



A Call to Prophetic Creativity

Presented by: Sr. Agnes Marie Regan, OSF

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May the Lord
give you peace!

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“Wherever we are . . . place, hour, time of day . . . let us give thanks to the Most High and Supreme Eternal God Trinity and Unity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit . . . (“The Earlier Rule, FA:ED, Vol. 1, pp. 85-86).”

Prophetic Creativity: "Rebuild"

Pope Francis spoke about the **need for prophecy in the church** today, saying "prophecy is born whenever we allow ourselves to be challenged by God, not when we are concerned to keep everything quiet and under control. When the **Gospel overturns** certainties, prophecy arises. **Only someone who is open to God's surprises can become a prophet.**"

Francis added that "**we need lives that manifest the miracle of the love of God.** Not forcefulness, but forthrightness. Not palaver, but prayer. Not speeches, but service. You want a prophetic church? **Then begin to serve and stop talking. Not theory, but testimony.**"

Moreover, he said, "We do not need to become rich, but rather to love the poor. We are not to **save up for ourselves, but to spend ourselves** for others, not to seek the approval of the world...We need pastors **[Franciscans]** who offer their lives" like Peter and Paul. **What they did "was prophecy. And it changed history** (America Magazine, June 2020)."



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In an article in AMERICA MAGAZINE in June of 2020, we were gifted with a wonderful article by our good Holy Father, Pope Francis. In that article, he " . . . spoke about

--- quote on Slide #2

"[Service] is not limited to "bureaucratic issues"
not to the execution of the "guidelines" of the
Council of the high level, but requires

Prophetic Creativity

for the realization of the Secular Franciscan
life, both as individuals and as Fraternity,
consistent with the **Gospel** and the
Magisterium of the Church (Instrumentum
Laboris, p.5, 2021)."



Tibor Kauser, OFS, Minister General of the Secular Franciscan Order, and General Council

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As preparation for the General Chapter, Tibor Kauser and the General Presidency gave the Secular Franciscan Order the INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS to "Animate and Guide with Servant Leadership"

Within that document we read: "Service is not limited .

.."



A Call to Prophetic Creativity

"Our God is the God of Surprises"

- Pope Francis

Summary: Message of Jan Parker, OFS, National Minister



St. Clare: "Let us be filled with a remarkable happiness and a spiritual joy."

Hope is bold!

"It is an exciting time for Franciscans as, one after another, God's gifts to the Franciscan Order just keep coming . . . three . . ."

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Jan's letter opens with a message from our sister, St. Clare: "Let us be filled with a remarkable happiness and a spiritual joy."

But the words of the Christmas Letter of the Franciscan Ministers General could and also should ring in our ears: **HOPE IS BOLD!**

We have spoken of **TOTAL RENEWAL** of our Order and the trajectory God has set us upon for its fulfillment. It began 40 years with the promulgation of our Rule, and continued in following years . . .

It's an exciting time for Franciscans as

For example -- the visioning gatherings which have taken place during the past three years for

- Youth
- Justice and Peace
- Formation

But now the Holy Spirit is calling us again . . . And once again speaking in THREES!!!!

And as Jan wrote, “. . . God gifts to the Franciscan Order *just keep coming* . . . “ And once again the Holy Spirit is speaking in threes . . . Wouldn't St. Bonaventure love it??????

The three gifts . . .



“Instrumentum Laboris”
CIOFS Presidency



“Fratelli tutti”
His Holiness Pope Francis



Christmas Letter
Ministers General

. . . God is continuing to chart our course.

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What are the three gifts?

1. The INSTRUMENTUL LABORIS
2. The Encyclical Letter of our Holy Father, FRATELLI TUTTI
3. The CHRISTMAS LETTER of the Ministers General “HOPE IS BOLD”

Together these three documents present a daring, but exciting challenge to REBUILD by taping into the *prophetic* gifts given to all of us at Baptism and Confirmation and through our Profession of the Gospel life.

So, God is continuing to chart our course.

"God's purpose in sending us
these three documents . . .

Prophetic Creativity

. . . I believe God is calling us to focus our **prayer** and **energy** in
this direction."

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The journey began with the promulgation of the Rule 40 years ago . . . And continued with many events and gatherings even up to the present moment as you assemble here.

Rooted in Baptism and our Profession the call to ***PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH***, still holds true and should ring loudly and clearly in our Franciscan ears and hearts.

Jan rightly wrote: ". . . I believe God is calling us to focus our **PRAYER** and **ENERGY** in this direction." And, as Franciscans, it can not be either-or, following St. Francis it must be both-and PRAYER and ENERGY.

At our meeting in St. Louis, your former Minister General was quoted:

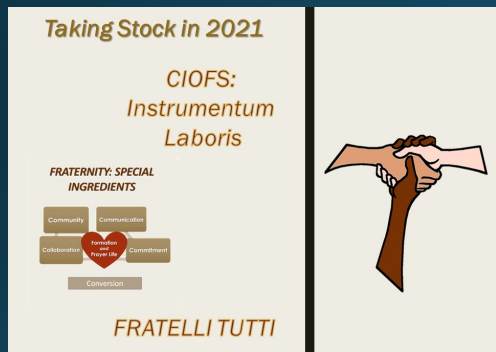
"I firmly believe that, based on the experience of the first 40 years, the future of formation in the Order must be oriented toward **BEING**. Only by **DOING**, without **BEING**, the Order will not mature, and gradually regress to a simple and tired routine."

Encarnacion del Pozo, OFS,
General Minister,
Rome, 24th March, 2019



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For those of us gifted with being present as Fr. Jerome Schroeder, OFM Cap, spoke the last two months at the Gathering of the Franciscan Family Forum, our good brother made that concept **of BEING** resonate more and more deeply as he spoke so eloquently about its meaning.



▶ That challenge to all of us is exactly what we read in the **INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS** :

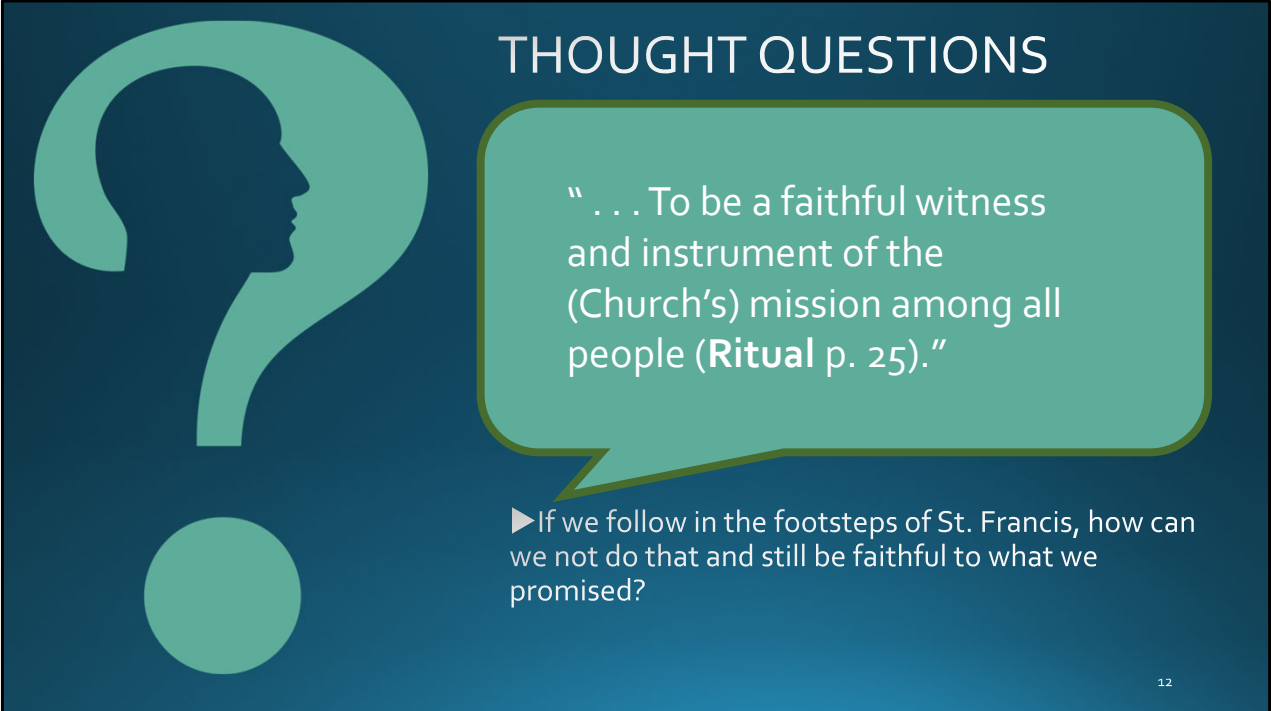
▶ [Service] “. . . is not limited to “bureaucratic issues” nor to the execution of the “guidelines “ of the Council of the higher level, but requires **“prophetic creativity”** for the realization of the Secular Franciscan life, both as individuals and as Fraternity, consistent with the Gospel and the Magisterium of the Church (Instrumentum Laboris page 5).”



What is PROPHETIC CREATIVITY?

- ▶ To see as God sees with spiritual eyes– and then to act, allowing God’s grace to strengthen us to do his will
- ▶ It is innovative action taken in response to the Holy Spirit working with and within us
- ▶ Example of Pope Francis: uses “create” no less than 44 times
- ▶ **GENERAL MINISTERS: CONVERSION** impossible without motivation and change
- ▶ It directs us to look at Jesus . . . and to Francis for our examples

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THOUGHT QUESTIONS

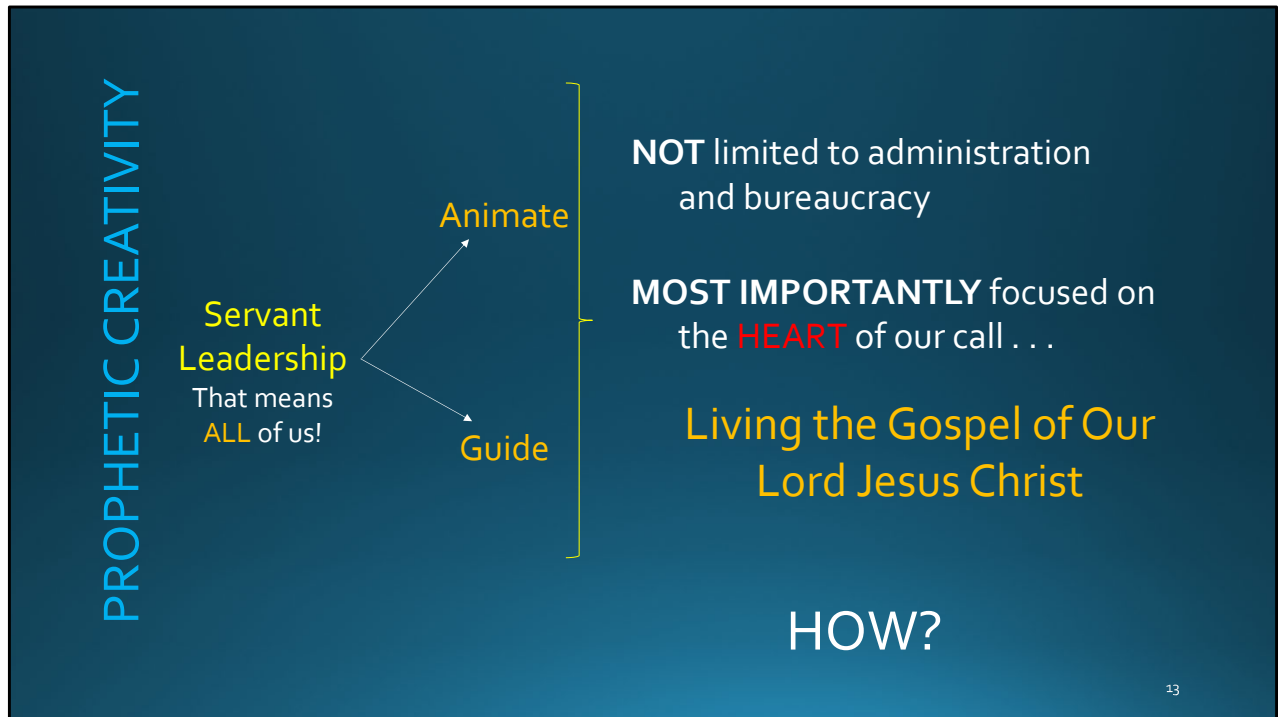
“ . . . To be a faithful witness and instrument of the (Church’s) mission among all people (**Ritual** p. 25).”

▶ If we follow in the footsteps of St. Francis, how can we not do that and still be faithful to what we promised?

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How does my Regional, National, International Fraternity do that?

If we follow in the footsteps of St. Francis, how can we NOT do that and still be faithful to what we promised? Namely; “ . . . To be a faithful witness and instrument of the [Church’s] mission among all people (**Ritual**, p. 25).”



These two words from SFO legislation are important ANIMATE and GUIDE

-- not limited to administration and bureaucracy

--MOST IMPORTANTLY – focused on the HEART OF OUR CALL – living the GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

HOW? ITEMS MENTIONED ARE NOT EXHAUSTIVE . . . Time to be CREATIVE

INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS:



1. Seek new ways to help development of fraternities – both new ones and by infusing life into older ones
2. Seek new ways to help the development of the spiritual life of the sisters and brothers: they're hungry for a deeper relationship with God and a broader understanding of their Franciscan calling
3. Being open to and responding to the voice of the **Holy Spirit** along with the signs of the times.

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The IL states emphatically that to achieve this goal “prophetic creativity is required.” To accomplish any one of those and / or all three requires courage and prophetic creativity



THOUGHT QUESTION

What will move our fraternities, and our Order(s) forward, so we become what the Church expects as the *Instrumentum Laboris* challenges us?

15

How does my Regional, National, International Fraternity do that?

If we follow in the footsteps of St. Francis, how can we NOT do that and still be faithful to what we promised? Namely; “. . . To be a faithful witness and instrument of the [Church’s] mission among all people (**Ritual**, p. 25).”

A GOOD QUESTION: does **PROPHETIC CREATIVITY** apply only to servant leaders?

CO-RESPONSIBILITY

Applies to every member of the Order

*"The brothers and sisters **are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity** to which they belong and for the OFS as the organic union of all fraternities throughout the world (Article 30. 1)."*

*"The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires **personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration**, in accordance with each one's situation and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity (Article 30.2)."*

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Co-responsibility --- needs to be seriously pondered and its implementation encouraged.

Fraternity implies co-responsibility and I cannot push off, shove off, or excuse myself from my share of fraternal life in all its manifestations – personal presence, witness, prayer, collaboration, etc.



THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ▶ Co-responsibility: what is **MY** part?
- ▶ What would result **if we all responded** to the Holy Spirit's call as did Francis and Clare?



- ▶ We would grow closer to God and to each other
- ▶ We would engage more deeply in our vocation and what we have promised and there would be a re-birth of our Franciscan Order
- ▶ Our fraternities would be more alive with enthusiasm, joy, and hope



HOW can this happen?

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Can you imagine how living this way would re-light the world on fire with love for Jesus and the Church as it did through our Holy Father, St. Francis?

The three gifts . . .



“Instrumentum Laboris”
CIOFS Presidency



“Fratelli tutti”
His Holiness Pope Francis



Christmas Letter
Ministers General

God will continue to chart our course . . .

19

What are the three gifts?

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So, God is continuing to chart our course.

"We need to unpack them in the months ahead as a part of Ongoing Formation in local fraternities . . ."

"I believe strongly more than ever God is calling us to live a life worthy of our call, and as always, he is providing us with all we need . . ."





▶ "It is true that our God is the God of surprises. Each day carries another surprise! . . . We will never move forward if we do not have the courage **[HOPE IS BOLD]** to break the mold, for our God impels us to do the following:

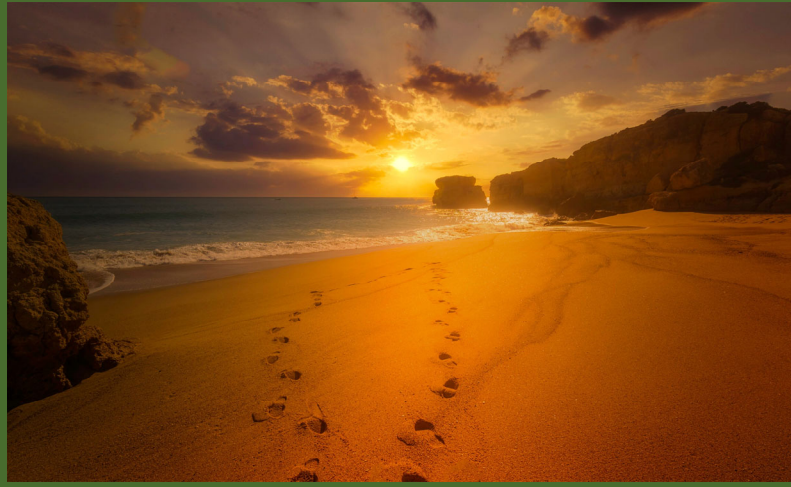
▶ BE CREATIVE ABOUT THE FUTURE!!

▶ **YOU** . . . shall be called a prophet of the Most High

▶ for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways and

▶ to give knowledge of salvation to his people . . .





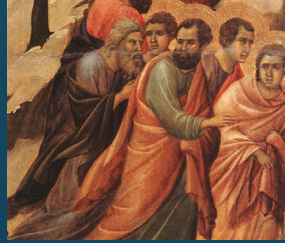
. . . to give light to those who sit in darkness . . .

and guide our feet into the way of peace
(Luke 1.76ff)."

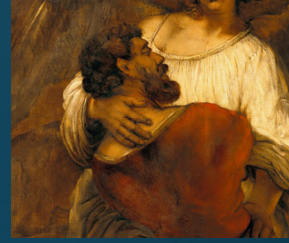
23



Sarah laughed because they were "too old"



Apostles: Last Supper on Thursday, desertion on Friday



Jacob – wrestling match with God !



Jonah . . . Well, it wasn't on Carnival Cruise Line!



Moses said, "Send my brother."



St. Paul, "I'll kill them all."

How do you react to God's call to be a prophet to rebuild? ²⁴

Sarah and Abraham in Public Domain:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah#/media/File:Sarah_Abraham.jpg

Jacob Wrestling in Public Domain:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt_-_Jacob_Wrestling_with_the_Angel_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Jonah and Whale in Public Domain:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pieter_Lastman_-_Jonah_and_the_Whale_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

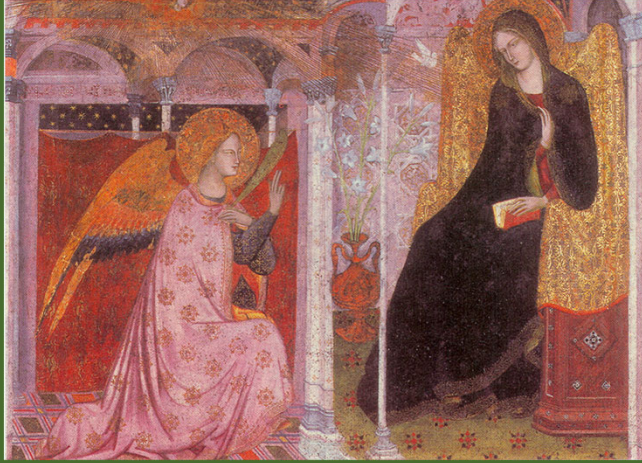
St. Paul in Public Domain:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans_Speckaert_-_Conversion_of_St_Paul_on_the_Road_to_Damascus_-_WGA21655.jpg

Apostles Fleeing in Public Domain:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Duccio_di_Buoninsegna_-_Christ_Taken_Prisoner_\(detail\)_-_WGA06794.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Duccio_di_Buoninsegna_-_Christ_Taken_Prisoner_(detail)_-_WGA06794.jpg)

Moses: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Moses_Pluchart.jpg



"May it be done to me, as you say . . ."



Tibor, you're head of
the largest religious
Order in the world.

Where are you?

Let's answer that question later . . .



Prophetic Creativity – we've been challenged !!!

"... appreciate it as coming from St. Francis through Pope Francis, like a new musical score to be learned, practiced, and performed as part of the great composition of history (IL, p. 2)."

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They've given us a challenge – now it's in our hands.

Be Creative about
the Future!

- ▶ Renaissance
- ▶ Rebirth
- ▶ Re-found
- ▶ New Pentecost
- ▶ Renewal
- ▶ Rebuild
- ▶ Identity
- ▶ Contemplation
- ▶ Telling Our (my)Story
- ▶ Etc.

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Go slowly before ASKING THE QUESTION . . . give attendants a chance to reflect

From the RULE . . .

6. "They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. **Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically** to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of **apostolic effectiveness and creativity.**"

“Why do we in the Church today constantly stare only at the decreasing numbers instead of **JOYFULLY** and **CREATIVELY** doing what is possible with the sisters and brothers who are there? . . . I am convinced that the future of the Gospel does not depend on numbers.

The Gospel unfolds its power where people honestly commit their lives to the message of Jesus.”

--Cornelius Bohl, OFM





Let's go back to that question . . .

How will that "renaissance", rebuilding happen?



We are the LIVING STONES . . .

Questions for Discussion and Discernment

Where do you see **PROPHETIC CREATIVITY** being most needed in our Order?

How have you applied it in the past?

How could you apply it now in your Fraternity and in your Region that they might be "... **visible signs of the Church, a community of faith and love** (Ritual, p. 22)

What could be YOUR part in doing it? "**YOU . . . shall be the prophet of the Most High . . .**"

How can we motivate our brothers and sisters to be **prophetically creative** about rebuilding and renewing our Order ?

Acknowledgements:

1. Letter of National Minister, Jan Parker, OFS, "A Call to Prophetic Creativity" in TAU Magazine, Winter 2021
2. "Christmas Letter from the Franciscan Ministers General", Christmas 2020,
3. Links to Reading Materials (Courtesy of Tim Short, OFS, Regional Formation Director, Our Lady of Indiana): <https://ofsongoing.com/2021/03/08/a-call-to-prophetic-creativity/>

Also see: www.ofsongoing.com

4. Summary of Letter and Power Point presentation: Sr. Agnes Marie Regan, OSF, Regional Spiritual Assistant, Our Lady of Indiana.
5. Best attempts have been made to indicate sources of images with credit given. If there are any omissions, this author is more than willing to make necessary corrections in this nonprofit educational work.



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