St. Paul articulated clearly the meaning of Christian holiness when he said, “I live, not I, but Christ in me.” Holiness is, in fact, to reveal Christ; to give life to the words of the Gospels; to reflect the Divine in our humanity: it is to allow the Word to become flesh in us. Holiness makes Christ present in our world today! The Church has recognized this holiness in our beloved Blessed Pope John Paul II; thus we can say with confidence of him: “Pope John Paul II lived, not only he, but Christ in him!”

As we prepare for the canonization of this great saint and his beloved predecessor Blessed John XXIII, let us reflect on the witness he gave us in his life and writings, his historic papacy and heroic holiness. The liturgy, the special prayers, the countless biographies of his life and even the recently crafted statues and holy cards in his honor help us to remember this amazing gift God has given to us, to the Church and to the whole world. However, we would certainly dishonor John Paul’s memory if we concentrated solely on celebrating his past accomplishments without responding to the challenges, the life and teachings that this great pontiff offers to us today.

Pope John Paul II passionately loved God with his entire being, and with that same passion cried out to the Church and to the world asking for a radical renewal of heart and mind. “The new evangelization,” he says in *Veritatis Splendor*, “will show its authenticity and unleash all its missionary force when it is carried out through the gift, not only of the word proclaimed, but by the word lived.” Pope John Paul is challenging us—each of us—to live in the truth of the Gospel, the truth that is Christ! He challenges us to a new evangelization of our broken and wounded culture by primarily calling us to personal conversion.

In the heart of every Christian, in the depths of each person, there must always echo this sentiment of deeper conversion, so that upon our own death we may say with St. Paul, “I have lived not I, but Christ in me.”

**Let us pray:**

*Blessed Pope John Paul II, pray for us to the Good Teacher, that we may have the courage to live the truth of the Gospel in an age that denies truth; the courage to proclaim the sacredness of life in a culture of death; the courage to defend the sanctity of marriage and human sexuality in an age of promiscuity and self love; the courage to follow Christ wherever he leads us, no matter what the price and no matter how heavy the cross.*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*
Fr. Gabriel Bakkar and Fr. Emmanuel Mansford got the prize of being the first of our friars to meet Pope Francis in person while in Rome for some ongoing studies. It is important to read what our Holy Father is actually saying, rather than the secular media’s spin.

(above right) The CFR presence in Ireland has gracefully and gratefully increased with our Sisters opening of St. Colette Convent in Drogheda. The Friars and Sisters were in Limerick for the Feast of St. Francis in October.

This bearded team isn’t going to win a world series, but they belong to He who “has overcome the world.” Here’s the novices! (l-r): Br. Michelangelo Best, Br. Rufino Poster, Br. Tarsicius Capistrano, and Br. Joshua Kidd.

Fr. Pio Hoffman and Br. Seamus Laracy are surrounded by volunteers at St. Benedict’s Mission, a lunch program in Fort Worth, Texas. This little Texan outpost of four friars is deeply grateful for the “extended family” of Lay Associates and volunteers, as are all of our local communities.

Fr. Felix Desilets baptized this little baby after a surgery to repair a cleft palate. Members of a surgical brigade from the US were present as well as Honduran staff from San Benito Jose Medical Center, where Fr. Felix is serving.

Tic-tac-toe, three in a row from California! Our new postulants are (l-r) Joshua Cordes, Ben Burwell, and Joseph Moreno. “Postulare” means “to question,” and postulants usually have lots of them as they begin our way of life.
The “Polish pilgrimage” to Doylestown, PA, is symbolic of our call to preach the Gospel “in season and out of season” (rain or shine). Br. Simon Dankowski, shown here, coordinated the English speaking group again this year, the 25th anniversary of the pilgrimage.

Some people are surprised that St. Francis of Assisi wrote more about sacristy concerns and care of the Body and Blood of the Lord than almost anything else. Br. Vittorio Pesce carries on this tradition of contemplative and careful preparation for the Eucharist.

“Praised be Jesus Christ!” Remembering the day I truly believed in Jesus fills me with great gratitude.

Prior to this day I was seriously depressed from years of debauchery and drunkenness, full of selfish pleasures. I lived to party. This only left me empty. Interioirly I was alone, afraid of my thoughts, anxious about the unknown. Where did I come from? What is my purpose in life? Why do I feel so very alone? Why is there death and where do I go after death? “I want that peace again” - this was the prayer of my broken heart.

Then Jesus came with great mercy, so gentle and kind was His voice. He came on my lunch break during work! As I read about the Passion of Christ, those words struck deep within my soul. I knew at that moment who Jesus was. I thought, “I crucified him with my sins, and yet He loves me?” I knew He was inviting me to follow him. As I began my journey to Christ I realized that life makes no sense without him.

It was a very difficult struggle to break free from the world. Bad habits are hard to break. In 2005 I entered the Catholic Church, with my older brother Mikey. It was the first church I thought of entering because of the good witness of my nanna and pappy going to Mass every Sunday. But I struggled with the question; why are there so many Christian churches? I began looking at the history of the Church, and watched EWTN's Journey Home. I began to learn about Apostolic succession, the Bread of Life, and Confession, as well as our Blessed Mother and her holy rosary, scapular, and miraculous medal.

This path led me on my way to a deeper, more intimate life with Jesus Christ as a consecrated religious. The Missionaries of Charity sisters helped me to discover a possible religious vocation; seeing them in their habit opened up questions about their life. After reading Omer Englebert's biography of St. Francis, I heard Jesus' invitation to give myself completely in poverty, chastity, and holy obedience. I thought it would be impossible to become a brother, considering the life I lived, but many good friends encouraged me along the way. Shortly afterward I went to the Catholic Underground in Pennsylvania and I met the CFR's.

So here I am, in my second year of temporary vows living in the Bronx serving the poor at our St. Padre Pio Shelter. Also as the community tailor, I’m “developing good habits” for those who answer the call of Christ to give up the bad habits of the world, to live a life worth living.

God can do a lot with very little. In fact he can make something out of nothing; because he is Almighty God.

And he who was sitting on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new!” And he said, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To him who thirsts I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely. He who overcomes shall possess these things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Rev 21:5-7).
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Are you interested in participating in our prayer and work as a lay associate? Contact a friary near you for more information.