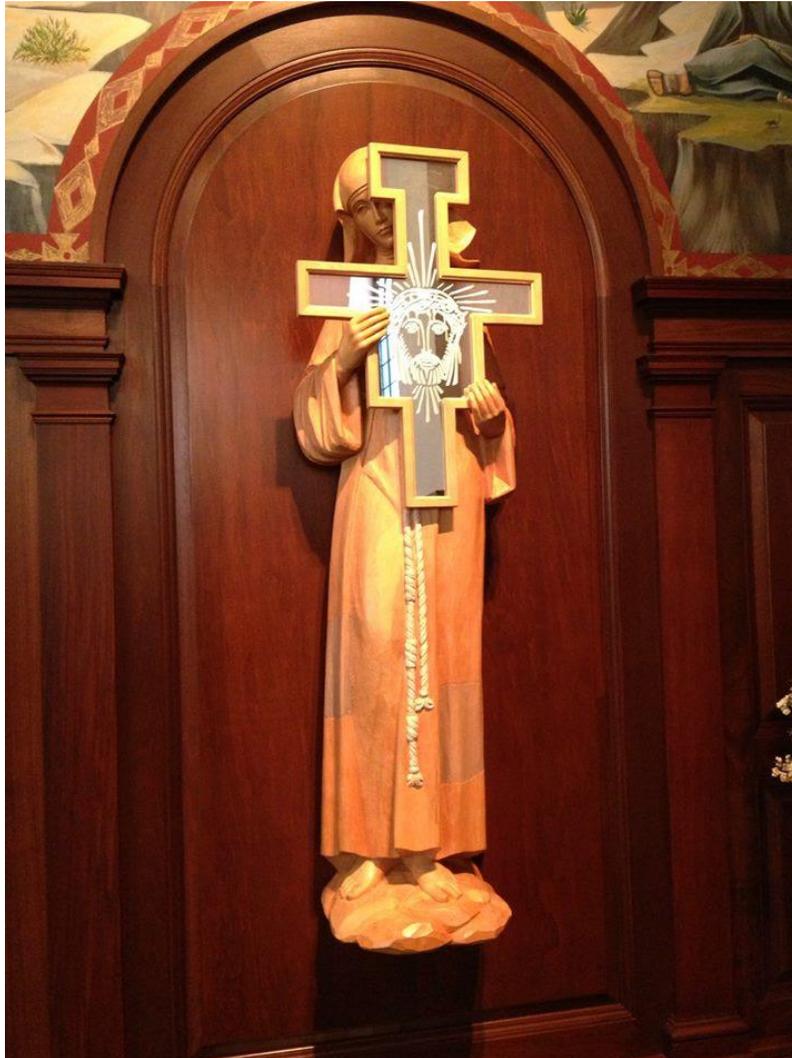


# **Contemplating the Cross, and the Lent of St. Michael**

**August 14, 2017**



**May the peace and love of Christ fill our hearts!**

**Dear Sisters and Brothers,**

**This past week set us on our knees asking God's mercy on our own country, on North Korea and on the whole world. Now our country is again shaken and saddened by violence and hatred, this time by the events in Charlottesville, Virginia. Again we are on our knees, asking our loving God to bring peace and healing.**

**Something that has been on my heart for many weeks is a renewed call to prayer before the Cross - more specifically I have been pondering St. Francis's time of prayer during the Lent of St. Michael.**

**As you know, Francis observed the days from the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, to the Feast of St. Michael, September 29, at least in 1224, by retreating to LaVerna. In my experience as a Franciscan this "second Lent" has not been widely practiced, but perhaps as Brothers and Sisters of Penance we should seriously consider its merits.**

**My own resolve to enter this Lent has deepened, and so for me a 40+ day journey starts tomorrow. I'm already trying to get my mind around the fact of Lent right here in the midst of Ordinary Time. I know I will be led, but it will be interesting to see just how this works out in practice.**

**I invite you to consider this Lent, too, as a way to be united in prayer and action - but of course it is only one way among many. Always, in the various ways that the Holy Spirit leads each of us, we remain united - one in our prayer and in our actions, one in our common Franciscan journey and one in our call to live the Gospel. For these bonds of fraternity we are can be ever thankful!**

**May the Cross which spoke to Francis, continue to speak to us and, in fact, be our very way of life. (see Luke 9:23)**

**St. Maximilian Kolbe, and all holy Franciscan saints, pray for us! Holy Mary, Mother of God, protectress of our Order and of the Americas, pray for our country, and for us, that we might bear your Son to the world!**

**Peace and love, (and Happy Lent!)**

**Your sister,**

**Jan**