

Extractions Thoughts and History

To extract means to draw out. In the Extraction of St. Francis's Spirit, we don't see our saint's name in advance because we trust the Holy Spirit to guide us as we each draw out a saint to be a patron for us throughout the year. Same with the Virtue, Scripture passage, and words of St. Francis. The Holy Spirit guides us there, too.

We and our saint might have some things in common, or maybe not — and that's OK. This isn't about us getting a saint that's like us, but for us to become more like our saint. The Holy Spirit has guided us to our Saint, Virtue, Scripture, and Francis Saying because they all have something(s) to teach us, to help us deepen our vocation and our spirituality.

So, dive in. Get to know your saint. Type your saint's name into your computer and resources will appear. Read several of them. Do this as soon as possible after the Extraction. The pamphlet, "Growing Closer to Your Saint" offers suggestions for your relationship with your saint.

The Extraction can be celebrated at any time but near the Epiphany is a good choice. We recall that the Magi, "having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way" (Matthew 2:12). What we receive in the Extraction may be the Resolutions we need to guide us in a new way in the New Year.

Origin of the Extraction of St. Francis's Spirit

"Imitating Francis' deep love for the Virgin Mary, Franciscans have consistently pursued the spiritual benefit of meditation on the joys and sorrows of the Blessed Mother. In the early 15th century, the community not only developed a new method of praying the rosary (the '*Crown*'), but according to some historians, it also added the final words to the Hail Mary, '*...pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.*'

"The friars also highlighted the sanctity of the Holy Family by zealously promoting devotion to Saint Joseph. As early as 1399, a General Chapter decree introduced as special liturgical office honouring Saint Joseph. A Franciscan pope, Sixtus IV (1471–1484), introduced the feast of Saint Joseph as the *husband* of Mary, now celebrated universally on the 19th of March. In 1741, the General Chapter of Conventuals made a request to have Saint Joseph named as a patron of the Order. Pope Benedict XIV granted the request, naming Saint Joseph as the '*Special Patron of the Whole Seraphic Order.*' In 1870, Pope Pius IX (a Secular Franciscan) named Joseph as the '*Patron of the Universal Church.*' Pope John XXIII (also a Secular Franciscan) proclaimed Saint Joseph '*Patron of the Second Vatican Council*' and inscribed his name in the canon of the Mass.

"This great reverence for the saints eventually led to the custom of celebrating Epiphany as a feast for promoting personal holiness. In the paraliturgical ceremony of the *Extractions*, each friar would draw the name of a saint (who would become his patron for the year), and a short spiritual exhortation. During Epiphany the community would also renew the sanctity of its home by going in procession to bless each room in the friary while singing hymns of praise."

Origin: Pp. 61–63, *Franciscans Conventual: Friars of the Community*, by Robert Melnick, OFM Conv., and Joseph Wood, OFM Conv. Franciscan Vocation Centre, Basilica of Saint Francis, Assisi, Italy. Published in Collaboration with Saint Francis of Assisi Custody, Canada, 29 November 1996, Feast of the Rule, All Saints of the Seraphic Order, Edizioni Messaggero Padova.