without the bishop, keep your bodies as temples of God; love unity; avoid divisions; be the followers of Jesus Christ, even as He is of His father.” *Epistle to the Philadelphians 7:2*

When his journey to Rome stopped in Smyrna and spent time with Polycarp, the Bishop there. Ignatius was a champion of apostolic tradition in writing. During his journey he authored seven epistles the Epistle to the Ephesians, Epistle to the Trallians, Epistle to the Romans, Epistle to the Philadelphians, Epistle to the Smyrnaeans and a letter to Polycarp the Bishop of Smyrna. Later on, there appeared other epistles credited to Ignatius but are not by his hand. He looked up to Paul and wrote in much the same linguistic style and was famous for his run-on sentences.

Among other beliefs, spoke out against grace versus law. That grace and the Torah were incompatible. “Do not be deceived by strange teachings, nor with old fables, which are worthless. For if we still live according to Judaism, we acknowledge that we have not received grace.” (emphasis mine) *Epistle to the Magnesians 8:1*

This can be compared to what St. Paul wrote, “I tes-

tify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ you who would be justified by the law, you have fallen from grace.” *Galatians 5:3-4*

Ignatius also championed changing day of Christian worship from the Jewish Sabbath to the first day of the week, “. . . no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord’s Day, on which also our life has sprung up by Him. . .” *Magnesians 9:1*

When Ignatius arrived at Rome, he ultimately was martyred, being fed to lions.

During the time he lived, Ignatius was a witness to the separation of the Synagogue and the Church. There is much more that he wrote about and worth reading. During his adult life and as Bishop he dealt with hard issues and had to pour himself into the teachings of Jesus. Some of these that he went through and championed created a division between Jews and Christians which lasted for centuries, such as:

1. Jewish hostility toward Jesus and his followers (Christians)
2. Tension between the Jewish and Gentile believers
3. The anti-Semitism of the Roman world
4. Misunderstanding Paul’s teachings to the Gentiles
5. The Jewish War of 132-135 CE
6. The Jewish poll tax
7. The expulsion of believers from Yavneh,

Yavneh is where the Jews had fled after the destruction of the Temple. (During the period of the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, the Jews fled to Yavneh and Christians to Pella. Hoping to survive. Evidently, there were some of the Jewish believers who also went to Yavneh.

“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place let the reader understand - then those who are in Judea must flee to the Mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house. And whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.” *Matthew 24:15-18*

By the time Ignatius took his position as Bishop in Antioch, the above factors had combined to create a new religious identity. He did not invent this new religious movement, but he was a result of it.

Ignatius’ feast day is observed on February 1st in the Anglican Church & Roman Catholic Church.

Christopher Harris, Lay Reader at St. James Anglican Cathedral

Sources: © 2025 *The Sent Ones: Acts of the Jewish Apostles, Lesson 51, First Fruits of Zion*

Acts 11:25-26; Galatians 5:3-4 (Revised Standard Version Bible)

Matthew 24:15-18 (New American Standard Bible)

Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History 3.36.4

Epistle to the Philadelphians 7:2

Epistle to the Magnesians 8:1

Epistle to the Magnesians 9:1



HCCAR IN ECUADOR

The Ministry of the Franciscan Order of Divine Compassion Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite



The Franciscan Order of Divine Compassion – Our Lady of the Angels Province is a religious community of Franciscan inspiration, integrated into the Holy Catholic Church of the Anglican Rite, which lives and proclaims the Gospel according to the charism of Saint Francis of Assisi, founded on fraternity, evangelical simplicity, spiritual poverty, and Divine Compassion.

The Province carries out its pastoral and evangelizing mission primarily through Our Lady of the Cloud Parish, located in the city of Guayaquil, Guayas Province, in the Los Vergeles neighborhood, from where sacramental, pastoral, and community care for the People of God is coordinated.



HCCAR IN ECUADOR

The Ministry of the Franciscan Order of Divine Compassion Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite



**Orden Franciscana de
la Divina Compasión
Franciscanos
Anglicanos
Provincia Nuestra
Señora de los Ángeles
Guayaquil-Ecuador**



The parish has parish missions and an active pastoral structure comprised of support groups, altar servers, a pre-youth group, a youth group, and catechesis groups, all dedicated to the Christian formation and spiritual guidance of the community.

The Province also has four missions, established both within and outside the city of Guayaquil, through which it extends its evangelizing and social work, with special attention to the most vulnerable communities. The provincial religious community is composed of six friars, four of whom are priests and two deacons, who serve in fraternity according to the Constitutions and the proper law of the Order.

The purpose of the Province is to make the compassion of Christ visible in the Church and in society, through the proclamation of the Gospel, sacramental life, and service to the People of God.



HCCAR IN COLOMBIA

The Ministry of Bishop Luis Carlos Garcia Medina HCCAR in Barranquilla, Colombia



Bishop Luis Carlos continues to serve Seven Barillos of Baranquilla in Colombia. His ministry includes assisting the elderly, catechism besides the celebration of Holy Eucharist and other spiritual and sacramental needs of the faithful. Thanks Obispo Luis Carlos Garcia Medina. Above is 4 pictures are the wedding of his own daughter Lourdes with Julio on November 1, 2025, and the nuptial wedding of members of his parish





HCCAR IN COLOMBIA

The Ministry of Rt. Rev Fray Juan de Jesus Torres Pereira HCCAR ,
FUNDACIÓN ORDEN FRANCISCANA DE LA DIVINA COMPASION



**Chaplaincy of Relief Organizations, hospitals and legal medicine. Ministry consists of intervention in cases of suicide attempts, fires, landslides or any calamity. Affected families are supported as well as first responders and firefighters. It relies on the search for missing persons or bodies found. Care of terminal patients, COVID-19, and in Intensive Care. We pick up and care for patients with terminal illnesses or abandoned older adults, we place them in residence and try to give them quality of life until they die. *Support and rehabilitation process for homeless people and addicts:* We rehabilitate young people on the street with drug addictions. They are supported psychologically, in education, hygiene and re-entry into family and social life. In boarding houses for minor offenders, polydrug users or for protection measures. With the limited available resources we hold Christmas celebration for more than 800 boys and girls. Above Bishop Fray Juan de Jesus Torres Pereira active in his ministry serving those in need. Thank you Bishop for your service to the community and Blessings!*



DHTGP & HCCAR SYNODS

Confirmation of candidates from St. Noah's HCCAR, Aberdeen, Washington



Clockwise: Confirmation of Elijah and Hona Lee Sturges at the Cathedral, the son and daughter of Fr. Alfred and Michelle Sturges. Congratulations to them both in their growth in the love of Jesus. May the Holy Spirit guide them on. Fr. Alfred Sturges is instrumental in building St. Noah's church, literally a floating marvel church.



To The Holy Priesthood

Fr. Rod Umlauf and Fr. Sergio Gomez at the Cathedral Parish of St. James



Ordination of Fr. Sergio Gomez and Fr. Rod Umlauf and the reception of Sr. Eloise into the third order.



DHTGP & HCCAR

Scenes from the Cathedral Parish of St. James and Corpus Christi Anglican Churches



Advent celebration at Corpus Christi Anglican Church, Rogers, Arkansas and St. James Anglican Cathedral, Liberty MO. We want to congratulate new Lay Reader Michael Guarante and new altar server Isaiah Deckinger. Opp. Page: Thankful to the wonderful Christmas Concert arranged by Dr. Stephen and Brenda Yingling, Arica Clay and all their musician friends. Thankful to the Junion Altar Guild in both the churches: Naomi Planeta, Charity Planeta, Ava Deckinger and Elyse Deckinger and for all the altar servers and the choir members. And Jerry McCaslin and our organist Dave Laurence for cooking and serving lunch. The newly lit steeple is thanks to Scott Yingling. The manger scene and bird houses at Holy Grounds thanks to John and Betsy Hamilton. Holly Michael for doing the editing the Koinonia magazine and the Ordo Kalendar.



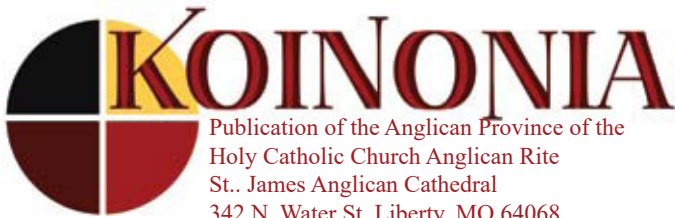


The Holy Catholic Church Anglican Rite

2026 ANNO DOMINI ORDO KALENDAR

According to the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and American & Anglican Missals

WALK
THIS
NEW
YEAR
WITH
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2026 A.D.



Publication of the Anglican Province of the
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