

Pray, Grow, & Serve

Learning about the dignity of the human person

The PELICAN
PROJECT

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 4th | Green

Communion of Saints: Meet Bl. Francisco de Paula Victor!

If you remember, a consistent ethic of life means that in every situation involving a human person, their life must always be carefully protected from harm. Protecting the unborn's right to continue living is the core of this conversation because, without this most basic human right, no other right can be guaranteed! With this in mind, it is very important to pray, grow, and serve in all areas that address our call to respect the dignity and sanctity of every human life. This week, Bl. Francisco de Paula Victor teaches us how to do this with the heart of Christ. He teaches us that with God's grace we can change the world!

Who is Bl. Francisco de Paula Victor?

Grow: Francisco was born on April 12, 1827, to his faithful Catholic mother Lourença Justiniana de Jesus. Lourença was a slave, and because of that, Francisco was born into slavery as well. As Francisco grew, he felt God's call to become a priest—but his mother thought this impossible. During this time, it was against the law for a black man (or woman) to hold a leadership role in the community or the church. It was even illegal for a black man to study to be a priest! Instead, Francisco was taught to work as a tailor. (A tailor is someone who sews clothes.)

Francisco believed and trusted in God's call to the priesthood. Bravely, he began to study in secret. Over time, through God's providence, he was let into the seminary. Sadly, even there, some men treated him very poorly because of the color of his skin. They humiliated him, rejected his call to the priesthood, and denied his dignity as a man made in the image and likeness of God. This hurt Francisco deeply, but with great patience, he loved those who persecuted him with the heart of Christ.

Against all odds, Francisco was ordained a Catholic priest on June 14, 1851!

Once assigned to a church, Fr. Francisco experienced some of the same poor treatment. Some members of his parish refused to acknowledge him as an ordained priest because he was black and an ex-slave; they even refused to receive the Eucharist from him! Again, Francisco's heart was deeply hurt, but he continued to care for his flock with a gentle patience. Over time, Francisco won over the hearts of his community because of his deep love of Christ.

Pray: This week, through the intercession of Bl. Francisco, ask God for the grace to always promote the dignity and sanctity of every human life with our words and actions; even when we are persecuted.

Love in the face of evil.

Because of the color of his skin, people denied Francisco's inherent dignity as a man created in the image and likeness of God, worthy of freedom, equality, and the opportunity to flourish within his God-given vocation. Francisco chose to face this evil with love. Through his Christ-like humility, Francisco showed those who opposed Him how to truly live the Gospel.

Bl. Francisco's story reminds us that we have great power to change the culture around us when our words and actions are rooted in Christ's love. Francisco was a courageous, faithful, and virtuous man of God who served as a humble shepherd to his flock. He is the first black Brazilian national to be beatified in the Roman Catholic Church!

Serve: This week, serve your friends and family well by introducing them to Bl. Francisco. Can you remember three facts about his story?



“The great lie of our age is that we are powerless in the face of compromises, structures, and temptations of the mass culture but we are not powerless, we can make a difference.”

Living the Gospel of Life, A Challenge to
American Catholics

