



## **OFS: *Secular Franciscan Order (& YouFra)***

*The Third Order of St. Francis in Ireland.*

### **National Newsletter March 2025**

“To follow Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis”

Website: [ofsireland.org](http://ofsireland.org)



### **Stations of the Cross: St Leonard OFM**

Leonard was born in Porto Maurizio in 1676, the son of a master mariner. He joined the Franciscan Order and for forty-seven years preached, wrote letters and sermons, and travelled the whole length of Italy. The popularity of the Stations (or Way) of the Cross is much due to the impetus he gave to the devotion. He died at Rome in 1751.

Every Friday, when St Pope John Paul II was Archbishop of Cracow, he would go to the Franciscan Church to make the Stations of the Cross. Perhaps OFS members would consider doing something similar during Lent. It's an important part of our heritage.

### **Lenten Meditation: *Love of St. Francis for the Holy Cross***

- “Look long at the Good Shepard, Who, to save His sheep, endured the suffering of the Cross”.
- When he was asked why he went about the countryside weeping, Saint Francis said, “I should travel through all the world and, without any false shame, cry and moan over the passion of my Lord!”
- St. Francis used to say we should prefer nothing to the salvation of souls, and he said so for this reason: it was for souls that the only-begotten Son of God deigned to ascend the cross.

### **Prayer for the Canonisation of Venerable Matt Talbot**

Lord, in your servant, Matt Talbot you have given us a wonderful example of triumph over addiction, of devotion to duty, and of lifelong reverence for the Most Holy Sacrament.

May his life of prayer and penance give us courage to take up our crosses and follow in the footsteps of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Father, if it be your will that your beloved servant should be glorified by your Church, make known by your heavenly favours the power he enjoys in your sight.

We ask this through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

***Why not cut out this prayer for your own use or to share with someone***

### **The Humility of St Francis**

One day when he was preaching to the people of Terni in the town square in front of the bishop's palace, the bishop of the city, a discerning and spiritual man, listened to the sermon. When it was over, the bishop said: "From the time he planted and built his Church, the Lord has always endowed her with holy persons to make her grow by word and example. And in these latter days, he has shed lustre on her through this poor, humble, and unlettered man. (As he said this, he pointed his finger toward Francis). That is why you are bound to love and honour the Lord and to keep yourselves from all sin, for he has not bestowed such great favour on all nations. Then blessed Francis bowed before the Bishop, threw himself at his feet and said to him: "In truth, Lord Bishop, I say to you: no man in this world has ever paid me the honour you have today. Other men say: He is a saint! Thereby they attributed glory and holiness to a creature and not to the Creator. You, on the contrary, as a discerning man, have made a distinction between what is base and what is precious." (*the Letter from Perugia –extract with thanks to Ger Silke*).

### **Praying for Pope Francis**

A great love and loyalty for the Pope is a hallmark of all who attempt to walk in the footsteps of Saint Francis. There were many reformers in the early thirteenth century who wanted to go back to the Gospel roots. However, despite this lofty objective many fell into heresy or schism. St Francis on the other hand immediately went with his twelve “Penitents of Assisi” to ask the formidable Pope Innocent III to have his simple Rule approved. At this time let us join in prayer for our beloved Pope who took the name Francis. Pope Francis addressed the OFS leaders when in Rome for the 2021 General Chapter. He urged us "to embrace the Gospel as you embrace Jesus. Let the Gospel, that is, Jesus Himself, shape your life. This is a link to the Vatican news article:

[Pope calls Secular Franciscans to closeness, compassion, tenderness - Vatican News](#)