



# THE CORD

A Newsletter From St. Anthony's Guild

Dear Friend of St. Anthony,

Late fall is one of my favorite times of year. There is still some fall foliage on the trees to admire, and the real winter cold hasn't set in yet. There is Thanksgiving to look forward to, and then Advent and the Christmas season!

While Saint Francis lived an austere lifestyle, he was a great lover of Christmas. It was he who created the tradition of the Christmas crèche, or nativity scene, when he used members of his congregation, and some local farm animals, to create a living tableau at a Christmas Mass whose homily he was preaching. He understood that a life of poverty and austerity in service to God should be a joyful one!

Another thing that reassures me of that is the support, both financial and prayerful, that we have gotten from all of our St. Anthony's Guild members. Your generous support of Franciscan ministries makes you no different from the people who gave bread to Saint Francis and his brothers when they walked the streets asking alms for the poor. God bless you for your ongoing kindness! I wish you a joyful and blessed Christmas and holiday season, and a brilliant New Year!

Peace,

Fr. David Convertino, OFM

*Executive Director of St. Anthony's Guild*

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## Advent, What is it All About?

Advent, which comes from the Latin word for arrival or coming, is a period of preparation for the birth of Jesus. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and is the start of the Christmas season, which lasts through the Baptism of Jesus. The first Sunday of Advent also marks the beginning of the liturgical year, the Church's "New Year's Day," at which time we change the cycle of readings we are using at Mass.

One of the most recognizable symbols of the Advent season is the Advent wreath.

The concept of the Advent wreath actually originated in pre-Christian times when people would gather evergreens and light candles to ward off the darkness of winter and serve as a sign of hope that spring would come. By the 16th century, Catholics in Germany began using the wreath as a sign of Christ's coming. From there the tradition slowly spread throughout the world as Germans immigrated to various countries.



Advent candles readily demonstrate the strong contrast between darkness and light, which is an important biblical image. Jesus referred to himself as the "Light of the World" that dispels the darkness of sin: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The circular shape of the wreath, without beginning or end, symbolizes God's complete and unending love for us— a love that sent his Son into the world to redeem us from the curse of sin. It also represents the eternal life which becomes ours through faith in Jesus Christ. The Advent wreath traditionally holds four candles which are lit, one at a time, on each of the four Sundays of the Advent season. Each candle represents 1,000 years. Added together, the four candles symbolize the 4,000 years that humanity waited for the world's Savior—from Adam and Eve to Jesus, whose birth was foretold in the Old Testament. Some Advent wreath traditions also include a fifth white "Christ" candle, symbolizing purity, that is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Many circular wreaths can incorporate a white candle by adding a pillar candle to the wreath center.

Violet is a liturgical color that is used to signify a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice and is used during Advent and Lent. Advent, also called "little Lent," is the season where we spiritually wait in our "darkness" with hopeful expectation for our promised redemption, just as the whole world did before Christ's birth, and just as the whole world does now as we eagerly await his promised return.

During the first two weeks of Advent we light the first two purple candles. The Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. On this day we celebrate that our waiting for the birth of Jesus on Christmas day is almost over. The color of Rose is a liturgical color that is used to signify joy, so we light the single pink candle on the third Sunday of Advent. Then on the fourth Sunday of Advent, the final purple candle is lit to mark the final week of prayer and penance as we wait expectantly for the soon-coming birth of the King of Kings.

# Test Your Knowledge of Saint Anthony of Padua

By Fr. Jack Wintz, OFM

## Was St. Anthony ever a missionary to the Saracens?

Anthony did travel to Morocco but his great dream to become a martyr for Christ never happened. Anthony became seriously ill and after some months, he had to return home. But he never did get to go home. After a stormy crossing the ship arrived on the coast of Sicily. Friars there welcomed him and nursed him back to health. **Did you ever have a dream that was changed?**

## What was the sickness that ended St. Anthony's mission to Morocco?

There is no clear answer to that question. We do know that Anthony seemed challenged by the story of the Franciscan martyrs and experienced a genuine call to follow what he believed was the Lord's call to proclaim the Gospel. What did he experience? Whether a physical sickness or a psychological one we will never know. We can only imagine that whatever happened, it must have been disappointing and probably very humbling. Recovering from this failure might have led Anthony to accept his own weakness and to rely on the power of God. St. Paul says, "In weakness God's power is brought to perfection." **Have you ever experienced that in your life?**

# In Transitus

Please remember our recently deceased Friars in your prayers. F. Edward Coughlin, OFM and James Toal, OFM both passed away last July. Please continue to pray for them as they have done for all of you, each and every day.



**F. Edward Coughlin, OFM**, 71, a professed Franciscan friar for 47 years, died on July 30 at Strong Memorial Hospital. He had worked for most of his religious life in leadership roles in education and for the Province. Since 2014, Edward had served as president of Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y. During his religious life, Ed authored more than 20 articles and book reviews. He presented at academic and pastoral conferences across the United States and around the world from New Jersey to Texas, Ireland to Japan and Bolivia to Zambia. He served on numerous boards of directors and trustees including those of Siena, St Bonaventure, Bishop Timon-St. Jude High School, Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities, and St. Francis Friends of the Poor Foundation. He also led pilgrimages to Franciscan sites in Europe.



**James Toal, OFM**, 87, a professed Franciscan for 65 years died on July 24 at Bon Secours Maria Manor. Jim spent roughly four decades in educational administration, with positions in leadership at three Franciscan colleges. Before joining the Order of Friars Minor, he served as principal of St. Francis Prep School and Bishop Ford High School, both in Brooklyn. After his ordination, Jim was stationed at St. Bonaventure University in Western New York from 1976 to 1983, where he served as executive vice president. In 1983, he was named the president of Quincy University, the Franciscan university in Quincy, Ill., where he served as president for 14 years. In 1997, Jim was assigned to Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y., where he served as vice president and then as special assistant to the president. In 2008, he was assigned to St. Anthony Friary in St. Petersburg where he served as guardian from 2008 until 2014. Jim is survived by his sister Phyllis Dircks of Huntington, N.Y., and a brother, Lawrence Toal of New York City.

# Holiday Lentil Stew Recipe

St. Francis of Assisi was a big fan of lentils, which are low-calorie but very filling. This recipe for Lentil Stew honors the poverty of the Saint with a recipe that could also work as a Lenten supper.

## Ingredients

- 1 chopped onion
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 chopped green pepper
- 6 cups of water
- 1 cup of barley
- 1 cup of dry lentils
- 1 carrot, shredded
- 2 cups of tomato sauce
- 2 Tablespoons of soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons of apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon of basil
- ½ teaspoon of marjoram
- salt and pepper to taste

## Instructions

Sauté onion, celery, garlic, and green pepper in a large pot with a small amount of water or oil until softened. Add 6 cups water, barley, and lentils. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to low. Stir, cover and cook 30 minutes. Add all the remaining ingredients, stir, cover and cook 30 minutes. *NOTE: You can also crock pot this. Serve stew over potatoes or brown rice.*



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