

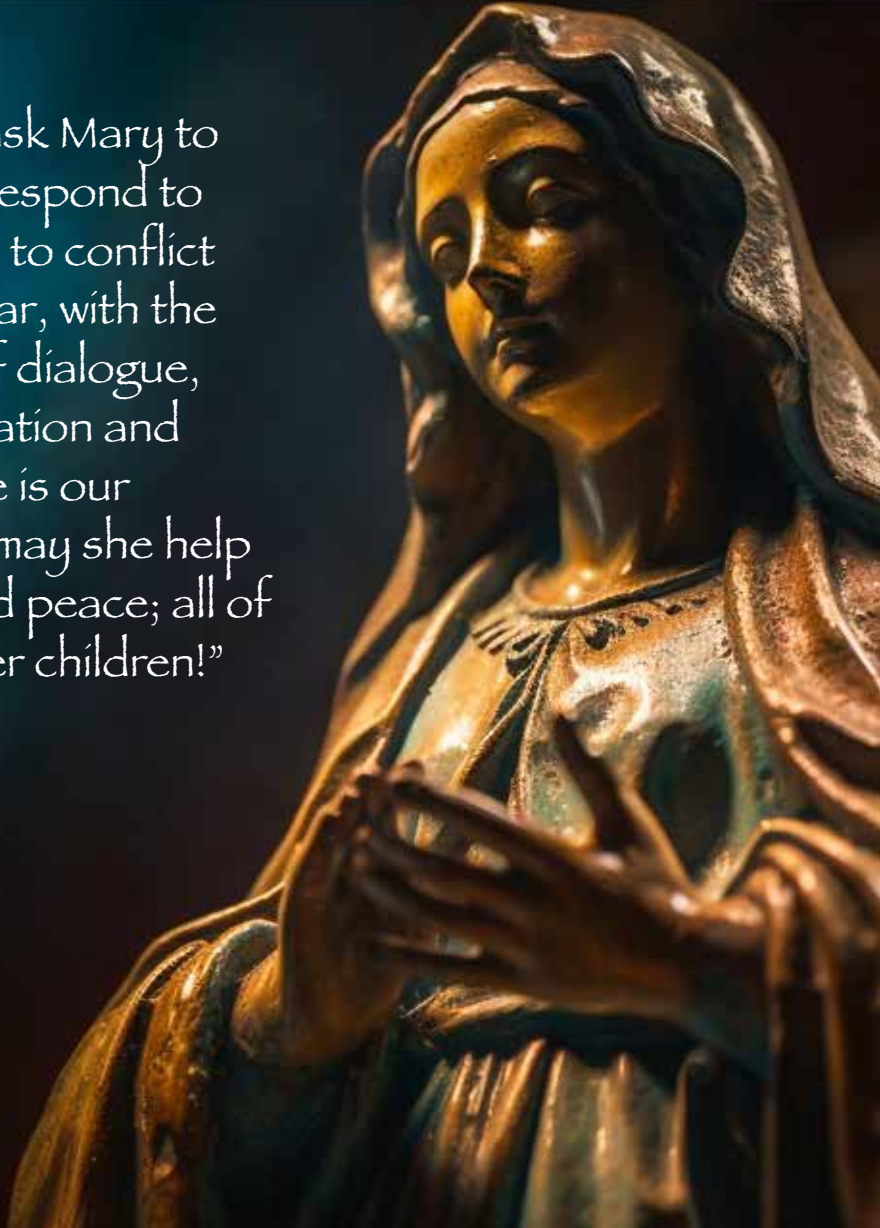
Troubadour

Volume 66, No.1

Autumn 2023

“Let us ask Mary to help us respond to violence, to conflict and to war, with the power of dialogue, reconciliation and love. She is our mother: may she help us to find peace; all of us are her children!”

Pope Francis





In the 12th century Christ spoke to St Francis of Assisi from this cross:

“Francis, go and rebuild my Church which you see is falling down.”

Don't complain about the Church in the 21st century.

Hear Our Lord's call and do something about it!

The Friars Minor have followed St Francis' example for the last 800 years.

Why not be one of them?

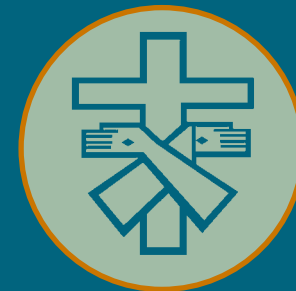
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Troubadour

A MISSIONARY MAGAZINE

at the service of

- The Franciscan Missionaries working throughout the world but especially in disaster areas.
- The Franciscan Missionary Union.



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	Page
The Transitus of St. Francis	4
Prayers for the dead in November	8
St. Anthony's Child & Youth Care Centre 'Caring for the Carers' outing to Ngome Marian Shrine	11
Madagascar - In the midst of the needs of the people - PART 2	16
St Francis of Assisi colouring page	19

COVER PHOTOGRAPHS:

Front cover:

Statue of Mother Mary; a Mother to all.

Back cover:

The need for hope of the child.

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The Transitus of St Francis

Each year on the 3rd day of October, many Christian people join Franciscan communities throughout the world in celebrating the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi.



*Saint Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy,
by Caravaggio, c. 1595*

St. Francis was the founder of the Franciscan tradition, and the values he lived and professed: creating a caring community, reverencing all of creation, showing compassion, and making peace are the basis of Franciscan life.

teachings - those he spoke and those he embodied through his actions - are more than just a set of inspirational ideas. They are an example of how to live life well, pouring oneself out in service to others for the glory of God, and even how to suffer with joy.

One version of Francis' passing, which we read from frequently at the annual "Transitus," was written by Francis' first biographer, Thomas of Celano. He tells us that Francis, when he knew he was dying, "exhorted death - terrible and hateful to all - to praise God."

Many Catholic institutions celebrate the feast day of their patron saint, but the Transitus is an additional celebration, unique to St. Francis. It is typically observed on October 3, the day before his October 4 feast day.

The Transitus, from the Latin word for passage or crossing, commemorates the completion of St. Francis' earthly life, and his passage through death into eternal life. At first glance, it may seem odd to reflect on death, particularly in our present world. Yet, for Franciscans, St. Francis'

However, as a vowed religious, St. Francis' life was also a testament to the Christian belief that the life we enjoy on this earth is not all there is.

By giving up a life of ease and riches for one of radical simplicity and poverty, St. Francis' humble life pointed to his steadfast hope of eternity with his Creator, and his belief that the life to come would fulfil him in the ways that his worldly success never did. He believed that we were made for heaven - eternal union with God. With

this view in mind, he saw death not as something to be feared, but as something to be welcomed at its appointed time, because it was the transition into the next life. In his well-

loved *Canticle of the Creatures*, he writes of embracing Sister Death, and the *Transitus* reflects on how he lived his life in preparation for that embrace.

Each year, we try to focus on one of St. Francis' values, and this year's value is making peace. Like the other contradictions of St. Francis' life



Celebrated around the world by Franciscans this shows the Habit of St. Francis being carried for Transitus Service at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington, D.C.

- poverty over wealth, humility over power, joy in suffering, and life from death - focusing on peace in a year that has been anything but peaceful seems nearly impossible. Yet, once again, we can draw hope from St. Francis' example. Peace is not

the absence of something - be it suffering, hatred, violence, fear, or death - nor is it incapable of existing where these realities are present. Rather, peace, as St. Francis showed us, can come from an internal



Transitus Service at the Franciscan Monastery.

disposition towards faith, hope, and charity, and a surrendering of one's own plans to God's plan. While our surrender to God may not always seem to change the situation, it does change our interior disposition, and God's peace "which the world cannot give" (John 14:27) flows from that.

As we forge ahead into the unknowns of our lives, let us pause and remember, as St. Francis did, that God goes before us, and that the sufferings we do not understand in this life point us, through faith, to something greater. This humble, poor man of Assisi who lived in relative obscurity was God's chosen instrument in his lifetime, and his life continues to shape our world today. May the example of his life and death continue to remind us of where hope and peace are to be found, in all circumstances.

"Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whose embrace no living person can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those she finds doing your most holy will. The second death can do no harm to them."

Taken from Canticle of the Creatures, by St. Francis of Assisi, .



St. Francis is often depicted holding a skull, a reminder of man's mortality.

This image shows St Francis painted by Jusepe de Ribera (1591-1652).

Prayers for the dead in November

“Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and may perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. May their souls and
the souls of all the faithful departed through
the mercy of God rest in peace.”

As the weather grows colder and the leaves fall, and as Christmas approaches it is natural for many of us to think about the people we've loved who are no longer with us.

For the Catholic Church, November begins with All Saints Day and All Souls Day, as the Month of the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

Perhaps no Catholic doctrine has been more misunderstood by Catholics themselves than the doctrine of Purgatory. Consequently, some tend to downplay it, even seem a little embarrassed by it. But according to Catholic theology, it is the Holy Souls who suffer because of the living's discomfort with the doctrine.

Purgatory is not, as many people think, one last trial. Catholics believe that all of those who make it to Purgatory will one day be in Heaven. Purgatory is where those who have died in grace, but who have not fully atoned for the temporal punishments resulting from their sins, go to finish their atonement before entering Heaven. A soul in Purgatory may suffer, but they have the

assurance that they will ultimately enter Heaven when their punishment is complete. Catholics believe Purgatory is an expression of God's love, His desire to cleanse human souls of all that might keep them from experiencing the fullness of joy in Heaven.

Christians believe that they don't travel through this world alone. Their salvation is wrapped up with the salvation of others, and charity requires them to go to their aid. The same is true of the Holy Souls. In their time in Purgatory, they can pray for the living, and the living should pray for the faithful departed that they may be freed from the punishment for their sins and enter into Heaven.

Catholics should pray for the dead throughout the year, especially on the anniversary of their death. In this Month of the Holy Souls, daily prayers should be said for the dead. Those that wish to participate should start with those closest to them—like their mother and father, for instance—but they should also offer prayers for all the souls, and especially for those most forsaken.

Christians believe that the Holy Souls for whom they pray will continue to pray for them after they have been released from Purgatory. Followers of the faith believe that they, too, will likely find themselves in Purgatory someday and that their acts of charity toward the Holy Souls there now will ensure that they remember them before the throne of God when they are most in need of prayers. It's a comforting thought for many, and one that encourages many Catholics, especially during the month of November, to offer their prayers for the Holy Souls.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

One of the most commonly recited Catholic prayers in times past, this prayer has fallen into disuse in the last few decades. Prayer for the dead, however, is one of the greatest acts of charity Catholics can perform, to help souls during their time in Purgatory so that they can enter more quickly into the fullness of heaven.



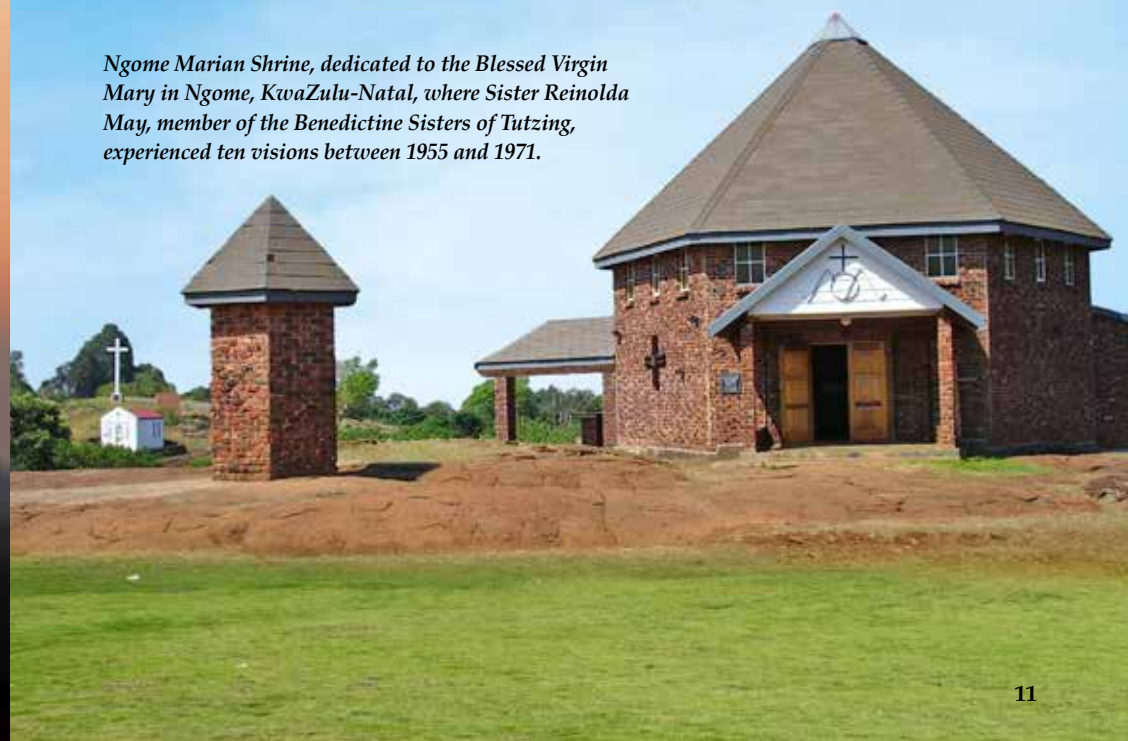
St. Anthony's Child & Youth Care Centre

'CARING FOR CARERS' OUTING

St Anthony's staff team members would like to pass their sincere gratitude for a reflection opportunity to Ngome. It was spiritually uplifting to be there and being there was like a heavy weight

was lifted from our shoulders. The staff at Ngome were good and supportive. The meals were delicious. What we can say about being at Ngome was all-good and we still wish for another opportunity.

Ngome Marian Shrine, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ngome, KwaZulu-Natal, where Sister Reinolda May, member of the Benedictine Sisters of Tutzling, experienced ten visions between 1955 and 1971.



Holy Mass

The message or the gospel was about living the holy life. The message left us thinking about the life at work, home and in the community. We were supposed to look within ourselves and do soul searching about the life we live.

Group Experience

The theme of the outing was all about living a Holy life. The feeling was like being born-again. We were able to offload emotionally. We were asked to purify ourselves by forgiving other people and the situations we have been through. Before we went for purification in the water were first purified by rain which we took as blessings from above. We were motivated to rise above all situations. The moment where we were asked to switch off candles which represented the lives of those whom we've lost along the way through death was difficult. That session taught us to let go of them and let them rest in peace. We were being armed spiritually to go and face life and its challenges. However, we wish to get another opportunity but we are grateful for this one we got.

Individual Experiences

"When I arrived there I could see that the place was a secret place of prayer. While I was there, I got time to reflect and be with myself. The place was refreshing and therapeutic. I was able to get purification and poured my heart out to God. I can say that I came back having assurance of who I am. I got an encounter with God and found my answers since it was my first time being there.

T.M Zondo

"I got spiritual healing while I was there and it was my first time going there. I still wish to go back and pray since I'm still experiencing challenges that I feel need some time alone away. The opportunity at Ngome was more than spiritually but it was emotional as well because I was able to deal with my feelings also."

T.C Zwane

"The opportunity of going to Ngome helped to deal with my pain. I was hurting emotionally and spiritually. The individual session helped me to let go of things that hurt me and the dearest people who have passed on in life especially my father's death. I was able to let my father to rest in peace. It helped to be able to be strong for my mother who couldn't cope with the loss. I also got internal happiness and this happiness is even experienced within my family ever since I visited Ngome."

O.L Mbatha

"Going to Ngome helped me to pray for Sithabelo who had wounds on her body. This have failed everything we have tried to help her heal but through prayers made at Ngome she is now healed. I was also healed from the sickness I had for a long time. I also got a chance to say my last goodbye to the dearest people whom I have lost along the way due to death."

Z.T Mncwango

"The prayers made at Ngome have helped me a lot and I still continue experiencing the blessings of what I have prayed for. My soul have found peace and I was spiritually healed. The challenges I had are being conquered."

C.G Zulu

"The opportunity of going to Ngome Marian Shrine has helped me a lot because I was relieved from fatigue in my body and my aching feet as well. All the bad things that were happening at home are no longer happening through the prayers made at Ngome Marian Shrine."

P.I Xaba

"Going to Ngome Marian Shrine has helped me a lot in all the hardships I have been experiencing in my life. My family has found peace and I have regained my prayer life which I have lost through the hardships. What helped me a lot was the one-on-one session with the Priest, the Holy Mass and the purification

session in the water, wilderness service and the service where we said our final goodbyes to the people we lost due to death. I so wish to get such an opportunity again because we do get to mourn for our loved ones and to cry to God."

H.G Mazibuko

"I really appreciate the opportunity to go Ngome Marian Shrine to be alone doing soul searching. Many of the thing I have prayed for have been answered. I have received my child's ID card. That same child has been healed because she always live on sickness and I was able to get answers about what makes her sick. I have prayed for my family who are always affected by owls and the bad spirit which affect the children at home. I got to attend a one-on-one session with the priest where I offloaded everything that affected me spiritually and emotionally. The priest gave advices about the things I needed to do to resolve some of my issues. I did all what the priest suggested and I do see the difference. I still wish to get another opportunity".

K Magubane

"Being at Ngome Marian Shrine helped me to deal with my problems and to communicate with God and to pray. I also got a chance to talk with the priest on a one-on-one session which helped me a lot even now."

B.P Buthelezi

"Being at Ngome Marian Shrine helped me a lot because I was able to deal with the loss of my family members especially my father. My prayer strength was revived and I am now able to share the word of God. I got time to reflect and team support was good."

J.G Ngwenya

"I went there to pray for my children to get employment, one of them is now employed at Eskom, and my sister's child was employed. I prayed for my first born daughter who has got cancer, my director prayed with me a prayer for people living with cancer. When we came back from Ngome Marian Shrine my daughter was supposed to go to Grey's hospital in Pietermaritzburg the doctors there said they no longer see cancer on her. I am a person living with Arthritis but I attended the purification service in cold water but I was not affected. I still wish we could get another opportunity because there is healing there."

P.V Shabangu

"It was my first time going there. The environment alone brought peace and healing emotionally, mentally as well as spiritually. I benefitted a lot from an individual session. I had a lot of stress and doubt about some of the things in my life. The session with the priest helped a lot. Getting time alone to do introspection in such an environment was also grateful. My spirituality was strengthened."

G.P Ndlovu

"I received healing that made a difference in my life as I was going through difficulties such as loss of my family members. My prayers were answered, my little brother got a job since he was not working for a long time."

T.M Mdluli

"I received healing since I was not able to deal with the loss of my parents and it was difficult to even talk about them. I was not able to spiritually bond with my child who passed away but I can even dream about him now. There is a financial inheritance, which we could not access as a family but that issue has now been resolved."

Being at Ngome Marian Shrine helped me to cope with my parents passing (deaths). It was hard for me to the point that it has not been easy to care for the children at St Anthony's but through your help I am managing to do what is expected of me. Thank you so much for your kind support. It was hard for me to even talk about them but the group session of letting go to the our dearest people helped me. I was not able to connect with my child who died but now I can even dream about him after coming back from Ngome Marian Shrine."

H.N Ntuli



Some images from what was a very special day at Ngome Marian Shrine



Arriving at Ngome, unaware what changes would lie ahead.



Morning prayers put us all at ease.



Purification by Water session.



Rosary Garden at Ngome Marian Shrine.



Preparing for rosary prayer.

Madagascar

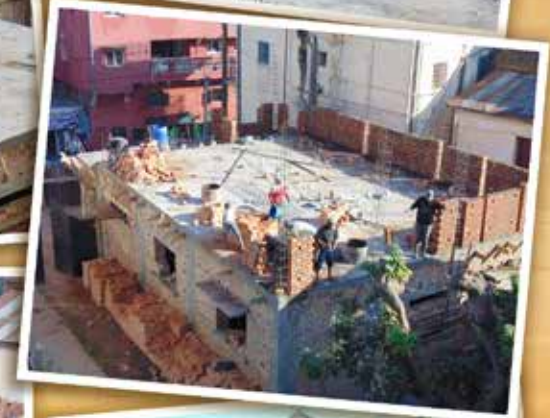
In the midst of the needs of the people Part 2

In our Summer issue of the Troubadour we introduced our Friars in Madagascar who are working amongst the poorest of people and despite having to study hard they reach out to the local people and try to help them to help themselves.

The project is continuing and this selection of photos show progress in the work they are involved in. They thank you very much for your help and, hopefully, the people who will benefit will also pray in thanksgiving for your goodness.



The project continues to progress well. The first floor completed the second floor goes on ...





The builders work tirelessly in the sweltering heat, as they know the importance of the project.



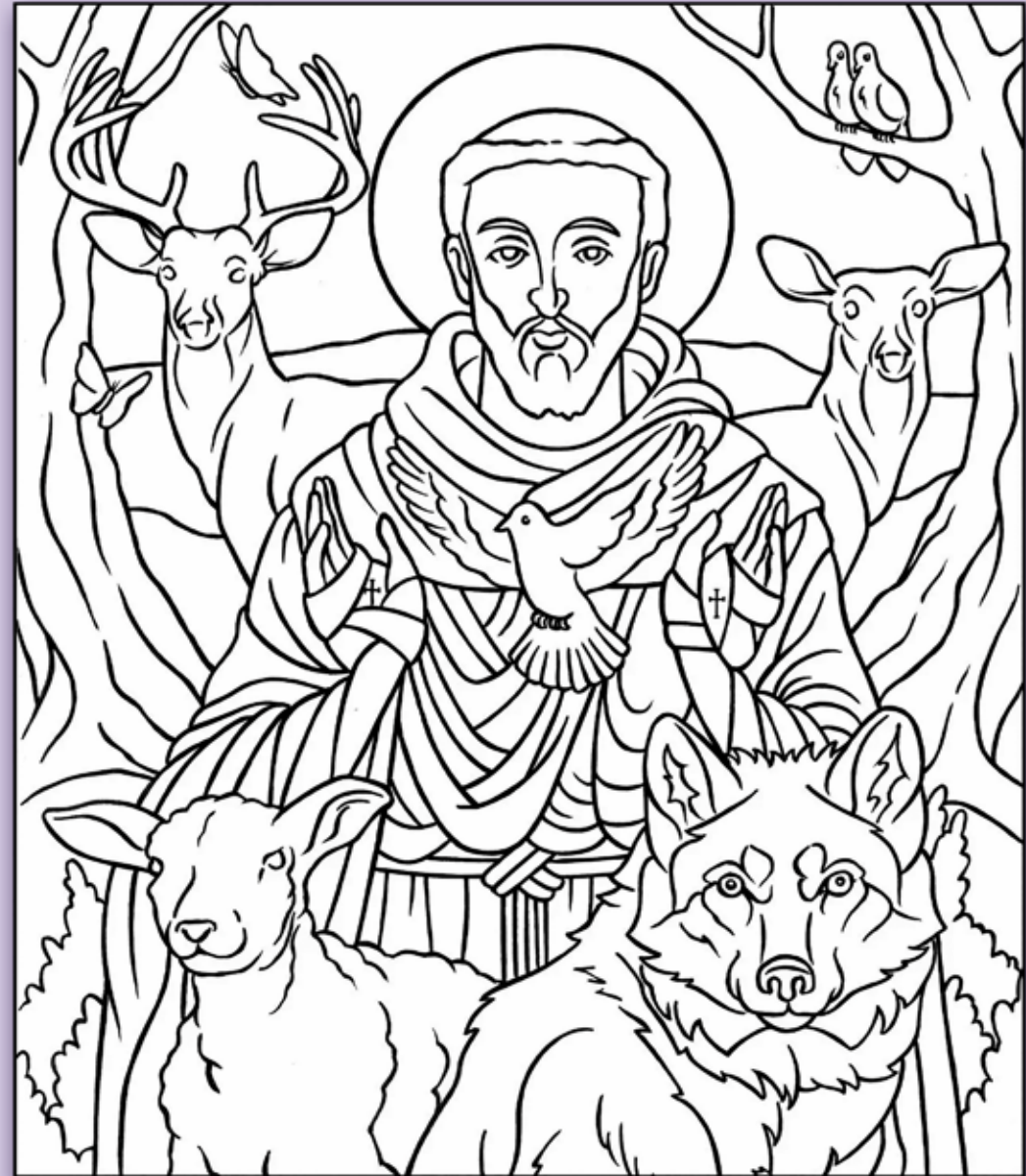
Official documents and forms, including a table with columns for 'No.', 'Description', and 'Quantity', likely related to construction materials or labor.

Handwritten notes and forms, including several 'FACTURE' (invoice) documents with columns for 'No.', 'Date', and 'Description'.

As everywhere the materials don't come cheap, and costs mount. But with your continued generosity we know our efforts will be rewarded.

COLOURING PAGE

Colour this page as neatly and brightly as you can. HAVE FUN!



St. Francis of Assisi - Feast day 4th October.

“ May we always care for our children,
not counting the cost, so that they may
never believe themselves to be mistakes, but
always know their infinite worth. ”

Pope Francis

