

FORMED IS A PARTNERSHIP OF



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE



ignatius press

INFORMED

THE FORMED NEWSLETTER FOR PASTORS AND PARISH LEADERS



WHO CAN SHOW ME HOW TO BE A SAINT?



FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Ben Akers

ben.akers@augustineinstitute.org

In the month of September, the Church continues to celebrate Our Lady, particularly under her title of Our Lady of Sorrows. Encourage your parishioners to grow in devotion to the Blessed Mother by watching our excellent Marian content on FORMED. In particular, I draw your attention to the inspiring audio talk by Kimberly Hahn, *Drawing Strength from Our Lady of Sorrows*, which explains how she came to love and draw strength from the Virgin Mary under this title. If you would like a fresh perspective on the beloved devotion of the Rosary, be sure to watch the *FORMED Now! How and Why to Pray the Rosary* episode with Dr. Tim Gray and Dr. John Sehorn. In addition, as the Church prepares to celebrate the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, read about the creation of the popular audio drama *Brother Francis: The Barefoot Saint of Assisi* in our author spotlight, highlighting Paul McCusker. This audio drama is great for the entire family and is a fantastic way to commemorate this great saint. Check out FORMED for other great content on the major saints for the month of September, such as St. Matthew the Evangelist, St. Padre Pio, and the archangels. Watch *Padre Pio: Miracle Man*, and listen to the Lighthouse Talk by Dr. Mark Miravalle titled *Angels Explained: What You Should Know about the Nine Choirs*. The team here at FORMED hopes this content on our Blessed Mother and the saints will inspire you on your faith journey this month.

In the lives of the saints, we find the examples and inspiration we need to live a holy existence that enables us to behold God face-to-face and to be with him forever in paradise.

“[Saints],” Pope Francis said at the noontime Angelus on All Saints’ Day in 2013, “spent their lives in the service of others; they endured suffering and adversity without hatred and responded to evil with good, spreading joy and peace.”

Starting in October and continuing each month thereafter, the AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE will publish a new collection highlighting the related content on FORMED for saints who have feast days during that month.

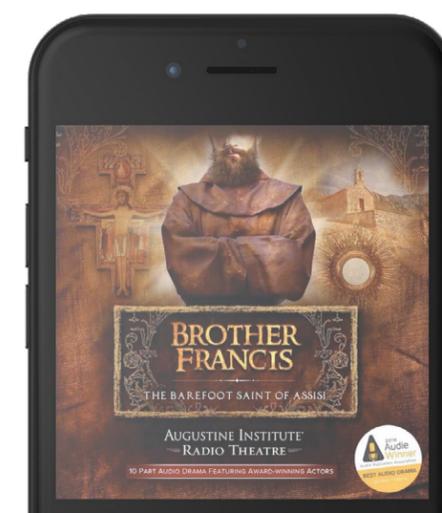
In preparation for the feast of St. Francis of Assisi on October 4, FORMED suggests viewers watch the audio drama *Brother Francis: The Barefoot Saint of Assisi*.

Produced by Augustine Institute Radio Theatre, the 10-part audio drama tells the astonishing story of Brother Francis, the fun-loving son of wealth and privilege who gave up everything for Christ. After encountering suffering as a young soldier, Francis’s experience as a victim of war ignited a search for meaning that would redirect his life. Transformed into a holy

beggar, he embraced lepers, shook hands with the pope, debated a sultan, and touched the lives of millions.

The audio drama lends itself to listening while making dinner, riding in the car, or relaxing in the evening. Appropriate for school-age children and adult audiences, the storytelling features dozens of award-winning actors, cinematic sound, and music to quicken the imagination and inspire one’s faith.

As Pope Francis said in his weekly Wednesday audience on April 21, “The saints remind us that even in our lives, however weak and marked by sin, holiness can unfold.”



HIGHLIGHTS ON FORMED

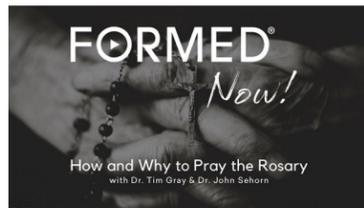
The month of September is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows. Illustrations often portray Mary under this title with seven swords piercing her heart, from the prophet Simeon’s prediction: “And a sword will pierce through your own soul” (Lk 2:35).

Simeon’s prophecy is the first sorrow, followed by the flight into Egypt; Jesus lost in the Temple; Mary’s meeting with Jesus on his way to Calvary; Mary standing at the foot of the Cross; Mary holding Jesus’s crucified body; and Jesus’s burial.

This month, the AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE highlights two resources on FORMED to increase the faithful’s understanding of Mary, particularly as Our Lady of Sorrows.

Drawing Strength from Our Lady of Sorrows

Speaker, author, and convert Kimberly Hahn shares her lack of understanding and reluctance to embrace the Catholic Church’s theology of Mary. In this engaging audio talk, Kimberly Hahn reflects on the joys and sorrows in Mary’s life. In Mary’s courage, love, and trust in response to her sorrows, we find—as Kimberly Hahn did—a spiritual mother who leads us to Jesus.



FORMED Now! How and Why to Pray the Rosary

Dr. Tim Gray and Dr. John Sehorn walk beginners through the basics of the Rosary, counsel how to avoid letting the Rosary become mindless repetition, and discuss the deeper theology and spiritual fruits of devotion to Mary through the Rosary.

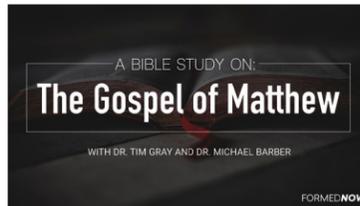
Watch as even Dr. Tim Gray learns something new!

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

To enrich your parishioners’ knowledge of and devotion to prominent saints who have September feast days, check out these resources on FORMED:

September 21 St. Matthew

Revisiting the Gospel of Matthew is an excellent way to celebrate the Evangelist’s feast day. St. Matthew’s Gospel is known as “The Catechist’s Gospel” because it contains many of Jesus’s beloved stories and teachings, including the angel’s appearance to Joseph, the visit of the Magi, and the Beatitudes.

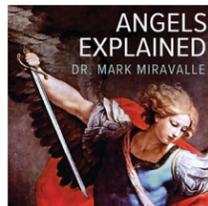


September 23 St. Padre Pio

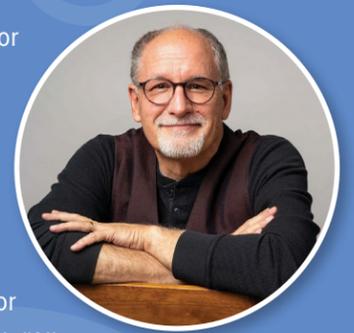
Known for his stigmata, his reading of souls, and the intensity of his prayer while celebrating Mass, St. Pio of Pietrelcina lived for 50 years as a Capuchin friar. He endured frequent attacks from the devil and persecution by his contemporaries. Dubbed into English, the Italian movie *Padre Pio: Miracle Man* dramatizes the events of Padre Pio’s life and is intended for an adult audience.

September 29 The Feast of the Archangels

While Catholics share a strong belief in angels, few have the in-depth knowledge of the heavenly beings found in *Angels Explained: What You Should Know about the Nine Choirs*. In this Lighthouse Talk, Dr. Mark Miravalle, professor of Theology and Mariology at Franciscan University of Steubenville, answers the questions, Why did God create angels? How are they different from humans? Are guardian angels found in Scripture?



AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL McCUSKER



Before he scripted audio dramas and authored children’s books for the Augustine Institute, Paul McCusker wrote the *Adventures in Odyssey* children’s audio drama series for the Christian ministry Focus on the Family.

But what McCusker calls “a yearning for transcendence” led to his conversion to the Catholic Church 14 years ago.

And friendship with Augustine Institute president Dr. Tim Gray resulted in Gray proposing that McCusker write for a different audience.

“I want you to do for the Catholic community what you’ve been doing for the Evangelicals,” Gray told him.

In February 2015, Gray suggested that McCusker begin with an audio drama about a saint—his first suggestion being St. Francis of Assisi.

“Let me begin to research to see if there’s a story there,” McCusker said.

As McCusker read, and consulted experts, he developed a picture of St. Francis as a troubadour and then as a shining knight.

After he was traumatized in battle, St. Francis’s “effusive secular joy” was transformed into a physical and joyful following of Christ.

To have the audio drama out for St. Francis’s October 4 feast day, McCusker produced a first draft of the script in three weeks—an almost unheard-of turnaround.

“As a Catholic, I could ask for Francis’s help,” McCusker said. “All the pieces came into place for what was a really good story.”

The blessings continued when McCusker traveled to England for the recording.

Although McCusker had worked with many on the production for his Focus on the Family audio dramas, “there was something unique about this one that was deeply moving, deeply affecting, that stands out in all of our memories,” he said.

One Focus on the Family colleague peppered McCusker with questions about Catholicism—and joined the Catholic Church a year later.

“I think St. Francis must have been interceding on my behalf,” McCusker said.

FORMEDNOW



Sacred Art: The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dr. Ben Akers and Taylor Kemp dive into Bartolomé Esteban Murillo’s famous painting—*The Birth of the Virgin*. As the Church celebrates this feast, your parishioners can learn about this beautiful work of art and the theology behind it.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Dr. Tim Gray and Dr. Ben Akers discuss the history behind the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross celebrated on September 14. You can share this episode with your parishioners to help them learn about St. Helena’s finding of the Holy Cross of Christ.

Bible Study: Galatians

Dr. Michael Barber and Dr. James Prothro, professors of Sacred Scripture at the Augustine Institute, study St. Paul’s pivotal Letter to the Galatians. This in-depth Bible study will walk through the entire letter, providing context and commentary.

An Apostolic Age

Dr. Ben Akers welcomes Tim Glemkowski, director of Strategy for the archdiocese of Denver, to talk about the Apostolic Age in which the Church finds herself. In four sessions, Dr. Akers and Tim will cover the times we are in today and how to develop an apostolic spirituality.