



# The Franciscan Sisters of Christ the King

1409 E. Meyer Blvd. Kansas City, MO 64131

traditionalosf.org

Spring 2023



The cross in this picture is a replica of the crosses placed all over “La Florida” by Apalachee tribes. The crosses were used as signals to request Catholic missionaries to come and teach the Apalachees. La Florida, fully La Florida de Pasquale, or the Flowers of Easter, at that time extended from the southern tip of Florida, north to Virginia, and west to Alabama. The Spanish gave the territory its name in honor of the day on which they first landed there in 1513. They shared the land with native tribes, many friendly, some hostile, and they labored to bring the Faith to all, even at the expense of their own lives.

Most history books quickly tell of the checkered history of Spanish settlement in North, Central, and South America, a history in which avarice and violence is emphasized and religious fervor and zeal ignored. Few, if any, acknowledge the beautiful spread of the Faith in La Florida or the peaceful, respectful relations between the Spanish and many of the native tribes. Records show that the Spanish paid rent to the Apalachee for the use of land.

A recent visit by three of our Sisters to St. Thomas More in Sanford included visiting classrooms and enjoying a day of activities with the girls of local chapels on Saturday. The Sisters had time on Sunday to see St. Augustine and the surrounding area. There, a replica of the first altar on which the first Mass in the future United States took place stands within six inches of its original location. Close by, the shrine of Our Lady of La Leche, built in honor of a devotion brought to the continent by the Spanish, bears a replica of the statue

once destroyed by British invaders. The garments of the statue resemble those of Our Lady of Guadalupe, but here she holds the Infant Jesus in her arms, nursing Him. Here begins the fulfillment of her promise to convert the land. In addition to this shrine, there were many chapels built and destroyed or forgotten in this territory.

The Sisters had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Mary Soha, who assisted in the cause of Sts. Francisco and Jacinta, and who is now one of the postulators for the cause of the Martyrs of La Florida, a cause that will soon be introduced in Rome. She explained that all up and down the coast, inland and in many places in present-day Florida, natives and missionaries heroically shed their blood for the Faith. While the Church’s official judgement on actual martyrdom for each individual awaits determination, there is no doubt that the Faith was strong among the Spanish Missions, and that the missionaries and native converts lived their Faith and, in a significant number of cases, died for their Faith.

One of our favorite examples is the martyrdom of Antonio Cuipa, who was the “Inija” or second in command of his tribe, and his companions. The British,

allied with Creek Indians, launched one of their many vicious attacks on the Apalachees on January 25, 1704, about 30 miles east of present-day Tallahassee. A group of Spanish soldiers and Apalachee, among them Antonio, left their own nearby village to help the victims of the attack, accompanied by Father Parga Araujo. When they stopped to rest on their journey, Father preached words of encouragement and administered the Sacraments.

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, the group encountered the British and Creeks and lost the battle. Father Araujo was killed. The others who were captured were offered mild treatment if they renounced their Faith, but they steadfastly refused and were consequently tied to stakes. The enemies of Christ lit fires under their feet, but the men encouraged one another and tried to convert their torturers, who mocked them. After hours had passed, Antonio cried out that he could see the Blessed Virgin, that she was beside him helping him to endure the torture. He would die, he said, but his soul would go to God. Antonio's companions suffered many other frightful torments, but also remained steadfast.

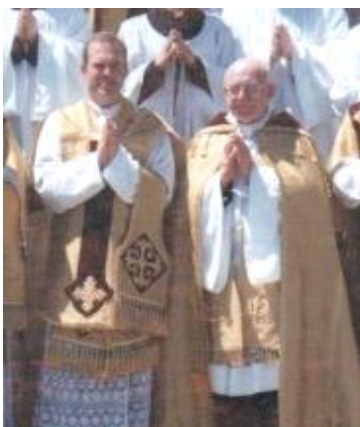
The enemies may have thought that they vanquished the Apalachees, but the victory belonged to the Christians. Could anyone honestly claim that Antonio and his companions were forced for convenience sake or by fear and



oppression to accept the Catholic Faith, that they really did not embrace what they were taught? Would tribes put up crosses all over the territory requesting instruction if there was nothing worth hearing? When many of today's prelates shock us by preaching against evangelization, do not these brave Florida Martyrs remind us that

Our Holy Catholic Faith is worth not only speaking about, but dying for? And how could those men have died for their Faith if they did not live it first? And how could they have lived their Faith without striving to let nothing pass out from their lips that would speak against Our Lord, even to their last breath? If wicked men are trying to silence the singing of God's praises once again, Our Lord assured us that the very stones of the earth would rise up. Please pray that the canonization of the Florida Martyrs will take place, that they will be, each of them, a kind of "singing stone" in this Faithless age.

*Our Lady of La Leche, pray for us, that we too will be "singing stones," in whatever way you choose for us! Be with us by our sides!*



+

**In Memoriam**



Most of our readers have probably heard about Fr. Christopher Darby's sudden death on March 17<sup>th</sup> here in Kansas City. Fr. Darby was a friend of our community, helping us in many ways over the years, including preaching our retreat in 2009 when there were only five of us (above, right.) Fr. Darby was a late vocation, and it was our founder Father Heidt who inspired Fr. Darby to enter the priesthood. They are pictured together (above, left) after Fr. Darby's first Mass. The faithful at Fr. Heidt's chapel celebrated the new priest's first anniversary with him (above, center.) Reverend Mother Herlinda and Fr. Heidt's nephew Andy are pictured as well. Father said the funeral Mass for Fr. Heidt. As a mission pastor, he spent many hours driving to bring the sacraments to shut-ins, including Mother Mary Joseph's mother and sister, whose funeral Masses he also said. May he rest in peace.



For St. Joseph's feast day, the 9/10 girls dressed as literature characters for a tea party with Sr. Louise, in honor of the librarian, Mrs. Julie McMaster.



The 11/12 girls worked with Sr. Elizabeth to paint the paschal candle for St. Vincent's.



K-2 put on a performance for parents, which included a play about St. Clare and the Saracens, singing, poetry recitals, and a play about the fourth wise man who, after decades of delays, arrived in Jerusalem at the crucifixion. To the right, Saracens wait to attack the convent of Poor Clares.



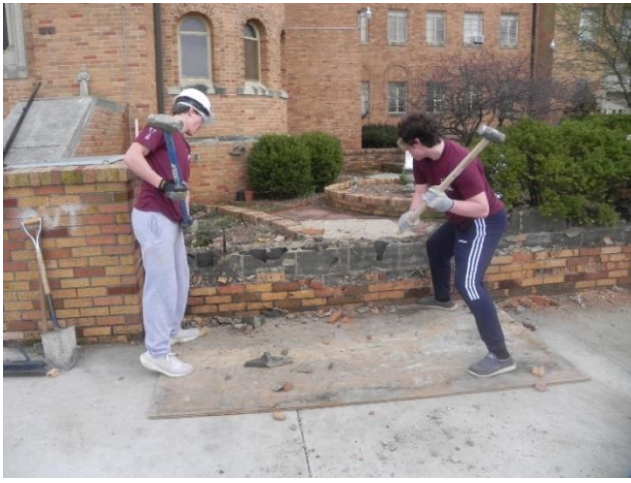
Last minute instructions to St. Clare and her Sisters before the play.



The fourth wise man insists on leaving to find the Infant King. He must make many stops on the way to help others. Giving away all he has, he arrives in Jerusalem on Good Friday. He thinks he has failed, but Our Lord appears to Him and says "What you did to the least of my brethren, you did to Me."



Kindergarten Book Time



Thank you to over forty students, teachers, and parents from Bishop Miega High School, who spent a morning here furthering several building projects, namely the removal of the Mary Garden wall, painting of second floor rooms, and filling in of dirt around the new sidewalk in the courtyard. These students were very respectful and hard-working. Also, now that the weather is good, we hope to have the bricklayer out soon to replace the bricks along the new chapel steps!

## It's Ready!

Thank you especially to Mrs. Jody Valet for spending many hours helping us put together our **new website**:

**[traditionalosf.org](http://traditionalosf.org)**

There you will find more information about our community and our convent property, talks, other media items, and more options for making electronic donations, including credit card, Venmo, Paypal, or ACH transfer (ACH works for donations of \$100 or more.) You can now also set up automatic recurring donations using a credit card or Paypal. Foreign donations are also possible.

You will receive an electronic receipt for your donation.

If you know how (we don't,) you can also **scan the QR code below or text HELPOSF to 53-555.**

*We have shut down the Paypal account we used to use.*

