

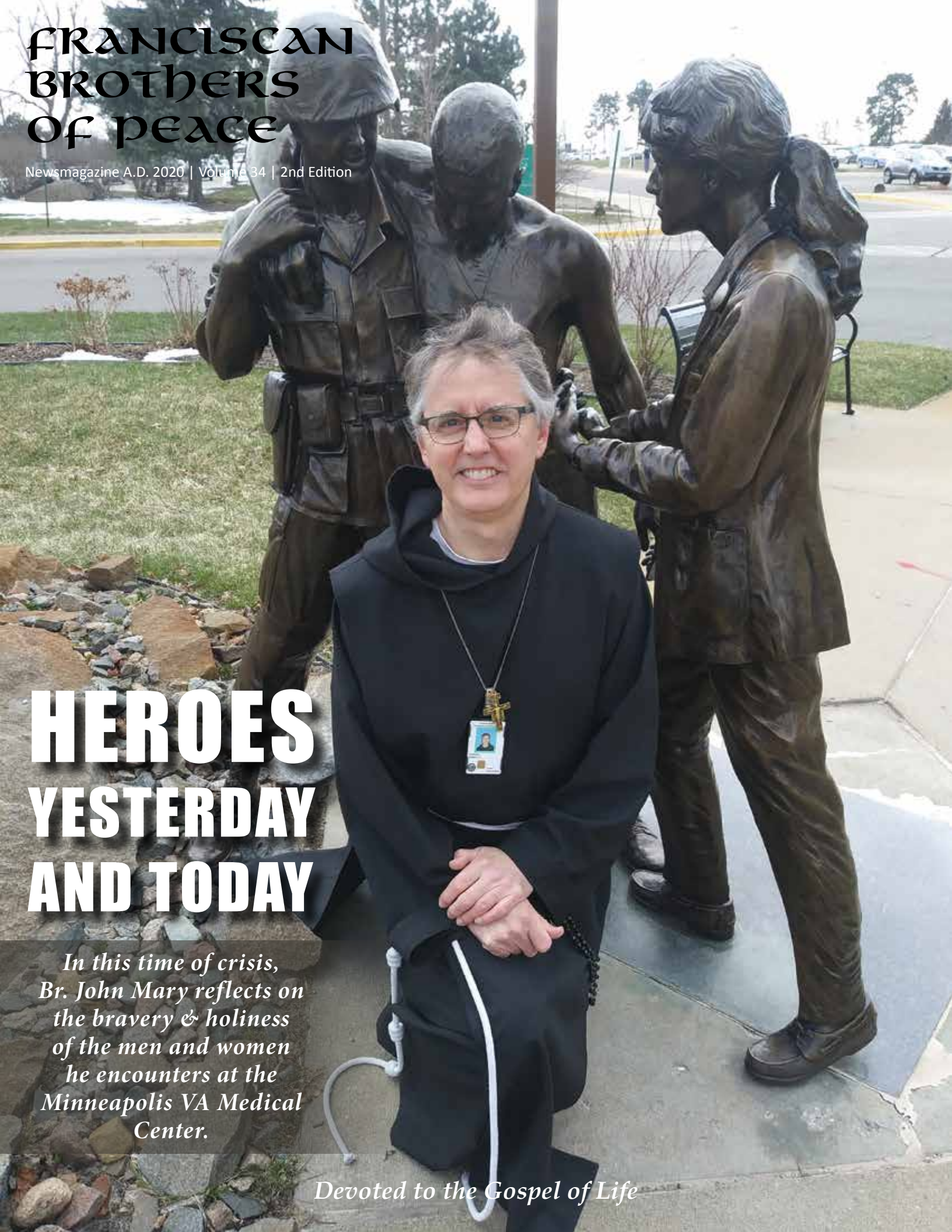
FRANCISCAN BROTHERS OF PEACE

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HEROES YESTERDAY AND TODAY

*In this time of crisis,
Br. John Mary reflects on
the bravery & holiness
of the men and women
he encounters at the
Minneapolis VA Medical
Center.*

Devoted to the Gospel of Life





Brotherhood Update

by Brother Conrad Richardson, fbp, Community Servant

Christ Is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

**“Christ is risen from the dead
trampling down death by death, and upon
those in the tombs bestowing life!”**

— Paschal Troparion

Especially during times such as these we must know that God is most certainly with us and will not leave us orphans. For the majority who have been prevented from receiving the sacraments in churches, the sense of being orphaned may be felt. We must remember that the same Lord whose Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity we had received before the onset of this pandemic is no less present in each and every one of us. Let us stand firm in our faith, pray for the sick and dying like never before and trust in Jesus. We pray for God’s protection and thank all those brave essential workers who are caring for us, keeping us as safe as possible and providing what is needed most.

“For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

— 2 Corinthians 12:10

To admit our weakness is to admit that we need God, a power greater than ourselves to restore and build us up. As long as we are on this earth we will be “under construction” so you might as well put on a hard hat and move forward with holy fear and trembling. With the blessing of the brothers, I decided to undergo some intentional “construction” with Jesus as my “Foreman” by getting assistance on how to better care for myself. I have been away at a residential center for priests and religious seeking to better their lives by learning self-care when caring for others is the main focus of their vocations.

Since childhood I have found food, particularly food containing sugar and white flour, to have a profound effect on me. It made me feel good and seemed to make the emotional aspect of things that were difficult or challenging become a bit more tolerable.

Over time however it became a maladaptive behavior in dealing with stress and strong emotions. It has taken years for me to come to this realization and even more years to accept it. It is not my willfulness but my willingness to have God do for me what I can not do for myself.

Also, while COVID-19 has given us all reason to be cautious, I am learning that living with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) needs to take priority in my self-care if I want to be as healthy as possible. CF is a genetic disease that largely affects the respiratory and immune system. Even though people are born with CF, some like me may not know that they have it until later in life due to the many gene mutations that when combined determine the types and severity of symptoms. I received my official diagnosis of CF in 2011 having lived all of my childhood and much of my adulthood without much trouble in my day to day life. However, CF is a chronic and progressive disease which requires diligence and time for treatments that help prolong life. I share this with you because I had not been taking the best care of my CF and learning to assert this vital need is something I am also working on here.

For some time now, the brothers and I have felt the Holy Spirit working in a powerful way within our brotherhood. We recognize and are grateful for the foundation that we are building upon that our late Co-Founders, Brother Michael and Brother Paul painstakingly laid for us and I believe that God is preparing us for a tremendous time of growth. We are privileged to pray daily for all of you our dear friends and benefactors, and we humbly ask you to keep praying for us.

“I know well that the greater and more beautiful the work is, the more terrible will be the storms that rage against it.”

— St. Maria Faustina

A Tumultuous Yet Blessed Time

by Brother Didacus, fbp

With so many changes and transformations happening within our culture and society as a result of the new COVID-19 (CoronaVirus) regulations, the brothers have found new ways to adapt to the current circumstances surrounding us. Each day, we are reminded that God is very much in control of our lives and that His graces and love are being out-poured on us during this time.

Some activities have remained the same, while others have undergone a few ramifications. All of the brothers have taken extra care in exercising vigilant precautions to help keep the people we serve safe. Greater time and effort has been dedicated towards cleaning and sanitizing our frieries as well as implementing measures like social distancing, wearing face masks, and gloves. Even with zig-zagging our plates at dinner, the brothers are still able to engage and shout across the table to each other like never before!



Apostolates Continue — Food Shelf Needs

Some of our apostolates are still being conducted with the generosity of the Holy Spirit moving in each of us. Among them is the Food Shelf which is seeing more of a need as children are home from school. People call in and schedule an appointment to come in. We then write their names on a bag of food and place it on a table outside of our friary door. It is such a blessing to still serve people during this great time of need.

As long as God allows us to serve as apostles of His mercy, we will do our best to fulfill the call and meet the needs of His children materially and spiritually. If you would like to consider making a food donation, we encourage you to contact us either by phone or email.



Br. Paschal and Br. Didacus making bags for the food shelf.

However, used clothes, blankets, and toys are not being accepted for the time being.

The sidewalk counseling and praying outside Planned Parenthood apostolate is still going strong, several brothers participate in this each week. Several babies continue to be saved through many prayers.

Praying For You and Our World

Above all, the brothers are remaining rooted in prayer with Daily Mass and Liturgy of the Hours celebrated privately in our chapels. Thanks be to God, we were even able to celebrate First Friday, and Easter masses with our first ever recording that went online!



Br. Pio, hard at work in the office.

Solanus Casey Friary

Fr. Seraphim and the Brothers at Solanus Casey Friary have started to live stream all the masses and some of the Liturgy of the Hours prayer. Fr. Seraphim also live streams a Karen language mass every Sunday for the Karen people in the USA. Confessions are

also available by appointment only at Solanus Friary. You may email or call Fr. Seraphim to make an appointment.

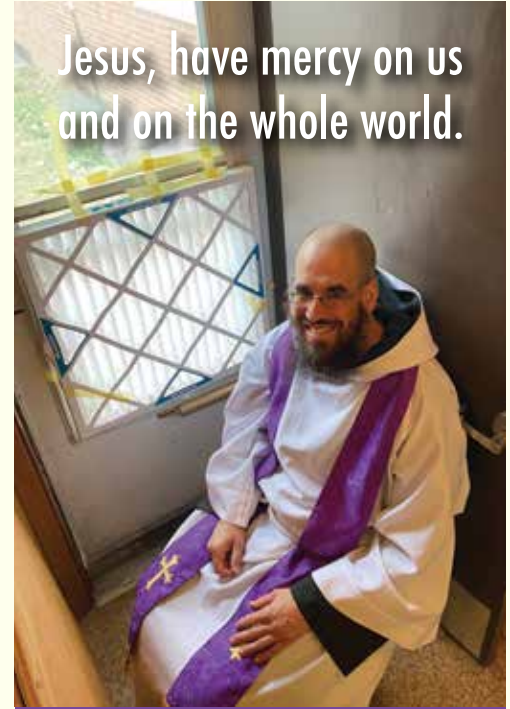
If you would like to join us virtually for the daily prayers, liturgical gatherings and masses, we encourage you to subscribe to our newly created channel by searching Franciscan Brothers of Peace on YouTube. We will also be trying to post more updates regularly on our Facebook page by the same name. We would be most grateful to have you accompany us in praying for the needs of our world!



Br. Dismas is in charge of the food shelf while Br. Antonio is with his family.

Thank you

Lastly, we would like to express our deepest gratitude for all who continue to make our way of life possible here at both friaries. Through this crisis, we have grown more closely as a community and have been able to spend more quality time with Jesus in prayer. Rest assured that you are all in our prayers and we ask you to keep us in yours as well. We praise God for assisting us all in growing more in union with Him during this most tumultuous yet blessed time in our history!



Jesus, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Fr. Seraphim is hearing daily confession at Solanus Casey Friary on St. Paul's East Side.

Taking all precautions to keep social distance, confessions are available by appointment only.

Please email him to set up a time: seraphimbrothersofpeace@gmail.com

"I will be sitting in the sacristy of our friary chapel and the penitent sits outside the screen door. There is a thick filter in place of the screen and I also wear a face mask during the confession."



Br. Antonio celebrating his father's 84th birthday in the Philippines with his family.

Mission Trip to Burma



Fr. Seraphim with Bishop Justin Saw Min Thide, Bishop of Hpa-An, Myanmar.



By Fr. Seraphim Wirth, fbp

I recently had the opportunity to go on a mission trip to Burma (Myanmar) with Br. Antonio and seven members of the Karen Catholic community to whom we are affiliated. I was invited to go by a Karen refugee family (Ku Poe) who has settled in St. Paul. The Ku Poe family had formerly built a chapel in their native village in the jungle region of Burma. They invited me to dedicate the chapel at the village. It was truly a wonderful experience. I was the only white priest who has been to these regions since the first missionaries in the 1940's. The journey was challenging but wonderful. I never could have predicted all the experiences I had. I encountered what it was like to be a refugee and illegal immigrant spending nights in refugee camps and in bamboo huts. I had many wonderful experiences and will write more about them in future newsletters.

Thanks to Jesus, six of us made it back to Minnesota and are healthy and safe. Br. Antonio—who is also doing well—needed to go back to his home country, the Philippines, to be with his family during this uncertain time. We hope to have him back soon.

Stay tuned for many wonderful stories about our trip!



HEROES YESTERDAY AND TODAY

By Brother John Mary, fbp

Recently I had the great honor of being identified by a hospitalized patient as a personal hero. However, to me and to countless others, this individual and numerous other selfless men and women are the true heroes of our nation, those who have served in the U.S. military. These very veteran heroes I have had the privilege to serve for seventeen years as a chaplaincy extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

Via my ministerial experience, this article attempts to put a hero's human face to the innumerable statistics we are hearing of daily applicable to the novel coronavirus afflicting our planet. With each of our actions and interactions being affected and/or hindered due to the scourge of COVID-19, our need to beseech God's mercy upon our nation and world is now greater than ever. And if it has infected or seriously afflicted any of you, dear readers or your loved ones, know of the Franciscan Brothers' prayers on your behalf.

The veterans whom I visit, though extremely affected, are courageously bearing with it like the band of brothers and sisters which they are.

These veteran patients countless times are witnesses to me of faith and perseverance in long-suffering as I offer them a smile, a listening ear and especially Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. They are models of Jesus bearing their various salvific crosses in acceptance of their physical infirmities for weeks, months or even lifetimes. And now, with the threat of the coronavirus ever looming, they are forced to bear their



cross alone, as did Jesus, with the physical visitations and support of family or loved ones being currently prevented. Still these noble veterans willingly carry on with self-effacement, sharing their desire to prevent their buddy down the hall from contracting the virus. Joe recently showed me a reference to Anne Frank and her hiding from the Nazis for seven hundred and sixty one days. He explained that if she could do such, he could self-isolate for an extended period to help prevent his neighbor from becoming critically ill. Joe is one of my heroes.

Steve experienced symptoms of a high fever, thus requiring very precautionary isolation while he underwent tests for COVID-19. His caregivers require the wearing of layers of protective apparel (PPE) even to enter his room. Being a regular recipient of the Holy Eucharist, he recently requested the Sacrament and I was honored to gown, mask and glove up and administer Jesus to him. Asked if he was afraid, Steve replied no, that he has tried to lead

a godly life, and is grateful to God for the gifts He has bestowed—for his wife, his children and his grandchildren. Steve also lovingly shared that that day was his granddaughter's birthday; that she had expressed a gift wish, a new pair of glasses, of her "Grandpa" and that it is his hope that he may belatedly grant her birthday wish. For living out his familial vocation so beautifully, Steve is one of my heroes.

Mike, an aged veteran, was admitted to the medical center with a confirmed case of the coronavirus. It being one of his final requests to receive the last rites, Father donned the PPE and administered the anointing and prayers of commendation, Mike whispering a labored "thank you, Father" at the rite's conclusion. Then he was literally alone with his and our God, receiving periodic hospice comfort care, until a few days later Jesus, via His resurrection victory, invited him to his eternal rest in Heaven. For expressing such hope and faith, offering up his suffering in confidence of his eternal reward, Mike is one of my heroes.

These heroic witnesses are but a few examples of the men and women I am weekly honored to serve who embrace Jesus' and the Church's teaching. Quoting John 11:25-26, "Jesus said to Martha, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in me, even though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.'" As we are all invited to do, these veterans are witnessing their faith as an act of love in our Triune God, which is sustained in all their afflictions by hope in Christ's victory over death. When they and we offer up our sufferings in this life to God, so they and we participate in the profound redeeming grace that Jesus won for each of us on the cross; and we hope and pray that one day we will also share in the glory of His resurrection.

Author's Note: Names have been changed to protect patient privacy.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings! I am very grateful for this opportunity to share my prayer—poems and theological reflections with you. I hope that you find them to be both inspiring and beneficial in your walk with the Lord. I have been inspired by the Gospel witness of Saint Mary Magdalene, not only because of her profound conversion story, but also because of her indisputable closeness and friendship with Christ. My prayer—poem to Saint Mary Magdalene situates her as intimately involved with Christ, both at his crucifixion on Calvary, and in the liturgical re—presentation of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. To be clear, the idea that women will one day be ordained to the ministerial priesthood is theologically inconsistent with the will of Christ as taught by the Church. At the same time, it seems likely that Christ's divine plan for women in the Church has not yet been fully understood, appreciated, and actualized in the Church. In other words, the blossoming of grace, truth, and beauty in the Church as the Bride of Christ "ready to welcome Him" (Rev. 19:7) is yet to come.

That Saint Mary Magdalene was present at the resurrection of Christ was not simply a matter of Divine Providence, in my opinion, but the result of the expressed will and intention of Christ prior to his death. Jesus Christ wanted Mary Magdalene there, both at his crucifixion and at his resurrection. At

the resurrection, Christ called Mary to act as a missionary to his Apostles and to his other disciples. Mary's divine commission (co—mission) was to act as a female witness of Christ's resurrection in the early Church, to act as an interpersonal relational link of grace, truth, and beauty—which fostered, encouraged, inspired, and revitalized the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and charity in the floundering Apostles and other disciples—and which fostered, encouraged, inspired, and revitalized all the other spiritual and corporal works of mercy which flowed out from the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and charity in the early Church to the People of God from the Mystical Body of Christ. It could be said that the People of God and the Mystical Body of Christ are coextensive dimensions of the Church through which grace flows—grace flowing from the Mystical Body of Christ to the People of God. In the particular case of Mary Magdalene at the resurrection, grace flowed from the risen Christ... through Mary Magdalene... to the Apostles who were in hiding, and to Peter and John in particular, who then ran to the tomb and believed.

Here is my little prayer—poem tribute to Saint Mary Magdalene. Thank you for your prayers and support of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. God bless you!

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
— *Theophilus*^{*}

**A pen name chosen by a dear friend of the Brothers out of a desire to remain anonymous...*



MAGDALENE

O blood-stained lily,
Penitential beauty,
Notorious sinner,
Absolved innocence.
Notorious more still
Your bold heart burning
Flames enduring
Unto death...

Pure calix
Beneath the cross
You mingled...
His true Blood
Your tears distressed.

By the mingling...
Of *this* water
And *this* Wine,
May we come to share in the
Divinity of Christ,
Who humbled Himself
To share in our humanity.

Saint Mary Magdalene,
Pray for us to God!
Alleluia!

Near the cross of Jesus
Stood his mother...
And Mary of Magdala.^a
Saint Mary Magdalene,
Pray for us to God!
Alleluia!

Having risen early...
He appeared first
To Mary of Magdala.^b
Saint Mary Magdalene,
Pray for us to God!
Alleluia!



CHRIST IS RISEN!



The Brothers celebrated the Feast of feasts at both Queen of Peace Friary (above) and Blessed Solanus Casey Friary (left & right).



“Having seen the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one. We worship your Cross, O Christ, and we hymn and glorify your holy Resurrection. For you are our God, we know no other but you, we call you by name. Come all the faithful, let us worship the holy Resurrection of Christ; for behold through the Cross, joy has come into all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, we hymn his Resurrection. For having endured the Cross for us, he has destroyed death by death.”

— Anonymous, 5th-6th Century

www.brothersofpeace.org



Please Join Us via LiveStream on YouTube or Facebook!

FRANCISCAN holy hour

Every First Friday at 7:00 P.M.

Adoration + Franciscan Crown Rosary
Chanted Compline + Benediction