



LIVING IN THE SPIRIT OF FRANCIS AND CLARE

**THE TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY OF THE ASSOCIATES
OF THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ALLEGANY**

(Approved - June 24, 2024)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with sincere appreciation, that we, Sr. Colleen Brady, OSF, and Linda Dees, Associate Co-Directors, wish to express our deepest gratitude for the tireless dedication and generous sharing of time and talents of the TAU Team members: Sr. Jo Streva, OSF, Congregational Leadership Liaison, Sr. Rosimeire Dias Nolêto, OSF, Brazilian Regional Associate Coordinator, Sr. Patricia Reid, OSF (Interpreter), and Associates: Mary Laubenthal (NY), Robin Roche (NJ), Rita Canfield (NC), Ellen Nash (NC), Marcia Gill (Miami, FL), Paula Lyn (Tampa Bay, FL), Cheryl Ann Maggio (Tampa Bay, FL), and Margaret Jarrett (Jamaica); all those who were instrumental in and supportive of their efforts, as well as all those who came before them, in prayerfully bringing forth this newly revised and updated Guidebook.

With grateful hearts and prayers of blessing it is lovingly shared with all those drawn to the Mission, Vision and Charism of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and eager to embrace the *“Transformative Journey of the Associate Way of Life.”*



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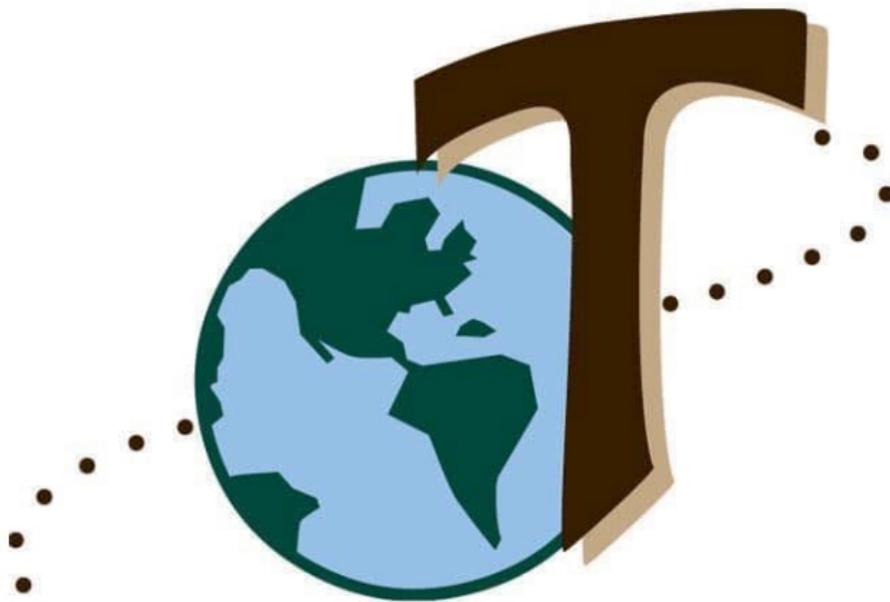
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The Associate Journey Begins



“Behold, I am doing something new...LISTEN!”

**Welcome to Living
in the
Spirit of Francis and Clare**

**The Transformative Journey of the Associates
of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany**

The following pages are a comprehensive guide for those led by the Holy Spirit to embrace the Associate Way of Life, living in the spirit of Francis and Clare, and reflecting the Charism of The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany.

May this manual serve as a source of inspiration and resource for our Associate community and Sisters.



INTRODUCTION & CALL TO THE ASSOCIATE WAY OF LIFE

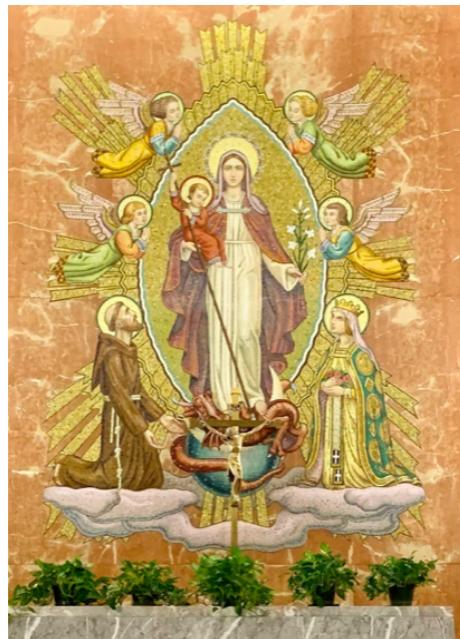
Throughout the ages the laity has responded to the Holy Spirit's call to a deeper spirituality through good works, some as Third Order members and others through lay institutes or sodalities. Documentation on the concept of the Associate Program can be traced back to Vatican II which discussed the role of the laity in the Church and the recognition of their search for "a spirituality that has meaning in their lives." This recognition prompted religious communities to partner with the laity as a way to deepen and share in the spirituality that evolved from and around the Charism of their particular founders.

Since 1996, Sisters and Associates have had the opportunity to read about and/or network with counterparts in other Congregations through the North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR, which was formally dissolved in 2022) and the Franciscan Federation, through materials, biennial conferences, etc.

May each one of us realize our own goal of union with God and the building up of God's Kingdom as we journey with Francis, Clare and the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany.

"Rejoice that the Spirit is alive and present among us today and doing something new in religious communities. The Associate Program is a sign of life and hope. Sisters and Associates are joining together to make the Gospel present in our world today. People feel called to share their gifts and talents and Religious Communities are opening their doors to share their Charism. Rejoice! The Spirit is doing something new!"

(Excerpted from a presentation by Sr. Helen Lodge, OSF)



THE TRANSFORMATIVE ASSOCIATE WAY OF LIFE WITH THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ALLEGANY

In response to the lay movement in the Church, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, commonly known as the “Allegany Franciscans,” have officially been involved with the Associate movement since 1987. The vision of the Congregation for the Associate Way of Life is to provide an opportunity for those who are called to personal holiness in the Franciscan-Clarian spirit. They experience journeying together with the Allegany Franciscan Congregation as they strive to live the Gospel message and way of life.

Those who choose to “associate” with the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany do so by embracing the Franciscan-Clarian Charism, Mission and Core Values of the Congregation. They are committed to becoming followers of Francis and Clare while maintaining their chosen state of life.

The Associates meet regularly for prayer and faith sharing in the form of in-person, Zoom and/or Hybrid meetings with Sisters and/or one another. This enables them to be faithful to the Mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany “to be at home with all and to witness the Gospel way of life” in their personal and professional life. Associates are encouraged to share their individual gifts and talents ministering to those within their local communities.

All are welcome to be an Associate. One only needs to have the desire for a deeper spiritual life and a commitment to live the Gospel message.

Associates are not bound to a Rule or a specific form of daily prayer, nor do they take vows. Associates do make a formal annual commitment to the FSA Associate Way of Life. They dedicate themselves to interior conversion and life-long transformation.

Like Francis and Clare, Associates respond to the realities they face in our world today, living and serving in relationship with one another, as our sisters and brothers, and all of creation.

Becoming an Associate of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany is to be in a collaborative relationship with and through the vowed Congregation of Sisters, and to receive and nourish the gift of their Charism for the good of the world.

The Charism of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany is the gift which the Holy Spirit gave to them, to be used for making the world a better place. They are responsible for “holding” the Charism and sharing it with others through their mission and ministries.

The vocation of the FSA Associate is a call to Mission, Charism, prayer, community, ministry and a collaborative connection and relationship with the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. Associates and Sisters walk together, mutually supporting each other in faith, ministry and prayer. Associates are encouraged to share their individual gifts and talents with local communities because both Associates and Sisters are called to minister in the Church and in the wider society.



ASSOCIATE MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, strive to live Gospel Values. Rooted in God's LOVE we respond to the diverse needs of the world by building relationships that bear witness to the Franciscan-Clarian Charism.

ASSOCIATE VISION STATEMENT

Embracing the transforming power of God's LOVE, we...

- Deepen Franciscan-Clarian Spirituality
- Engage in Social Justice Actions
- Foster sustainability in our world

CORE VALUES: The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and Associates

strive to live Gospel values and reflect the spirituality of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi by praising God. For the goodness of all people, we ...

Reverence and Honor the sacredness and dignity of every person.

Commit to the Poor by standing with and serving those who are impoverished, especially those most vulnerable.

Seek Justice by fostering right relationships to promote the common good, including sustainability of the Earth.

Practice Stewardship by honoring our heritage and holding ourselves accountable for the human, financial and natural resources entrusted to our care.

Act with Integrity by being Faithful to who we say we are.

Seek to Provide a Safe Environment for All by embracing a culture that prevents harm and nurtures a healing.

ASSOCIATE ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan provides direction for Associates to implement the objectives of the Associate Mission and Vision Statements, as well as support the Chapter Initiatives of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany:

Chapter Initiatives 2021: Integral Ecology, Interculturality/Diversity and promotion of the Common Good.

A. Strive to actively deepen Franciscan-Clarian spirituality, personally and communally:

1. Participate in prayer, faith-sharing and discussion on Franciscan-Clarian spirituality, values and life
2. Read Franciscan books, articles and periodicals from the Associate Bibliography and other sources
3. Annually participate in Days of Reflection, retreats, or other opportunities to withdraw from the activities of daily life to commune with God
4. Model Franciscan-Clarian spirituality in your community

B. Support and implement the Social Justice initiatives of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany:

1. Participate in and share educational awareness through news and social media, as well as presentations and discussions
2. Promote and advocate for social justice:
 - a. Identify and serve the poor and marginalized in our communities and missions
 - b. Embrace principles and attitudes of non-violence, peace and reconciliation to eliminate prejudice and discrimination in our lives through prayer, education and promotion of Congregational statements on vital issues
 - c. Actively engage in networking for social change

C. Foster sustainability in our world, advancing the principles of Integral Ecology:

1. Educate ourselves and others on the meaning of Integral Ecology, i.e. the interconnectedness of environmental, ecological, economic, social, cultural, ethical and political issues as they affect the health of our planet and all of humanity
2. Respect and nurture the cosmos through sustainability practices in our personal lives

3. Collaborate with other groups to engage in actions that foster sustainability and sacredness of all life in our world

D. Invite greater diversity in membership:

1. Engage with and learn about local ethnic groups by participating in a variety of activities, celebrations, etc.
2. Volunteer for projects with other service organizations for greater witness and visibility

E. Foster circular and shared leadership within the Associate Way of Life:

1. Encourage and empower Associates to plan, prepare and facilitate local community meetings
2. In collaboration with Associate Co-Directors and the Local Associate Minister (LAM), identify and prepare Associates to assume leadership responsibilities:
 - within local communities
 - in committees associated with the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany
 - other related organizations (i.e. Franciscan Federation, Intercongregational Associate Directors (IAD), etc.



PROCESS FOR BECOMING AN ASSOCIATE OF THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ALLEGANY

Sisters and/or Associates are encouraged to invite individual(s) who reflect(s) the Allegany Franciscan Charism to “come and see” and to encourage them to attend monthly Associate meetings. Others may make initial contact through the website at (www.alleganyfranciscans.org) and may be directed to contact/communicate with one of the local Associate communities either in person or virtually. After several meetings the Inquirer will be invited to complete the Prospective Associate Fact Sheet found in the Transformative Journey of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. The **Local Associate Minister (LAM)** of that community will pass the fact sheet to the Co-Directors. The Inquirer will begin receiving communications from that local community.

Next, the LAM will invite the Inquirer to enter into the mentoring process. Each Inquirer will have a local contact person, appointed by the LAM, who will introduce them to the Mentoring Team and support them on their journey.

The Mentoring Team, consisting of three Associates selected by the Co-Directors, will meet with Inquirers and implement an appropriate course of study for the mentoring process. After a period of orientation, prayerful reflection and mutual discernment, the Mentoring Team will make a recommendation to the LAM, as to the readiness of the Inquirer for commitment. The LAM, in collaboration with the Co-Directors, acknowledges the Inquirer’s request and may invite the Inquirer to commit to the Associate Way of Life.

The local community, along with the Inquirer, will plan a prayerful, first commitment celebration. This can take place during a meeting, a liturgy, or during the local communities’ recommitment ceremony, with the new member(s) making their commitment first. This commitment will be renewed annually with other members of the community, for as long as the Associate and the Congregation wish to continue the relationship. At this ceremony (*See sample ritual on page 17*), all members will complete the “**Covenant of Association**” form, which will be sent to the Co-Directors.

A formal letter of welcome will be mailed to the new Associate from the Co-Directors and/or a representative of the Congregational Leadership.



WAYS OF BEING IN RELATIONSHIP AS AN ASSOCIATE:

Active Committed Associate – Fully participates in local community meetings, community service activities, and larger Congregational gatherings (see Covenant of Association for more details).

Extended Committed Associate – Those who are unable to participate actively due to geographical distance or incapacity, or other circumstances, but wish to maintain a connection to the Charism and Mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and the Local Associate Community.

All Committed Associates will continue to receive Congregational and Associate information if they desire and personal contact with the local community is encouraged. They should always be invited to Associate / Congregational gatherings.

DEATH OF AN ASSOCIATE

News of the death of an Associate is communicated to the Co-Directors by the LAM. Both a picture of the Associate and their date of death will be shared with the Co-Directors and the details will be added to the archived Necrology. This information will also be shared by the Co-Directors with the Congregational Communication Team. The Congregation will send out prayer requests. A Mass card will be sent to the family on behalf of the Sisters and the Associate Community by the Co-Directors. When possible, the LAM will make a personal contact with the family of the Associate to express sympathy and offer prayerful support for all.

DISASSOCIATION FROM THE ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

At times a situation may arise in which an Associate asks for termination of her/his relationship with the Congregation or the Co-Directors may ask the person to leave the Associate Community.

Disassociation may happen for one of the following reasons:

- An Associate no longer feels called to journey with the Sisters and Associates in a formal relationship.
- When an Associate no longer attends monthly gatherings and fails to communicate with the group. The LAM will attempt to clarify the relationship, but if there is no response the LAM will confer with the Co-Directors to discern the next steps.
- When there is behavior on the part of the Associate which causes grave scandal or is inconsistent with the Franciscan Way of Life.

The Associate is free to submit a written request to the Co-Directors for reinstatement if she/he feels called to do so and the issue(s) causing her/his disassociation has been reviewed and resolved.



Associate Covenant Ceremony

Opening Song: 🎵 Sing the *Canticle of the Sun* 🎵 by Marty Haugen

REFRAIN: The heavens are telling the glory of God
 And all creation is shouting for joy!
 Come dance in the forest, come play in the field,
 And sing, sing to the glory of the Lord!

Praise for the sun, the bringer of day,
He carries the light of the Lord in His rays,
The moon and the stars who light up the way,
Unto your throne!

Praise for the wind that blows through the trees,
The sea's mighty storms, the gentlest breeze;
They blow where they will,
They blow where they please, to please the Lord!

Praise for the rain that waters our fields,
And blesses our crops so all the earth yields,
From death unto life her mystery revealed
Springs forth in joy!

Praise for the earth, who makes life grow,
The creatures you made to let your life show;
The flowers and trees that help us to know,
The heart of your love.



Opening Prayer: We believe in a God of love, a love that overflows to give us life and lets us cooperate in giving life. We believe that God gave us the freedom and responsibility to be all we are created to be. We believe that the Holy Spirit is present today giving us faith and hope, calling us all to be witnesses to God's love and life. We believe, by sharing the power of the Holy Spirit with others, we can call forth Gospel people. Amen.

Psalm 86

Awaken new life in me, O Lord, as I yearn to do your will; dispel the ignorance of my ways as I put my trust in You. My soul is uplifted, as I abandon myself into your hands.

Teach me your ways, Mighty Counselor, that I may walk in truth; write my name upon your Heart. Oh, that I might radiate your Light forever!

Great is your steadfast Love toward those who call upon You; You are merciful and gracious, forgiving and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Be present to me and receive my prayer; imbue me with strength and help me to release each fear. Pour forth your Light into my soul, that all that is hidden in darkness, may come forth into awareness.

For You, O Beloved, are my Redeemer and my Comforter.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

Introduction of Associate(s):

Reflection (by LAM or Associate Co-Directors): St. Francis of Assisi grew up wealthy in the small town of Assisi, yet after receiving multiple visions from God, where in one God told him to "repair my church, which is falling into ruins," he took a vow of poverty and sought to live out the Gospel in a literal way. He is known for his love of nature and animals, his strong commitment to both physical and spiritual poverty, and for receiving the marks of the crucified body of Christ. He and Saint Clare continue to inspire their followers through both their words and actions. Impelled by their vision, as followers of Christ who are graced with the fire of the Holy Spirit, let us embrace the Gospel Way of Life as Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. May we, as we share the Charism, also seek to follow the Gospel and live in a spirit of minority, simplicity, joy and being "at home" with all people. Faithful to the heritage and values fostered by Mother Teresa O'Neil and our Sisters, may we as Associates give life and meaning to the words that reflect the life of Saint Francis of Assisi:

(Each quote to be read by an Associate making or renewing their commitment)

- ✚ “Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”
- ✚ “If God can work through me, He can work through anyone.”
- ✚ “For it is in giving that we receive.”
- ✚ “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love...”
- ✚ “Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary.”
- ✚ “The deeds you do may be the only sermon some people will hear today.”
- ✚ “Do few things, but do them lovingly well, simple joys are holy.”
- ✚ “Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received – only what you have given.”
- ✚ “A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows.”
- ✚ “I have done what was mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours!”



Franciscan Sisters: We, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, believe that the mission of Francis and Clare was to live the Gospel life in the world. As Franciscan women of the Church, we have this apostolic ideal: to be and to witness. We strive to be present to the people of God and to be a sign of Christ’s transforming love and power. In our daily lives we seek to witness to the poor, humble and crucified Christ.

We invite you to make/renew your commitment in our witness. We, your Sisters, promise to join you daily in spirit and prayer, sharing our Charism with you through our meetings and relationships. We promise to strive to live out the values of Jesus, Francis and Clare in our daily lives.

FSA Associate(s): We thank you for the invitation to join you in that witness. Through my/our commitment, I/we promise to strive to live out the values of Jesus, Francis and Clare in my/our daily life/lives. I/We seek to know and live out the Charism of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. I/we promise to join you daily in spirit and prayer, taking part in local meetings, sharing prayer and our living of the Gospel, reaching out in service to others in the spirit of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany.

ALL: Together may we work toward becoming Christ-centered persons, going to God through Jesus, following in the footsteps of Jesus, Francis and Clare.

🎵 Sing *The Blessing of St. Francis* 🎵

May the Lord bless you; May the Lord keep you,
May he show his face to you and have mercy.

The Lord bless you; the Lord keep you,
May he turn to you his countenance
and give you peace,

The Lord bless you.



Closing Prayer: *(St. Anthony's Prayer for Help of the Holy Spirit)*

O God, send forth Your Holy Spirit upon us; guide all our thoughts and actions so that our lives will be pleasing to You. Be with us in times of trial, stay close to us when we are weak in body and soul; give us the strength, courage and grace to do Your holy will in all things. Never let us be separated from You in thought, word and deed.

ALL: Good and gracious God, enfold us with strength and steadfast love, help our faith to remain strong. May we render to you all praise, all glory, all thanksgiving, all honor and all blessing.

AMEN

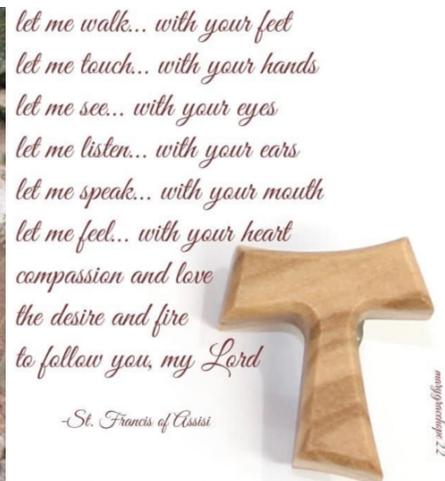
Closing Song: 🎵 *I Have Loved You* 🎵 by Michael Joncas

REFRAIN: I have loved you with an everlasting love,
I have called you and you are mine;
I have loved you with an everlasting love,
I have called you and you are mine.

Seek the face of the Lord and long for Him;
He will bring you His light and His peace.

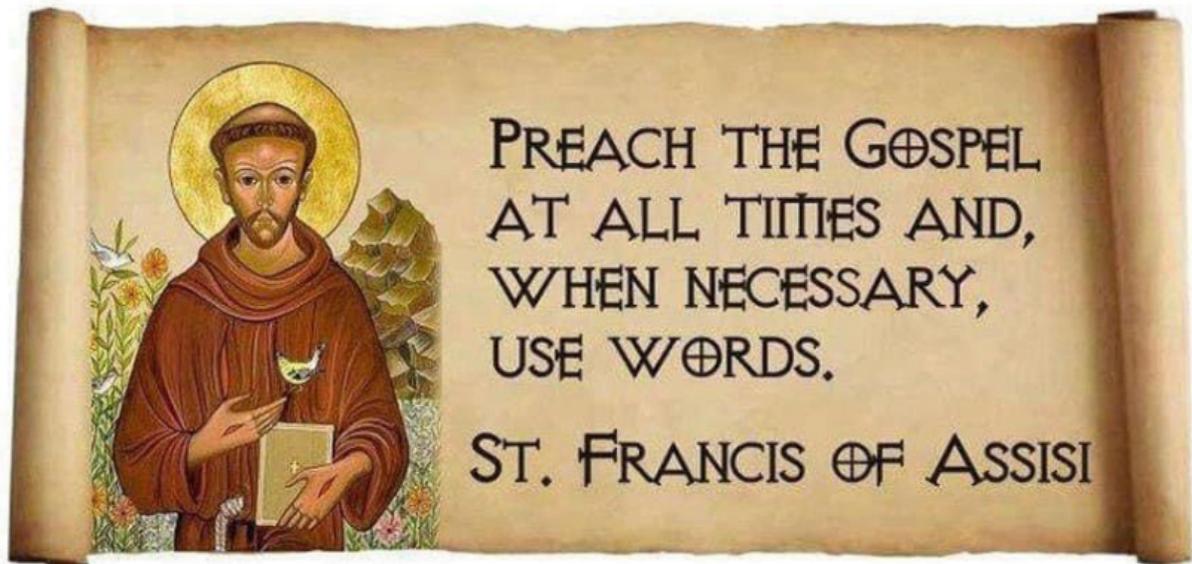
Seek the face of the Lord and long for Him;
He will bring you His joy and His hope.

Seek the face of the Lord and long for Him;
He will bring you His care and His love.



NOTE: This Associate Covenant Ceremony is strictly a SAMPLE. Associates are encouraged to use this solely as a MODEL, selecting Music, Readings and Prayers deemed appropriate and/or significant to each community of Associates.

Policies and Forms



COMMUNICATION POLICY

Communicating Information for Publication through Email, Newsletters and Social Media

To ensure that all publications are aligned with and reflect a common, positive voice of unity with the Congregation, and its Mission and Vision, it is vital that all act in accordance with the following system which has been put into place by the TAU (Transformational Associates Unified) Team:

- Please add identifying captions including names, places, etc. to all pictures submitted for publication.
- Send notes, pictures and drafted articles to the Associate Co-Directors in the United States and the Brazilian Regional Associate Coordinator.
- The Associate Co-Directors and Brazilian Regional Associate Coordinator, will review, approve and forward on submissions to members of the Congregational Communication Team for timely publication. The Congregational Leadership Liaison will be consulted on an as needed basis only.

All are encouraged to take pictures (**FSA Written Release signed form is required**), record highlights and/or write a brief synopsis of the ongoing work and events in which you and your local community engage and participate. Information will be translated and disseminated to all Sisters and Associates in the United States, Jamaica, Brazil, Bolivia and Mozambique utilizing a variety of platforms including email, E-Newsletters, META Facebook, WhatsApp, and the FSA Website.

To ensure that information is kept current, please be aware of the Deadlines utilized by the Congregational Communication Team for content publication:

Allegheny E-Newsletter Submission and Publication Dates:

E-Newsletter Submissions received on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month at 12:00 PM EST.
E-Newsletter Publication Release on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month by 2:00 PM EST



PROSPECTIVE ASSOCIATE FACT SHEET

Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Male _____ Female _____

Phone/Cell _____

E-Mail _____

Emergency Contact: Name _____ Ph. # _____

Preferred form of Communication: (Call/Text/Email/WhatsApp) _____

What would you most like us to know about yourself and what attracted you to the FSA Associate Way of Life?

Signature _____

Date _____

LAM _____

Date _____

Family Information:

Spouse's Name: _____

Children's Names: _____

Gifts to Share (special skills, talents, languages, educational experience, hobbies, training, etc.)

Ministries (currently or previously involved or interested in)

Anything else you would like to share about yourself:



Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY
St. Elizabeth Motherhouse

PHOTO RELEASE FORM

The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany Communications Department has permission to use my photograph publicly to promote FSA. I understand that the images may be used in print publications, online publications, presentations, websites, and social media. I also understand that I will not be receiving a fee, royalty, or other payment for use of my photograph.

_____ YES, I give my consent.

_____ NO, I do not give my consent.

Signature _____

Name _____

Date _____



COVENANT OF ASSOCIATION

I, _____, striving to live Gospel values, in the spirit of Francis and Clare, commit myself as an Associate to live in relationship with the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and to follow the Associate Way of Life for one year, with annual renewal, that includes:

- Praying for Associates and Sisters
- Living the Associate Mission and Vision Statements and the Mission and Charism of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany
- Participating in opportunities to deepen my spiritual life, i.e. retreats, days of reflection, etc.
- Participating in Associate Meetings and Franciscan Sisters of Allegany Congregational celebrations and regional gatherings
- I will, to the best of my ability, be involved in outreach ministries, uniting my ministry and volunteer work with that of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and whenever possible, to volunteer to work in a Franciscan Sister of Allegany Ministry/Mission.

Associate Signature _____ Date _____

First Commitment: _____ Renewal _____

Local Associate Minister _____

Associate Co-Directors _____



ANNUAL ASSOCIATE DATA COLLECTION UPDATE

Regional Associate Group Location: _____

Name: _____ **Birthdate: (Month/Day)** _____

Address: _____

Cell # _____ **Landline Phone #:** _____

Email Address : _____

**** Preferred form of Communication: (Call/Text/Email/WhatsApp)** _____

Current Status: _____ **Active Associate** _____ **Extended Associate** _____ **Inquirer**

Emergency Contact Info:

Name _____ **Relationship** _____

Phone # _____ **Email** _____

Preferred Meeting Style: _____ **In-person** _____ **Zoom** _____ **Hybrid**

Significant life changes you would like to share, i.e., loss of family member, move, health issue, etc.:

Anything else you would like us to know about you or your ministries, skills, gifts, talents, educational experiences, training, etc.

Any questions for the Associate Co-Directors or suggestions you would like to make that may benefit us as Associates seeking to live out our Mission, Vision, Core Values and FSA Charism:

Signature

Date

Revised 4/16/24

ASSOCIATE ARCHIVES DONATION FORM

If an individual or group wishes to Donate items representative of their community, for the Associate Archives, please include the following Archives Donation Form with the item(s).

**FSA Congregational Archives
PO Box W, St. Bonaventure, NY, 14778
Associate Collection
Material Donation Information Slip**

Donor's Name:

Donor's Associate Community (Allegany, Brazil, Jamaica, Miami, NC, NJ, Tampa Bay, etc.):

Donor's Preferred Contact Information (email, physical address, phone, etc.):

Description of Material: (use other side if needed)

Date of Material Donation:

Subject or Event depicted in the Material: (use other side if needed)

If this material is not eligible for accession into the Archives, how would you like it to be handled? (Circle one)

Returned to Donor

Disposed / Recycled

Signature

Date



Franciscan Sisters of Allegany

History of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and Associates



HISTORY OF THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ALLEGANY

The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany trace their beginnings to April 25, 1859, when, in the chapel of St. Bonaventure College and Seminary, Father Pamfilo da Magliano, O.S.F., gave the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis to Mary Jane Todd and she received the name Sister Mary Joseph. Father Pamfilo, the Custos-Provincial of the Friars Minor of the Immaculate Conception Custody, had come with three other friars to western New York in 1856 at the invitation of Bishop John Timon, C.M. of the Diocese of Buffalo and Mr. Nicholas Devereux, a Catholic layman who had donated land and finances to the Franciscan community. The friars had come to educate young men at St. Bonaventure College and carry-on pastoral work in the area. Upon the request of Bishop Timon to “seek for Sisters of the Third Order” to provide education for the young women of the area, Father Pamfilo was led to form a new Congregation of women religious in Allegany, New York.

After the reception of Sr. Mary Joseph, Ellen Fallon was received on June 24, 1859, and given the name Sister Mary Bridget. Both women had been Franciscan Tertiaries in Ireland prior to their coming to Philadelphia, PA. Several months later, these two sisters were joined by Mary Anne O’Neil, a fifteen-year-old girl from New Jersey who had been exhorted by Father Pamfilo to be generous with the Lord despite her young years. Mary Anne was received on December 8, 1859, and given the name Sister Mary Teresa.

The three women formed the nucleus of the new community that soon began to attract other young women from the surrounding area. From the beginning of the Congregation, the Sisters were guided by Father Pamfilo. He appointed the leaders of the new community and in 1865, he presented the Sisters with their first Statutes, which had been adapted from the Statutes of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Glasgow, Scotland. (Father Pamfilo knew of the Glasgow Sisters from his time in Rome, and it was from this Congregation that the Allegany Franciscans would inherit their missions in Jamaica). In that same year, the Sisters held their first Chapter and elected Sister Mary Teresa O’Neil as their General Superior. She was to serve in this capacity for fifty-five of her sixty-six years in the Congregation; it was she who was to give leadership and formative vision to the new community.

The new community grew as the Sisters sought to serve the needs of the Church in a variety of ministries. The Sisters’ first ministry was education, where they taught countless children of many races and nationalities. In 1861, St. Elizabeth Academy was opened in Allegany for the education of young women. From this beginning, the Sisters branched out to open schools from Maine to Florida, along the eastern coast of the United States, and as far west as the state of Texas. Their students fondly remember them as kind, compassionate teachers who inspired many young people and provided a quality education to all.

In 1879, an appeal was made by the Vicar Apostolic of Jamaica, Very Reverend Thomas Porter, SJ, to the Very Reverend Leo Da Saracena, OFM, Provincial of the Friars Minor of North America to take over and staff a boarding and day school for girls, The Academy of the Immaculate Conception, established in January 1858. This matter was placed before Reverend Mother Teresa of Allegany, New York, even though the Allegany Congregation was itself just emerging from its pioneer stage. Her missionary zeal motivated her decision, and three Sisters were sent to Jamaica in the British West Indies. In doing so, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany became the first American-founded Congregation of religious women to send Sisters to the foreign missions. These Sisters were educators and, together with many others, established several schools throughout the island.

In the 1880's the Sisters expanded their ministry to include healthcare. In the year 1883 the Sisters assumed the administration of St. Elizabeth Hospital in Boston; in 1890, they accepted St. Elizabeth Hospital in New York City, and later sponsored and administered multiple hospitals and clinics throughout the Congregation. They also opened an orphanage and several homes for working girls and boys in the 1880's and 1890's. Additionally, they have served as nurses providing health care in Jamaica, Bolivia, and Mozambique. From the early days, when Sisters initially rode to remote jungle clinics on horseback, to more recent years when they cared for the marginalized, including AIDS patients in the mid-1980's to protecting those affected by human trafficking and domestic abuse, Allegany Franciscans have provided a steady, calming and healing presence to those most in need.

Missions were opened in Jamaica in 1879, central Brazil in 1945, in the state of Goiás in 1946, in Bolivia in 1965, and Mozambique in 2022. Initially, the Sisters worked in education; but later they opened health clinics and served in parishes. Sisters served the poor throughout United States. In 1947, The St. Elizabeth Mission Society was established to provide for the active participation of the laity in supporting home and foreign missions. The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany have joyfully responded and served others wherever they are called.

The Congregation received papal approbation of its Constitution and its status as a Pontifical Institute in 1913. In 1934, a new Constitution, encompassing the Franciscan Rule of 1927 was approved. A General Chapter was convoked in 1968 to initiate a period of spiritual renewal throughout the Congregation and an adaptation of the Constitution to the directives of the Second Vatican Council. Ministries were expanded to include pastoral work in parishes and hospitals, spiritual direction and retreat work, various types of social work, and new apostolates to the poor in migrant areas and the inner city. The Allegany Franciscans are as deeply committed to their spirituality as they are to the people that they serve. They have established houses of contemplative prayer. The Cloister, a contemplative dimension of the Congregation, was founded in 1959 and developed as a Ritiro or "a place to withdraw and pray" in Allegany, NY in 1967 and years later Bethany House (Jamaica) was established. Today, the Sisters lead faith sharing groups in local parishes, started the ecumenical "House of Prayer for All People" in

Gulph Mills, PA, and sponsor the Franciscan Center, a retreat house in Tampa, FL, open to all who seek spiritual growth and a deeper relationship with God.

The years after the Second Vatican Council were marked by significant changes in religious life. Renewal programs, workshops, retreats, and several studies positively affected the Congregation. By the General Chapter of 1976, the Sisters had reached a critical point in the life of the Congregation, and the decision was made to work both individually and corporately toward revitalization. Over the years, the Sisters have aligned their ministries to social justice causes. The Allegany Franciscans have served the poor and homeless at the Dwelling Place in New York City and continue to work alongside the Franciscan friars at St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia, PA. They sponsor ministries such as St. Elizabeth Mission Society, The Renodin Foundation, and Allegany Franciscan Ministries, which provide grant funding to charitable projects locally and globally. The Sisters also sponsor Canticle Farm, an organic community garden that cares for the planet as well as people living locally.

The revised Third Order Franciscan Rule of 1982 and subsequent General Chapter Statements continued to set direction for the Congregation. Changes in governance structures were developed; actuarial and viability studies were undertaken to assess the present and future of the Congregation; and formal long-range planning was initiated.

During the 1988 Chapter, the Allegany Franciscans officially established the Associate Program to connect more deeply with lay people who wish to live the Franciscan Charism. Today, the Associate Program consists of multiple groups in the United States, Brazil, and Jamaica, each of which endeavors to joyfully serve their communities in the tradition of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany.

The General Chapter of 2004 set in motion the revision of the Constitution and of other Congregational documents. From Chapter 2004 to Chapter 2008, the Congregation wrote and revised eight drafts of the proposed Constitution which was unanimously accepted by the Chapter body. Subsequently, it was sent to Rome and received final papal approval from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life on February 11, 2009. Throughout the following years, the Sisters spent time studying and internalizing this new document.

In 2009 it was apparent that the Congregation needed to assess its properties, in light of present resources, both personnel and financial. Decisions were made to sell and/or remodel properties in all four countries. Major reconstruction was undertaken at St. Elizabeth Motherhouse in Allegany, NY and at Mae Admiravel Convent in Brazil.

Chapter 2012 carried the theme "*Courageous Women: Incarnating the Christ,*" and this was the focal point for all discussion and decisions. There was a desire to continue and deepen commitment to

those areas of endeavor which had already begun. As preparations for Chapter 2016 began, the theme which surfaced was “*Were Not Our Hearts Burning Within Us: Be the Fire!*” The living of Franciscan Spirituality provided an umbrella for other Chapter topics, which included Mission and Ministry, Emerging forms of Franciscan Life, Our Sister Mother Earth and Leadership.

During the Chapter, participants became increasingly aware of the importance of Clare’s influence in living the Gospel. The phrase “Franciscan-Clarian Charism” began to be used to describe a new way to perceive our form of life today. Dependence upon the Holy Spirit was affirmed as essential to the discernment process regarding witnessing to the Gospel in the Church and the world today. Chapter 2016 re-emphasized the call to continue acting on behalf of justice and peace and caring for the human family and common home.

The Mission Statement of the Congregation continues to embody the spirit and Charism of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany in the present time and gives a hopeful perspective for the future:

We, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, seek to live the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We witness to God’s love in the Franciscan tradition by living as Sisters with all creation and by joyfully serving others, especially those who are poor or marginalized.

To learn more about the history of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, please contact the Archives at archives@fsallegany.org.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAY MOVEMENT IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Pope John XXIII convened the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican (Vatican II), which lasted four years from 1962 to 1965. The Holy Father was convinced that the challenges of a changing world, at both the local and global levels, required the help of our Lord and the coordination of the efforts of both individuals and groups.

From this Council, the 1964 promulgation *Lumen Gentium* emphasized the very important role of the laity:

“They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God; that by exercising their proper function and led by the Spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way, they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs, it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer.”

Pope John Paul II was acutely aware of the importance of the Council for the Church at the start of the third millennium. Addressing participants in the 6th Symposium of the Council of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe in 1985, he described it as “the foundation and beginning of the huge work of evangelization of the modern world, at a time when a new crossroads has been reached in the history of humanity, and in which the Church must address tasks of immense gravity and magnitude.”

His call to the laity was pivotal for the life of the Church. He encouraged lay people to:

- Be committed to the task of the new evangelization, with new enthusiasm and new methods and presentations.
- Understand that the mission of evangelization is not simply a task added on to the Christian experience, but an energetic communication of the extraordinary gift of an encounter with Christ shared with gratitude and joy from person to person, family to family, and from community to community.
- Be “sentinels of daybreak,” and become engaged in building up a society more worthy of humanity, and to show the beauty and dignity of marriage and family.
- “Open wide the doors to Christ” in every sphere of public life, and to tear down walls of injustice, falsehood and oppression.

In the 1996 Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, Pope John Paul II re-affirmed the importance of the consecrated life which, since Vatican II, had been significantly affected by the empowerment of the laity. His call for a renewed commitment to holiness by consecrated persons highlighted their role in supporting every Christian's desire for perfection. He noted that religious communities which recognized that their Charism could be shared with the laity were inviting lay persons to share more intensely in the spirituality and mission of their communities as Associate members. Associates were supported in their desire for Christian perfection through valuable spiritual activities such as schools of prayer, spiritual exercises and retreats, days of recollection, spiritual dialogue and direction. In this

way people were helped to grow in prayer and to become better able to discern God's will in their lives.

In his 2020 Encyclical Letter, Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis used these words of Saint Francis of Assisi to address his brothers and sisters and propose “a way of life marked by the flavor of the Gospel,” calling each to an openness of heart to “a love that transcends the barriers of geography and distance.” By “responding with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship,” we can dream and build together.

The Associates continue to grow in a spirit of cooperation and exchange of gifts with communities of consecrated religious, making it possible for lay people to work as leaven in the sanctification of the world.



EVOLUTION OF THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ALLEGANY ASSOCIATE WAY OF LIFE

The concept of the **Associate Way of Life** was introduced at the 1972 General Chapter. The recommendation read:

“That the concept of an Associate membership be accepted with possible implementation on an experimental basis.”

In 1972, the concept did not generate a great deal of interest. However, between 1972 and 1984 interest in Associate programs and affiliation with religious communities was increasing in all parts of the United States. Workshops were held regarding “Models of Associate Membership in Religious Community.”

At the 1984 General Chapter, the topic of an Associate Program surfaced once again, and the recommendation read:

“That a committee be established to look into the possibility of a lay Associate membership program.”

A committee was established, and the first meeting was held in September 1985. By June 1986, a program had been developed and was presented to the General Council, which approved it and granted permission for its initiation.

The original Associate Program consisted of three options:

- Option I** The Associates and Sisters committed to mutual prayer and spiritual support.
- Option II** Involved a deeper commitment with the Congregation. The Associate was periodically invited for prayer and supper with a local community. A covenant was signed between the individual and the Congregation and was renewed annually.
- Option III** A live-in program was proposed and was in the process of being researched.

The initial establishment of the Associate Program began in the United States in March 1987 with the appointment of Sr. Helen Lodge, OSF, as the Director of the Program. During the 1988 General Chapter, the Associate Program was officially accepted by the FSA Congregation. In 1989, Sr. Christine Tenn, OSF, began the program in Jamaica at Immaculate Conception Convent in Kingston. In 1991, the program was introduced in Brazil by Sr. Teresa Sweeney, OSF. When Sr. Helen Lodge, OSF, ended her term as Director, Sr. Kathleen Aherne, OSF, succeeded her, and guided the program through a period of rapid growth.

In the early 1990's, the General Council began to see the need for more structure and formality for the Program and a design was put into place. Over the next several years, the Associates began to take a more active part in organizing the monthly meetings and a greater mutuality began to be experienced. The idea of the Options gave way to the need and subsequent reality of more contact time between

the Associates and the Sisters. A format for monthly meetings evolved with time for prayer, faith-sharing, input on Franciscan spirituality, and socializing.

In 1993, Sr. Mary Rose Watkins, OSF, was appointed Director. Under her leadership, the Associate Program continued to evolve and take shape. Associates became an integral part of the Allegany Franciscan family. They began to attend Regional Days and General Chapters; to take their place on Committees; to minister in some areas alongside the Sisters when possible; and to share their time, talent, and expertise, as well as prayer and faith.

To meet the needs of the expanding Program, the General Council decided in the Fall of 1997 to appoint Co-Directors, Sr. Francis Leo Brown, OSF, and Associate Judith Radell. They were supported in their work by an Advisory Board, also named by the Council. Under the guidance of the Co-Directors and Board, the Associate Mission Statement was written, and the tasks and responsibilities of the Directors were identified.

The Co-Directors also began to attend the meetings of the **North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR)**. From these meetings, great strides were made in expanding the Program and giving it depth. The relationship with NACAR continued through its dissolution in 2022 and attendance at other conferences, such as the Franciscan Federation, continues to be very beneficial to the Associate Program.

In 2000, Sr. Antoinette Pellegrino, OSF, was appointed, and Judy Radell was re-appointed to serve as Co-Directors of the Associate Program. Under their leadership, a written Communication Plan was put into place for all involved in the Associate Program. In September of 2002, the Associate Guidebook and Local Associate Coordinator Handbook were completed, approved, and distributed to all Sisters and Associates. Associates participated in the Congregation's Viability Study and were invited to attend workshops on mentoring, which prepared them to become mentors to new Associates.

The Associate Program was without a Director for a short time in late 2002. Sr. Lucy Cardet, OSF, and the Advisory Board coordinated the program, while Judy Radell served as the Temporary Budget Manager. Local communities continued to meet with the guidance of their Local Associate Coordinators.

Sr. Joyce Ramage, OSF, was appointed Director of the Associate Program in 2003. She encouraged a deeper understanding and implementation of the Associate Guidebook and Local Coordinator Handbook. Sr. Joyce engaged Sisters and Associates in more active participation and empowered new leadership among the Associates.

In 2004, the name of the Advisory Board was changed to the Advisory Committee, which continued to meet twice a year. In October 2006, a joint meeting of all Local Associate Coordinators and Advisory Committee members was held, and that resulted in the development of new Mission and Vision Statements.

After the Chapter of 2008, Sr. Jeanne Williams, OSF, succeeded Sr. Joyce as Director. At that time, the Associate Advisory Committee was reconfigured and held its first meeting in January 2009. Committee members assisted Sr. Jeanne in establishing goals for the future, which included the development of new leadership among the Associate communities and on-going formation for the Associates in Franciscan-Clarian Spirituality. Associates were encouraged to participate with the Sisters in the projects designed by the Congregation's Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission. Many Associates were involved in ministries in their local areas.

In the summer of 2009, a gathering of Associates from the United States, Jamaica and Brazil was held in Allegany. This was planned to coincide with the closing of the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Congregation. The gathering included visits to the Motherhouse Infirmary and Archives, the Ritiro, St. Bonaventure University campus, Canticle Farm, Mt. Irenaeus, and Letchworth State Park.

Several Sisters and Associates attended the bi-annual conference of NACAR in June 2010. Two of our Associates, Marie Cameron from New Jersey and Rita Joan Phillips from Calabash, NC were nominated for the Partners in Mission award given by NACAR at the conference.

A joint meeting of the Associate Advisory Committee and the Local Associate Coordinators was held in September 2010. Among the accomplishments of this meeting was the design of a pin for the Associates, which they would receive at their First Commitment and wear proudly.

Between 2010 - 2012 the Associate Guidebook, brochure and directory were updated, and an Associate Data Base was developed. In December 2012, Associate Kathy Doyle was appointed as Co-Director of the Associate Program to serve with Sr. Jeanne Williams, OSF.

In 2013, as part of the preparations for the 25th Associate Anniversary, an oral history DVD was compiled, and the Associate brochure was translated into Portuguese.

The Year of Jubilee began on October 4, 2013, with celebrations in each local Associate community. The closing of the Anniversary took place in Allegany over 5 days in the summer of 2014 and was attended by Associates and Sisters from the United States, Jamaica and Brazil. It provided an opportunity for the Associates to get to know one another, celebrate their past, honor their foundresses and envision their future. A tree and plaque were presented to the Motherhouse as a symbol of their "rootedness" to the Allegany Franciscans and in gratitude for the Allegany Associate Way of Life.

For the next three years (2015-2017) greater emphasis was placed on encouraging and developing leadership among the Associates. That endeavor precipitated an in-depth look at understanding Charism and how it is embodied in the Allegany Franciscan and Associate Way of Life, which propelled an updating of the Formation Process.

Associates accepted the invitation to participate on the 2016 Pre-Chapter Planning Committee, in planning circles and dialogues, and served as speakers and translators at Chapter. Working with the Congregation's Formation Minister and the Franciscan-Clarian Spirituality Committee, the Co-Directors

created a retreat that was given to all English speaking Associates. The *Associate Alliance*, the Associate bimonthly newsletter, was first published in English and Portuguese in November 2016. An all-Spanish speaking Associate community was also established in Miami.

Additionally, Associates were chosen as Franciscan Federation Honorees: Rita Phillips, in 2015, as someone “who reflects the beauty and goodness of God through her artistic expression of music” and Mary Laubenthal, in 2017, as someone “who embodies the best of our teaching tradition.”

In 2018, the focus for the Associates changed from simply studying Franciscan spirituality to actively engaging in the Franciscan Way of Life by applying the principles aligned with the 2016 Chapter Vision Statement and Initiatives. This included the Associates conducting mission appeals in parishes for the St. Elizabeth Mission Society and attending a retreat on Interculturality.

In 2020, the Covid 19 Pandemic severely limited in-person meetings and visitations, resulting in the postponement of the 2020 Chapter for the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. Zoom technology became the primary means of communicating and maintaining relationships. It allowed individuals to meet virtually, regardless of distance.

After serving many years, Sr. Jeanne Williams, OSF, retired as Associate Co-Director and Sr. Joyce Ramage, OSF, assumed this position, one she had held previously. The 2020 Congregational Directory of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany listed Associates for the very first time! An on-line Visioning Retreat was offered via Zoom to the Advisory Committee and local Associate community leaders in 2021. “*Meet and Greet*” Zoom sessions were initiated to deepen relationships between Associates throughout the United States and Jamaica.

Chapter 2021 was held virtually, and ten Associates served as consulting participants. Following Chapter, Linda Dees was appointed to succeed Kathy Doyle, who had served many years as the Co-Director. Recognizing the realities of aging and diminishment, during the 2021 Chapter a decision was made by the Congregation to embark on a transformational journey. Ted and Beth Dunn were hired as consultants to provide the Sisters with skills for engaging in deep dialogues regarding these issues. Part of the process led to the **CARE (Conversational Approach to Relational Effectiveness)** Program which was intensive. For this reason, Regional Assemblies were paused for a two-year period. Having already been impacted by COVID-19 precautions, this led to Associates feeling a further sense of separation from the Sisters. With some Associates being less technologically inclined and no longer attending monthly meetings, active participation began to wane in some Associate communities. This left the **Local Associate Coordinators (LACs)** expressing concern on behalf of themselves and their local community members over their loss of contact with so many Sisters, as well as for opportunities to meet with one another.

During March 2022, an Associate Advisory Committee meeting was held virtually. A decision was made to hold an in-person weekend meeting to rekindle the spirit of the Associate Way of Life. This meeting was held at Sabbath House on the grounds of the Franciscan Center in Tampa, FL, during which the Mission and Vision Statements were updated and the title of the **Local Associate Coordinator (LAC)** was changed to **Local Associate Minister (LAM)**. Among the next steps for this “Deep Dive” group were to

collect, develop, assemble and organize both resources and materials. Utilizing technology, these resources would then be shared and accessed by all Associates. These could then be used for mentoring, as well as to guide and support the shared Circular Leadership Roles of members in the planning of meetings and discussions that support the Gospel way of life.

Sr. Joyce Ramage, OSF, retired from her position and in December 2022, Sr. Colleen Brady, OSF, was appointed to serve alongside Linda Dees, as Co-Director of the FSA Associates.

The “Deep Dive Working Group” made plans for a “Homecoming” to Allegany by gathering in person at St. Elizabeth Motherhouse in July 2023. The week of prayer and work was guided by Sr. Colleen Brady and Linda Dees, Associate Co-Directors, and supported by Sr. Jo Streva, Congregational Leadership Liaison. Those in attendance were Sr. Rosimeire Dias Nolêto, OSF, (Brazilian Regional Associate Coordinator), Sr. Patricia Reid, OSF, (Interpreter), and Associates: Mary Laubenthal (NY), Robin Roche (NJ), Ellen Nash (NC), Paula Lyn (Tampa Bay, FL), Cheryl Ann Maggio (Tampa Bay, FL), and Margaret Jarrett (Jamaica). Marcia Gill (Miami, FL) and Rita Canfield (NC), who were unable to travel, participated in most sessions via Zoom.

The Associate “Working Group” included several representatives from the original Associate Advisory Committee. It also included new members who brought fresh ideas and sparked increased energy. With a deep desire to do whatever they could to support the Sisters on their transformational journey, this group quickly recognized that their own work was also leading towards a complete transformation of the Associate Way of Life. Eager to reflect the scope and focused purposefulness of their own efforts, the “Working Group” renamed themselves the “**Transformational Associates Unified**” (**TAU**) Team.

Members met with Sisters Helen Lodge, OSF, and Marigene Kennedy, OSF, who were instrumental in the establishment of the FSA Associate Program. TAU Team members collaborated with Congregational Communication staff members, as well as the Archivist, and explored foundational resources to enrich their work. Members left with assignments for continued work, plans for further Zoom meetings, and with determination to not only carry on the legacy and Charism of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, but to grow the Associate Way of Life as they celebrate their 35th Anniversary.

In the Fall of 2023, the Congregational Leadership invited some Associates to commit to engaging in four weeks of intensive training in the CARE process between June and October 2024.

The Gospel Way of Life for The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany: Congregational Purpose & Direction



FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ALLEGANY

Charism

Our Franciscan Charism impels us to be Christ-centered, to live in a spirit of minority, simplicity, joy, and being “at home” with all people, while being faithful to our heritage and the values fostered by Mother Teresa O’Neil and the Sisters of the early community.

Mission Statement

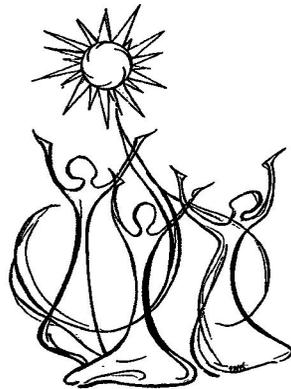
We the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, seek to live the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We witness to God’s love in the Franciscan tradition by living as sisters with all creation and by joyfully serving others, especially those who are poor or marginalized.

Vision Statement

As vowed women, our Mission impels us to:

- ✚ Live simply in right relationship with God, with others and with creation
- ✚ Commit to continuing conversion
- ✚ Deepen our contemplative stance
- ✚ Proclaim the Reign of God in word and deed
- ✚ Participate in building a global community based on the principles of justice and compassion
- ✚ Be instruments of peace, reconciliation, and non-violence in our Congregation, Church and world
- ✚ Care for God’s earth and its resources

This is our Vision - We live it as Women of Hope



FSA CHAPTER STATEMENTS AND INITIATIVES

The Chapter, when in session, is the governing body of the Congregation which meets every four years. It is comprised of delegates of finally professed Sisters. The direction of the Congregation's focus is decided and the election of the leadership team is held.

Chapter 2004 ~ Chapter Challenges

The General Chapter of 2004 calls us to risk the following:

- Let go of our comfort and security in all areas of our lives;
Be prophetic witnesses, speaking with a corporate voice for Justice, Peace and Care of the Earth
- Share our lives with transparency and simplicity, to be open to the new and the different with courage and faith, as we continue to read the signs of our evolutionary time
- Take a Charismatic stance to continue dialogue with clergy and laity to build a church that is inclusive and pastoral
- Unite with other groups committed to solidarity with the poor, the marginalized and the abused, in the struggle for justice, healing and reconciliation

Chapter 2008 ~ Chapter Statement

Encouraged by our vitality for Mission, we, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, gathered at Chapter 2008, claim a future of hope.

We commit ourselves:

- To live contemplatively from the Portiuncula of the heart
- To nurture a heart that embraces our own joys and sufferings, and the joys and sufferings of others
- To en flesh the values of our Constitution, allowing ourselves to be prophetic
- To act with Pentecostal courage as we implement the Long-Range Plan

Chapter 2012 ~ Chapter Initiatives

We, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, embrace a stance of cordial welcoming, attentive listening, and dialogue as we respond to the signs of the times, through the lens of our Franciscan Charism and spirituality.

We commit ourselves, individually and as a Congregation, to:

- Engage in service with people who are unemployed, under-employed, and those who are affected by these conditions. We will partner with our Associates, sponsored ministries, and others to use our life experiences, skills, and financial and human resources.
- Minister as Franciscan ecclesial women in, and for the Church. In the midst of its divisions, we will work towards its visible unity as the Body of Christ.
- Affirm our solidarity with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR).
- Continue to live our Mission through the sharing of our Franciscan Spirituality. We will use Franciscan Spiritual Development as a way of ministering with youth/young adults and promoting vocations.
- Respond to the impact of ecological crises on our Sister Mother Earth by working for personal and systemic changes related to these crises and by addressing the needs of affected persons through partnership with other groups.

Chapter 2016 ~ Chapter Vision Statement

Ignited by the fire of the Spirit and our Allegany Franciscan-Clarian Charism, we lovingly gaze on the Source of All Goodness, and consider our Mission and witness in the Church and the world. We contemplate creation's clamor for justice and peace; and transformed by the life and ministry of Jesus, we respond. We act as Gospel women and partner with others to generate a culture of peace and integrity, reflecting God's love for our human family and common home.

CHAPTER 2021 ~ DIRECTIONAL STATEMENT

Rooted in our Franciscan-Clarian Charism and Mission and led by the Holy Spirit to interior conversion and life-long transformation, we must respond to new realities of our world today as prophetic witnesses by living and serving in relationship with one another, our sisters and brothers, and all of creation.

As servant leaders we recognize the urgency to advance the cause of Integral Ecology, embrace Interculturality/Diversity that exists within and beyond our Congregation, and promote the Common Good.

Therefore, we commit to:

- a) *Educate ourselves and others for better understanding of Integral Ecology and how it relates to restorative justice, affects creation and impels us to act locally and globally for the healing/care of our Common Home.*
- b) *Collaborate with our Associates, Partners in Mission, other Congregations, and other groups to engage in actions that foster a sustainable and sacred world, and thus, we dare to imagine a new vision for Religious Life, and our emerging future.*
- c) *Create environments of peace and reconciliation and seek meaningful ways of encountering those whose cultures are different from ours for mutual growth and understanding, eliminating all forms of prejudice and discrimination.*
- d) *Defend All Created life with preferential option for those who live in poverty, on the margins and excluded from society.*
- e) *Seek new ways to promote and practice servant leadership and mutuality by opening ourselves to dialogue in a spirit of prayer, co-responsibility and courage in light of the Common Good.*
- f) *Invest resources of the Congregation, financial and human, to promote initiatives in Integral Ecology, Interculturality, and Servant Leadership.*



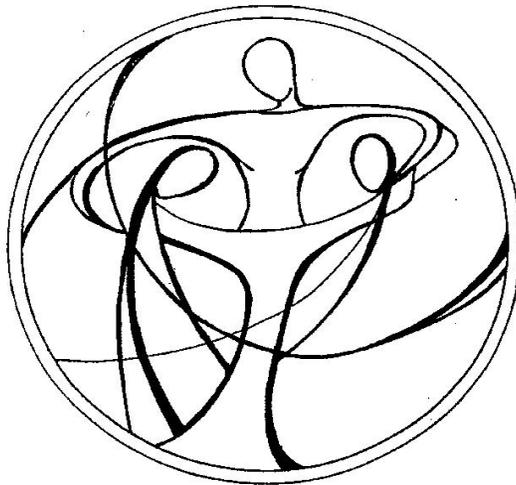
SPONSORED MINISTRIES OF THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ALLEGANY

Canticle Farm – A local non-profit, Community Supported Agriculture with certified, naturally grown produce that supports the community, including the disadvantaged, in the Allegany / Olean, NY area.

Dr. Lyle F. Renodin Foundation – Is committed to the Gospel stance of social justice, which is lived out in a spirit of love, healing and compassion. The Foundation focuses its energy and resources primarily in Cattaraugus / Allegany counties in NY and McKean County in PA, striving to improve the quality of life of those experiencing poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, disabilities, vulnerability and injustice, by providing funding for food, medicine and shelter to those in need.

The Franciscan Center – A Retreat Center in Tampa, FL that welcomes everyone who seeks spiritual growth through a deeper relationship with God in a place of peace, community, healing and joy.

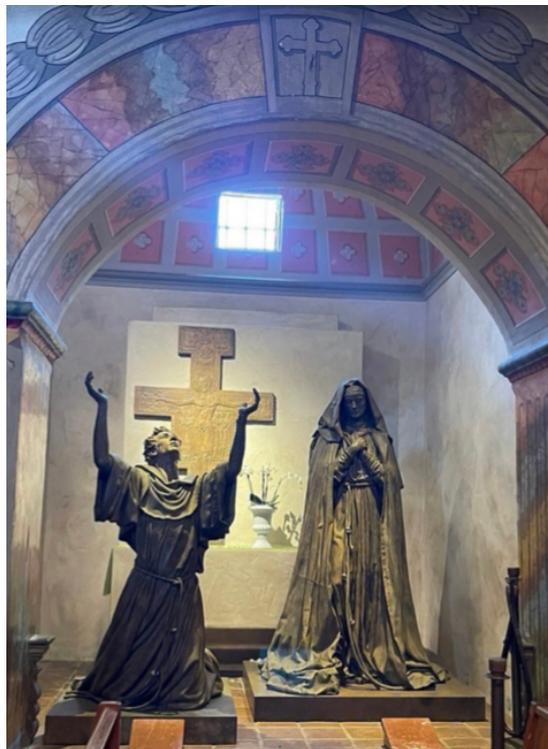
St. Elizabeth's Mission Society – Supports the ministries of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany serving those who are poor and marginalized in Bolivia, Brazil, Jamaica, Mozambique and the United States, through donations, grants, Mass Cards, etc.



*** All grant opportunities are available to applicants who must have a direct connection with an Allegany Franciscan Sister or Associate who is personally involved with the particular outreach project.*



Franciscan – Clarian History, Beliefs and Spirituality



CHRONOLOGY OF FRANCIS AND CLARE

- 1181/1182 Birth of Francis (baptized Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone, was called Francesco by his Father)
- 1194 Birth of Clare
- 1190 - 1200 Civil war in Assisi. (Clare's family, the Offreduccio family went into exile in Perugia.)
- 1202 Assisi at war with Perugia; Francis captured and imprisoned at Collestrada until ransomed by his father. Returns to Assisi, ill until 1204.
- 1204 Francis sets out with Guelph force to fight on the side of the papacy against the imperial forces. DREAM at Spoleto sends him home.
- 1205 - 1206 Francis' conflict with his father. San Damiano experience - trial before Bishop of Assisi. Possible visit to Rome, where he joins beggars at St. Peter's. He nurses lepers at Gubbio, and perhaps in Assisi.
- 1206 - 1208 Francis abides in Assisi, dressed as a hermit, repaired churches: San Damiano, San Pietro, the Portiuncula.
- 1208 Francis hears Gospel (Feb. 24, Feast of St. Mathias) and becomes an evangelical preacher. He begins to attract Brothers.
- 1208 At Poggio Bustone, located in the Province of Rieti Italy, Francis receives assurance of Christ's forgiveness of his sins and of the "growth of the Order."
- 1208 - 1209 Francis and his companions go out into the world to preach.
- 1209 Francis and his companions go to Rome, where they obtain Pope Innocent III's approval of their Form of Life.
- 1209 - 1210 Francis and his companions embrace a life of radical poverty and establish themselves at the Portiuncula (having been driven out of their first settlement at Rivotorto.)
- 1210 Lay men and lay women living the life of Penance turn to Francis for guidance.
- 1212 Clare joins the Brothers at the Portiuncula, then spends time in two Benedictine convents before moving to her permanent home at San Damiano.
- 1211 - 1219 The friars travel in Italy and northern Europe; Francis and other friars go to the Middle East; in 1215 Francis returns to Rome for the Fourth Lateran Council; in 1219 Francis crossed enemy lines in Damietta, Egypt during the Fifth Crusade, to meet with and preach to the Sultan, Malek al-Kamil.

- 1220 Francis returns to Italy from the Middle East. He asks Pope Honorius III for Cardinal Hugolino as Cardinal Protector of the Friars Minor. Resigns leadership of the "Order," he chose Peter Catani as his successor and then appointed Elias of Cortona.
- 1221 The Regula non Bullata (Earlier Rule) Honorius III approves (or writes) the Rule of the "Third Order," the Brothers and Sisters of Penance.
- 1223 The Regula Bullata (at Fonte Colombo), approved by Honorius III
- 1223 Special celebration of Christmas at Greccio
- 1224 Francis receives the Stigmata at Mt. Alverna (*Latin name for La Verna*)
- 1225 Very ill, Francis continues to preach in Umbria and the Marches. Stays at San Damiano where he composes the first part of The Canticle of the Sun. Goes to the Rieti Valley, preaches. Eyes cauterized at Fonte Colombo.
- 1226 Sees physicians at Siena. Eventually asks to return to Assisi and is taken first to the Bishop's palace, then to the Portiuncula.
- 1226 Oct 3rd, Francis dies at the Portiuncula: his Transitus to eternal life.
- 1227 Cardinal Hugolino becomes Pope Gregory IX
- 1228 Pope Gregory IX canonizes Francis.
- 1230 Francis' body transferred to the new Basilica of San Francesco in Ravenna. (This is a different church than the Basilica di San Francesco d'Assisi, where the saint's remains are now entombed.)
- 1253 Clare receives approval of her Rule or Form of Life from Innocent IV. Dies Aug. 11th
- 1255 Pope Alexander IV canonizes Clare
- 1260 Clare buried in the new Basilica of Santa Chiara



A SHORT LIFE OF FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Francis of Assisi has been called “everyone’s saint.” He was born as Giovanni di Bernardone in the town of Assisi, in Italy. Because of his father’s numerous travels to France, he became known as Francis. Though he was born in 1181 or 1182, a time of great change from a feudal society to an urban one, he seems to belong to every age.

His father, a prosperous cloth merchant, provided the popular young man with all the resources he needed to live a charmed life. He reveled with his friends and dreamed of making a name for himself as a successful knight. When he was in his early twenties, he lost interest in wealth and success and began to dream instead of living for God alone. He experienced a conversion that transformed his reason for living without taking anything away from the natural gifts that made him so attractive to others. Maybe that is why his appeal remains even after 800 years.

At first Francis was not clear about the direction his life should take. He knew he was not called to the monastic life that was customary at the time for those who wanted to dedicate themselves to God. He engaged in long periods of prayer, trying to discover God’s call for him. Early in his conversion, he experienced the voice of God through the crucifix at San Damiano telling him to “rebuild my Church.” At first, he took the words literally and began to repair churches that were disintegrating. Later, as followers joined him, it became apparent that he was rebuilding the church spiritually by living the Gospel as a poor man who modeled his life after the poor Jesus. Throughout his life, Jesus remained the model and inspiration for his behavior.

The new way of life Francis was developing unfolded, and many men were attracted to follow him. He captured their imagination as he renounced his Father’s money, took on the garb of a beggar, kept no property even for housing, and wandered from place to place, proclaiming God’s love for all of creation. Everything from the moon and stars to the plants and animals, to lepers and lords were his brothers and sisters. He sang “All praise to you, my Lord, through Brother Sun and Sister Moon” in the Canticle of Creatures which he composed near the end of his life.

Francis was an immensely original and gifted individual. He did not set out to start a new religious order, but the force of his vision captured the religious imagination of many people at a time when there was little in the Church to inspire them. He related to people out of a deep grasp of the love of God and the example of Jesus. Francis was not controlled by the group values of his society, nor was he controlled by his own personal likes and dislikes. He discovered the inner truth of who he was because of his profound personal relation to God. This inner truth allowed him to respond to individuals he met with spontaneity and appreciation for the uniqueness of who they were.

His spontaneity, born out of a passion to live like Jesus, is evident in many stories that reveal the characteristics of his personality. Early in his conversion process, he encountered a leper who repulsed him; after all, he was used to the finer things of life. When he realized he was turning away from God by turning from the leper, he hurried back to embrace him with a kiss. After that, he often sought to be with lepers. Humility marked all his actions. It was not a humility that causes discomfort to others, but a humility born of compassion. Once, when a young Brother was moaning at night because he was hungry,

Francis broke his own fast to show that solidarity with those in need is more important than one's own righteousness.

He sought so much to be poor like Jesus that he chose poor clothes and sparse lodgings, even refusing once to enter a sleeping place because it had his name on it. In all of these instances he was committed to maintaining "perfect joy." He would not let himself remain sad, because God is so much greater than an individual's passing moods. For him, joy was an indisputable sign of the presence of God. Once when a group of robbers stole his meager resources and beat him, he jumped up singing and praising God. In every situation, he acted out of the truth of who he was, not following conventional patterns of behavior.

Prayer was as natural as breathing for him. His prayer was almost always praise and gratitude. He would have been drawn to a life of prayer in solitude, but after consulting St. Clare and one of the Brothers, they convinced him that his calling was not only to immerse himself in adoration, but to also spread the Gospel message among those who yearned for it.

Francis devoted himself to celebrating the humanity of Christ, and this reverence for Jesus' humanity even affected artistic depictions of Jesus. Art before him had presented a Christ who did not manifest ordinary humanity. Thanks to Francis, human emotion, compassion, and events in the life of Jesus took center stage. It was he who originated the idea of the Christmas crèche in the little town of Greccio. The human Jesus was so real to him that he wished to celebrate his humanity. The reality of the poor Jesus in the birth scene touched the minds and hearts of his contemporaries and people for centuries since then.

The deepest mirroring of the life of Jesus came late in his life. Francis was discouraged because he saw that many of the Brothers were not observing the kind of poverty that was essential to his vision. His leadership was no longer assumed, and others began to direct the Order in another way. He handled this disappointment with grace and refrained from criticizing the Brothers publicly.

Two years before he died, his identification with the suffering of Jesus manifested itself physically. While he was caught up in prayer in a mountain retreat, he had a vision of a six-winged seraph that penetrated his very being and left him with the stigmata, the five wounds of Christ, in his feet, hands, and side. For the rest of his life he tried to hide these marks, so as not to draw attention to himself. Prior to dying, he asked to be placed on the ground naked. He had given himself to God, and now it was complete.

"I have done what is mine to do. May Christ show you what is yours to do."

~ St. Francis of Assisi

Classical Sources for the Life of Francis; Thomas of Celano's
First Life of Francis; Thomas of Celano's Second Life of Francis;
St. Bonaventure's Major Life of Francis



A SHORT LIFE OF CLARE OF ASSISI

Clare of Assisi was born in 1193 into the Offreduccio family, powerful because of its heritage and wealth. Clare's father, Favarone, as well as her brothers, were all knighted, and often they were off fighting in various battles. Clare's mother, Ortolana, also of noble heritage, was known to be a strong and courageous woman. She was seen by others as a model for a life of poverty as she would often express her compassion for the poor and imprisoned by ministering to their needs. During her first pregnancy, something was troubling her, and she asked God to give her strength and serenity. The medieval biographer, Thomas of Celano, tells us that Ortolana heard a comforting voice telling her that she would safely give birth to "a light that would enlighten the world". When her baby girl was born, she was given the name Clare, and she gave light and joy to everyone who met her.

At the time of Clare's birth, Italy was embroiled in political and military strife. The nobility known as the *maiores*, and former serfs known as *minores* were continually fighting for power among themselves. In her early youth, Clare and her family moved for a time to Perugia while the men were engaged in fighting and battles. Around 1205, Clare's family returned to Assisi, and it was at this time that Clare heard Francis preaching and observed how he was living a life of poverty and simplicity. Through the example and preaching of Francis, Clare began to experience God breaking into her life and calling her to give herself over to God. It is known through testimony given at the time of Clare's canonization that she met with Francis a number of times, but secretly so as not to be seen by her parents and family members. Listening to Francis, Clare was drawn more and more to the message of the Gospel.

Francis initiated Clare into the Gospel way of living and she was his most faithful disciple. On the night of Palm Sunday in 1212, Clare left her home secretly and went to meet Francis and some of his Brothers at the Portiuncula, one of the small chapels which Francis had restored. When Clare arrived, Francis took her to the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom the Portiuncula had been dedicated. There, he cut Clare's hair and clothed her in simple attire as Clare gave her life over to God.

Because the friars occupied the Portiuncula, they took Clare to a nearby monastery of Benedictine Sisters, where she stayed for a while. The men of Clare's family were not happy with her choice to follow Francis. When they found out where she was, they came to the monastery to forcibly bring her home. However, Clare clung to the altar, and when her family saw her resolve, they left her alone. Soon, Clare's sister Catherine, who later became known as Agnes, joined her. They lived for a while as companions with a group of Beguines, who were a group of strong, independent women living in community, who drew strength from prayer, the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit, while maintaining engagement in work, bringing a true sense of caring and commitment to those in need during very troubled times in the Church. Together they celebrated both the humanity of Jesus, as much as His divinity. Eventually, Francis brought Clare and her Sisters to live at the church of San Damiano, where the crucifix had first spoken to Francis telling him to "*go rebuild the church.*" From that time on, Clare lived her more contemplative life at San Damiano.

As the Sisters settled at San Damiano, the Lord sent other women to join them as companions of Clare and their community grew quickly. After the death of Clare's father, her mother Ortolana joined Clare and the poor ladies at the monastery. Clare's community was to be vastly different from the monastic

communities of her time. Her Sisters were to live poorly without land holdings or property of any kind. Their rule would be to embrace the Gospel form of life. They would all be of equal rank, and all decisions would be made together in collaboration with each other. Clare realized that leadership was a call to serve the needs of her Sisters. Even after illness overtook her, Clare would often wash the feet of the Sisters in her community as a means of living “servant leadership.” After her death, her Sisters testified about the miracles performed by Clare in the name of God. Clare’s life provides a model of forgiveness, patience in suffering, simplicity, prayer and service.

Clare was a woman of prayer and her entire life was lived in trust of God whom she contemplated daily in order to better imitate the life of Jesus. She needed little material wealth because she trusted that God would care for all of her needs.

For Clare, Francis always provided guidance, support and deep friendship. Our Franciscan writings tell of several meetings where Francis and Clare offered mutual guidance and prayerful encouragement to one another. On one occasion, Clare and Francis met at the Portiuncula where Clare had originally dedicated her life to God and Francis received her into the Franciscan Order. In the account of this meeting at the Portiuncula, we learn that Francis invited Clare to share a meal with him. Their conversation about God was so filled with praise for God’s goodness, that they became enraptured in God. The people of the town thought that the woods were on fire because of the brilliant light that was emitted in the valley below Assisi.

Although her health was very poor, Clare continued to live at San Damiano with her Sisters for 27 years after the death of Francis. It had always been Clare’s desire to obtain Pontifical approval of the Rule of Life which she had written for her Sisters. When Clare was weak and near death, Pope Innocent IV came to visit her. On the day before Clare’s death, a friar arrived at San Damiano and delivered to her the Papal Bull which confirmed and approved her Rule.

Clare died on August 11, 1253. When she was canonized two years later, the Bull of Canonization reminded us that Clare was “brilliant because of her clear merits, shining in heaven because of her clear glory, and on earth resplendent because of her sublime miracles. Indeed, she remains a light that continues to enlighten the whole world.”



ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY: A MODEL FOR THE ASSOCIATE WAY OF LIFE

Elizabeth, a Hungarian princess, was born in 1207 and sent to live with the family of her betrothed, Ludwig, a German prince, as was the custom, at the age of four. Married at fourteen, her marriage to Ludwig was one of conjugal and devoted affection. She gave birth to three children, was widowed at twenty and died at the age of twenty-four in 1231. In 1235 she was the first Franciscan woman and one of the few married persons to be canonized. She is honored as the patroness of the Franciscan Third Order. Her feast day is November 17th.

Elizabeth had a unique understanding of marriage. It was as serious as a religious vocation and one by which she could achieve not just personal fulfillment and happiness but holiness. She and Ludwig made the conscious decision to avoid the traps of court life that could jeopardize their relationship. Rising frequently at night to pray, she often fell asleep on the floor.

As the young Landgräfin (Duchess), Elizabeth participated fully in the life of her people. On Holy Thursday she walked in procession with the poorest women and washed the lepers' feet. Independently wealthy, she could not ignore the plight of the poor outside her castle walls. She served as Godmother for their children, provided fine linen for burial shrouds, and made sure that pregnant women and their newborns had food and clothing.

Around 1224, a Franciscan Brother came to Wartburg Castle and Elizabeth heard about Francis' romance with Lady Poverty, echoing what was already in her heart. She built a friary on land given to her by Ludwig, and provided the friars with food, and spun the wool for their habits.

Before leaving on a trip in 1226, Ludwig gave Elizabeth complete authority to act in his name. Three years of poor harvests, rain, flood and pestilence had caused many deaths, especially among the poor. Believing that serfs had as much right to the food they produced as the landowners, Elizabeth decreed that her husband's personal grain stores should be opened to feed the hungry. She also understood that if ill or dying peasants could not work, then no one would eat the following year. Ordering that those strong enough to work be fed until the new crop was harvested, she provided clothes and shoes as protection from injuries in the fields, supplied tools needed to harvest crops, gave the poor her own fine clothes with the proviso or condition to sell them for money to meet their needs, and she built a hospital near the castle in Wartburg.

Identifying greed, neglect or mismanagement by the rich, as the cause of so much poverty, her 'modern-day' approach of government assistance for immediate needs, achieved a sound workforce, improved economic conditions and contributed to the country's stability and economy. When Ludwig returned, his steward criticized Elizabeth's actions during his absence saying she would drain the treasury if she had the chance. Ludwig lovingly upheld all of her decisions.

Having heard of Elizabeth's humility, love of poverty and care of the poor, Cardinal Ugolino (the future Pope Gregory IX) told Francis about Elizabeth when he visited him in Assisi. The Cardinal suggested that Francis send his mantle to her as a tribute to her holiness. It's been said that Elizabeth put that mantle on every time she wanted to ask something special of God.

Ludwig died of illness on his way to the Crusade in June 1227, while Elizabeth was pregnant with their third child. After Gertrude was born, but before Ludwig's body was returned for burial, Elizabeth and her children were evicted from the castle. All her personal and conjugal wealth and possessions were confiscated. Ludwig's family was fearful that she would continue to spend it all on the poor. She, her faithful ladies, and her children spent that first night in an unheated pig sty. Going to the friars that night she asked them to sing the *Te Deum laudamus*, "God, We Praise You," in thanksgiving to God for her tribulation. Was she recalling what Francis said about "perfect joy?"

She then turned to her own Hungarian family for support, but they wanted her to remarry, something she had vowed not to do. Eventually, unable to provide for the children, Elizabeth relinquished custody of them, knowing that they would eventually be sent away as was customary; Hermann to train as a knight, Sophia to learn the ways of court life and Gertrude to a monastery (as her parents decided before her birth).

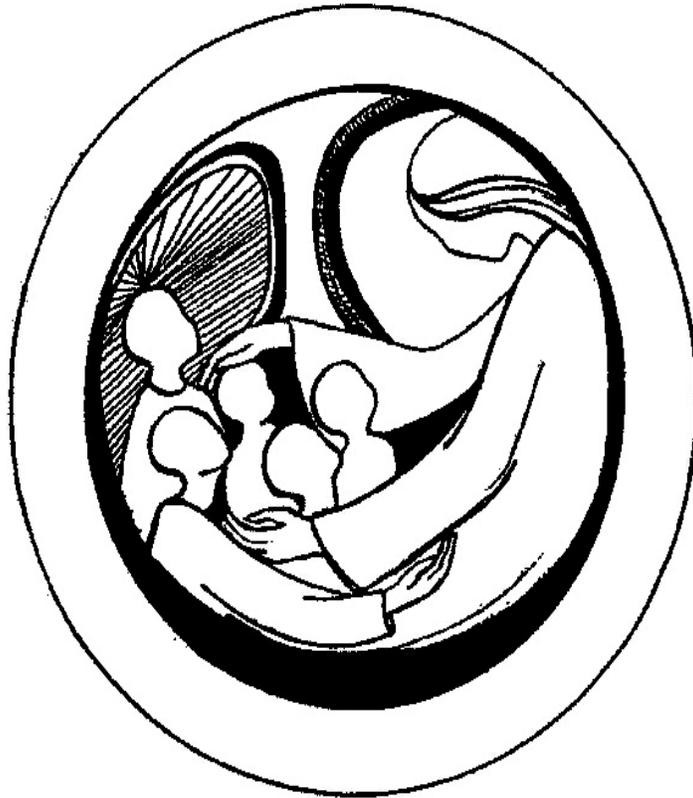
The Pope interceded and after Ludwig's funeral, Elizabeth's money and property were returned to her as a cash indemnity. But, desiring to continue to live in poverty as Francis lived, on Good Friday in 1228, in the presence of Ludwig's family and her three children, Elizabeth renounced "*her will and the pomp of the world*" and vowed to live a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. She used her money to build another hospital, this time in Marburg, where she lived.

Elizabeth and her faithful ladies decided to form a religious community. Making their religious profession, they were clothed in grey habits in the Franciscan friary in Marburg in March 1229. This event, often seen as the beginning of the Third Order, was unique for the time. Elizabeth's active life was unlike the contemplative life of Clare and her Sisters; and the early rule of the Third Order was intended for lay people living in their homes, not religious communities. While many of the features of Elizabeth's active life were similar to those of the Beguines, the Beguines did not make a religious profession or take formal vows.

Pope Gregory approved Elizabeth's choice to serve the sick, sending a relic of the blood from Francis' side for the Marburg hospital's chapel. Elizabeth was in love with LOVE. She successfully juxtaposed her active and contemplative life; her deep prayer life was intensified by her encounters with Christ in the poor. Her confessor said of her, "*In spite of these works of the active life, I declare before God that I have rarely seen a more contemplative woman.*"

Mary Beth Imler, OSF, a Keynote Speaker at the 50th Anniversary of the Franciscan Federation, quoted from Ilia Delio's book *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*. "*Christian life is a commitment of love, to give birth to God in one's own life and to become midwives of divinity in this evolving cosmos;*' to be whole makers of love in a world that is broken." Elizabeth's 13th Century life demonstrated these concepts that resonate today with the 21st Century Mission Statement of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany "*...to live Gospel values while maintaining our chosen way of life...In relationship with the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany... to respond to the needs of our suffering, broken world as instruments of peace, reconciliation and non-violence.*"

Elizabeth left no writings, but her life literally followed Francis' dictum, *"Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words."*



LAY & RELIGIOUS MEMBERS OF THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY

The Franciscan Family is an expression used to broadly encompass both lay and religious women and men who are inspired by the Charism of St. Francis of Assisi. Currently, it consists of 650,000 members and growing, who actively minister worldwide. The term “Franciscan” refers to the followers of the three Orders founded by St. Francis of Assisi:

- The First Order of Franciscan Friars
- The Second Order of Poor Clare Sisters
- The Third Order Regular of Franciscan Sisters, Brothers, and Priests and the Secular Franciscan Order

Francis first heard the call to “Rebuild My Church” in 1206. Striving to imitate Christ’s message of love, simplicity and poverty, followers were attracted to his way of life.

From 1209 to 1221 Francis, Clare and their early companions lived as lay penitents. They attracted many women and men who desired to follow this new evangelical expression of Gospel living but were not free to leave their families and business commitments. Francis responded to this desire by writing the *Letter to the Faithful* which offered direction for living a devout Christian life. This *Letter to the Faithful* is the foundational document for the Rule of the Third Order Regular and the Rule of the Secular Franciscans.

The Secular Franciscan Order (SFO) is an official Order within the Catholic Church, whose members profess and follow a Rule of Life. The Secular Franciscans share in relationship as sisters and brothers with the many branches of the Franciscan family. Secular Franciscans meet on a monthly basis for prayer and faith sharing in local gatherings called fraternities, participate in a formation process, share in ministry and works of charity, and in peace and justice activities.

Persons interested in developing a deeper spiritual life might question the difference between the Secular Franciscans and “Associates.” Both pattern their lives on the Gospel and following Christ in the spirit of Francis and Clare. Even though Associates are usually attached to a particular religious community, they are not bound to follow a Rule of Life or any particular form of daily prayer.

Associates participate in prayer and faith sharing with other Associates and Sisters on a regular basis. They seek to live out the Mission and Vision of the Associate Program and the spirit and Charism of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. Some Associates may share in ministry, peace and justice activities, and volunteer in projects with the Sisters.





ELEMENTS OF FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

Four insights into the spirituality of Francis

- ✚ Spirituality focused on the dynamic relationship of The Trinity
- ✚ Centrality of Christ as the living Word and Image of God
- ✚ Dignity of the Human Person as an image of the Beloved
- ✚ God is present in all of creation

First Element – The Trinity as a dynamic relationship

- The prayers of Francis were always directed to the relational persons of the Trinity.
- The Trinity reflects the self-diffusive love and poverty of God.
- Trinity is the unity of persons, Father, Son and Spirit, flowing out and gifting one another with life-giving love and goodness.
- The source of divine humility is in the triune, self-diffusive goodness of God.

Second Element – Christ is the Word and Image of the Father

- Francis is drawn to the humanity of Christ. As he prays before the crucifix in the chapel of San Damiano, Christ's burning love, which will later be imprinted in his flesh, is impressed on his heart. In Christ, Francis sees the goodness and love of God revealed.
- The Word became flesh, not because humans sinned, but rather because God wished to share the mystery of the divine life and love and beauty as fully as possible with all creation.
- The Incarnate Christ is the heart of the Trinity. Christ, Word of God, present before all-time humbles himself in the Incarnation and continues to humbly nourish us in the Eucharist.

Third Element – Dignity of the Human Person

- Christ is seen as brother, and so it follows that God is the Father of all. All come from the same Heavenly Father, so all are brothers and sisters to each other.
- Francis identifies Christ as the source of our dignity. "Consider, O human being, in what great excellence the Lord God has placed you, for He created and formed you *to the image* of His beloved Son according to the body and *to His likeness* according to the Spirit." (Admonition 5)
- The universe and all creatures, especially the human person, reflect God and reveal God's goodness because they are all made uniquely in the model of God's own heart.

Fourth Element – Creation as the mirror and the image of God

- At the end of his life, sick and almost totally blind, Francis says: "Therefore for His praise, for our consolation and for the edification of our neighbor, I wish to write a new *Praise to the Lord* for his creatures, which we use every day, and without which we cannot live. Through them the human race greatly offends the Creator, and every day we are ungrateful for such great graces, because we do not praise, as we should, our Creator and the Giver of all Good." (The Assisi Compilation 83) He then composed *The Canticle of Creatures*.
- The context for living the Gospel life as Franciscans is always relational and in the world.
- Loving one another and all of creation is the heart of the Gospel.
- We live as sister and brother in relationship with others. "The Lord gave me brothers." (Testament 14)
- Brother and sister are not titles; they convey our social and spiritual reality.
- This way of life implies interdependence and the willingness, on the part of the sisters and brothers, to affirm and support one another, sharing our gifts and frailties, in open and humble service.



FSA Associate Mentoring Team Process



ROLES OF THE MENTORING TEAM, THE CONTACT PERSON AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Mentoring Team Role is to:

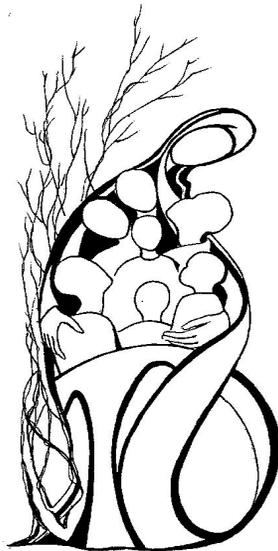
- Design and plan a course of study for the Inquirers, which includes the Franciscan Topics and Resources included in the *“Transformative Journey of the Associate Way of Life.”*
- Regularly meet with the Inquirer(s) for prayer and faith sharing inspired by that mentoring session’s selected topic

Local Contact Role is to:

- Journey with and provide prayerful support for the Inquirer
(Optional participation in the mentoring sessions with the Inquirer is encouraged.)

Local Community Role is to:

- Provide a warm and welcoming environment that reflects and nurtures the FSA Charism *“to be at home with all people.”*
- Prayerfully support and share your faith experiences as an Associate with one another.
- Witness God’s love through service and ministry
- Deepen Franciscan-Clarian spirituality
- Grow in relationship with our Sisters and one another



Recommended Syllabus of Topics for the Mentors and Inquirers:

- 1) FSA Mission, Vision, Charism and Core Values
- 2) Life of Francis and Clare of Assisi, as well as St. Elizabeth of Hungary
- 3) History of the FSA Congregation
- 4) History of the Associates of the FSA Way of Life (including the Mission, Vision & Core Values)
- 5) FSA Congregation's Chapter Initiatives and Directional Statements
- 6) Franciscan Prayers, Traditions and Symbols
- 7) Elements of Franciscan Spirituality

Detailed Mentoring Outline:

I. History of the Congregation:

The Wonderful Works of God was written for the Sesquicentennial Celebration of the Congregation in 2008. This book details the amazing accomplishments the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany have achieved through the years in the service of God's people.

II. Congregational Organization and Governance

General Chapters – provide the process, purpose, and resolutions made by the Congregation every 4 years, including the election of the Leadership Team members

Leadership structure – Congregational Minister, Associate Minister, Councilor(s)

III. Francis of Assisi

A. Read and discuss "A Short Life of Francis of Assisi." Identify Francis's influence on the world he loved.

B. Read ***Build with Living Stones*** to learn about and discuss the **relevancy of the Franciscan culture and influence in the world and our lives today.**

*** Book is available in local communities and through the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University. Phone (716) 375-2062*

C. The Franciscan Family:

- **1st Order** – consisting of the male Order of Friars Minor (OFM), both Priests and Brothers
- **2nd Order** – consisting of the Poor Clare Sisters – cloistered nuns
- **3rd Order Regular** - Religious Priests, Brothers and Sisters
(*Associates who commit to a relationship with a particular Franciscan Congregation fall within this category*)
- **3rd order Secular** - lay women and men who make a public profession of their vowed commitment to live the Gospel according to the example of St. Francis of Assisi, to have a regimented daily prayer life, and to follow the Order of Franciscan Secular Rule

***Franciscan hearted people** - unofficial title/description of those who are drawn to and embrace the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare

There are over 100 canonized Saints from the three Franciscan Orders giving credence to the efficacy of Francis's spirituality. Franciscan Feast Days in the Church Calendar:

- **Apr. 16th** - Marks the official founding of the Franciscan order in 1210 (day in which Sisters renew their vows)
- **June 13th** - Feast of St. Anthony
- **July 15th** - Feast of St. Bonaventure
- **Aug. 2nd** - Feast of Our Lady of the Angels (Portiuncula, the Church where God told Francis to rebuild His Church)
- **Aug. 11th** - Feast of St. Clare (commemorating the death of St. Clare)
- **Sept. 17th** - The Feast of the Stigmata (when St. Francis received the wounds of Jesus)
- **Oct. 3rd** - The Transitus (commemorating the death of St. Francis)
- **Oct. 4th** - Feast of St. Francis
- **Nov. 17th** - Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary



IV. Clare of Assisi & Elizabeth of Hungary:

Read & discuss the “Short Life of St. Clare” and “St. Elizabeth of Hungary – A Model for the Associate Way of Life.”

V. Franciscan Prayer

- *“Franciscan prayer is dynamic because it is about participation in the mystical Body of Christ. Prayer in this tradition is incarnational, centered on the person of Jesus Christ. According to Franciscan theology, Christ cannot be separated from the Trinity as Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, the One through whom all things are made and in whom all find their completion. To enter into the mystery of Christ through prayer, therefore, is to enter into the mystery of the Trinity, and to live in the Trinity is to live in relationships of love. Because Franciscan prayer is focused on the person of Christ, it is affective. It is prayer of the heart rather than head, and it seeks to center one’s heart in God. The heart that is centered in God, views the world as the place where God dwells.”*

~ From the book by Ilia Delio, OSF titled “Franciscan Prayer”
(St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2008)

- Discuss the “Elements of Franciscan Spirituality” as found in the Transformative Journey of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany

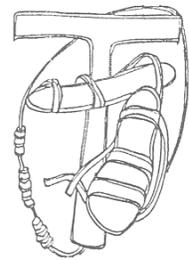
Structure of the Associate Way of Life

Congregational Leadership:

- Associate Liaison
- Associate Co-Directors
- TAU (Transformational Associates Unified) Team
- LAMs (Local Associate Ministers)

Local Associate Communities: we support one another through our prayer and sharing.

- LAMs
- Circular Leadership Roles
- Group and personal outreach ministries



The Franciscan Journey: Discernment & Reflection Guide



Refer to Attached Supplementary Materials following the Addendum

Franciscan Resources: Prayers, Topics and Symbols



Franciscan Topics and Resources:

Franciscan-Clarian Prayers

- Prayer before the Crucifix
- Prayer for Guidance
- Prayers of Saint Clare
- The Canticle of the Sun
- Peace Prayer (attributed to St. Francis)
- The Blessing of St. Francis



Franciscan Traditions

- Franciscan Crown
- The Omnibus - Francis of Assisi: Early Documents
 - Volume I. – “The Saint”
 - Volume II. – “The Founder”
 - Volume III. – “The Prophet”
- The San Damiano Cross
- The Tau Cross
- Franciscan Celebrations (Feast of Saint Francis, Feast of Saint Clare, Stigmata, Transitus)

History of the Community

- [The Wonderful Works of God](#) (book)
- [History of the FSA \(YouTube\) – 10 min.](#)
- [FSA: Journey in Healthcare \(You Tube\)](#)
- History of the Associates (***The Transformative Journey of the Associates of the FSA***)
- FSA Associate Mentoring Unit 1 (YouTube video series)
- Explanation of Chapter Initiatives & Directional Statements

Charism of the Community: ***“Through love and mutuality, we are at home with all people.”***

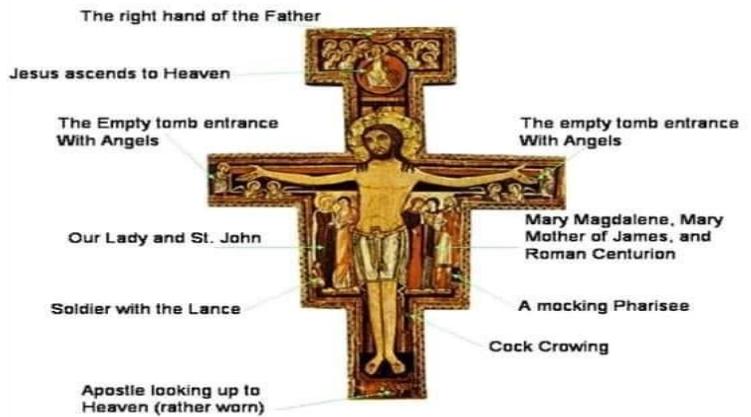
- Rule and Constitution of the Order
- Ann Wachter on Charism (YouTube)
- Core Values from Chapter

Other Resources to Share

- [Build With Living Stones](#), edited by Daria Mitchell (2015)
- [The Journey and the Dream](#), Murray Bodo, OFM (Life of Francis)
- [The Light in the Garden](#), Murray Bodo, OFM (The Love of Clare)
- [On A Shoestring and a Prayer](#), Raymond P. Sloan
- “The Franciscan Journey” (FSA Discernment & Reflection Guide/Mentoring Journal)
- [The Perfect Joy of St. Francis](#), Felix Timmermans
- FSA Website and META Facebook page

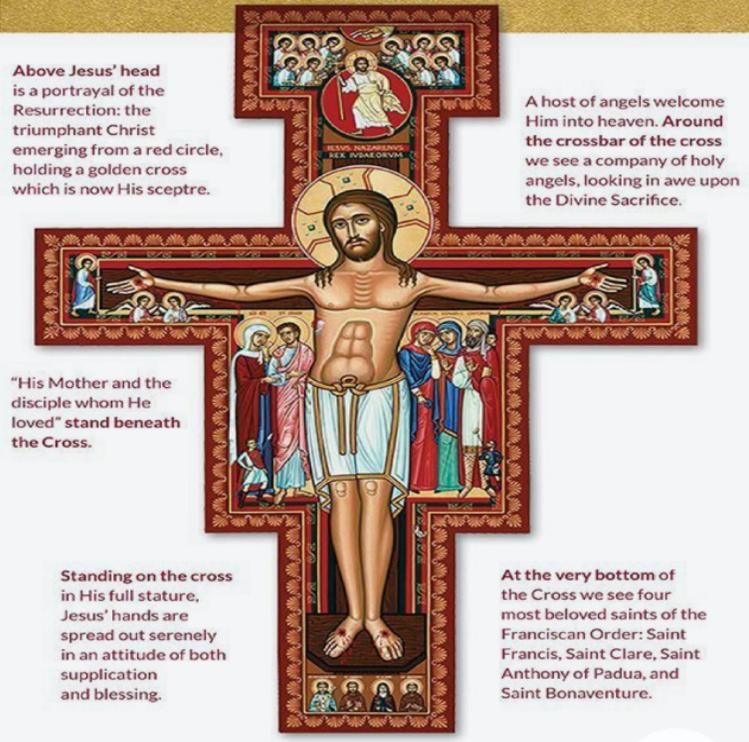
Franciscan Crosses:

San Damiano Cross - It was in the church of San Damiano where Francis first heard the call to rebuild God's Church. It was later moved to the Portiuncula, in which St. Mary of the Angels Church was built around. It now located in Santa Chiara and is a cross with several icons in the Eastern Church tradition.



< **“Go repair My Church.”** ...

When the image of Christ in the crucifix at San Damiano miraculously spoke these words to Saint Francis, he was awakened to a new zeal.



The Tau Cross - to ancient Hebrews, the letter “T” was the last letter of the alphabet and signified being faithful until the end of their lives. “T” was used by some religious in Francis’s time. After his conversion, Francis adopted it as his own crest and signature, signifying his fidelity to God to the end. Many wear the Tau Cross to identify themselves as being a Franciscan.



The Franciscan Crown (also known as the Seraphic Rosary)

The Franciscan historian, Father Luke Wadding (1588-1657) dates the origin of the Franciscan Crown back to the year 1422. According to Franciscan tradition, in 1442 an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary took place in Assisi, to a Franciscan novice named James. As a child, he had the daily custom of offering the Virgin Mary a crown of roses. When he entered the Friars Minor, he became distressed that he would no longer be able to offer this gift. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him to give him comfort and showed him another daily offering that he might do: to pray every day seven decades of Hail Mary, meditating between each decade on one of the seven joys that she had experienced in her life. Friar James began this devotion. One day the Director of Novices saw him praying. He saw an angel with him who was weaving a crown of roses, placing a lily of gold between each of the ten roses. When the novice had finished praying, the angel placed the crown upon him. The Director asked Friar James what this vision meant. After hearing the explanation, he told the other friars and soon this devotion spread throughout the Franciscan family.

To pray The Franciscan Crown (or Seraphic Rosary), a rosary consisting of seven decades in commemoration of the Seven Joys of the Virgin, namely, 1) The Annunciation, 2) The Visitation, 3) The Nativity of Jesus, 4) The Adoration of the Magi, 5) The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple, 6) The Resurrection of Jesus, and 7) The Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven. The Rosary begins by stating the first Joy and then praying one Our Father and ten Hail Marys, while meditating upon it. The same procedure is then followed for the other six Joys. It is common practice to add the Glory Be at the end of each decade. It is also customary, after the seventh mystery, to pray two more Hail Marys to bring the total number to seventy-two. This is to honor Our Lady, the Blessed Mother Mary, who is said to have lived on Earth for 72 years.



Well Known Prayers of St. Francis of Assisi

Prayer before the Crucifix:

Most High,
Glorious God,

Bring light to
the darkness of
my heart.

Give me
right faith,
certain hope,
and perfect charity.

Lord, give me
insight and wisdom
so I might always discern
your holy and true will.
Amen.

--St. Francis of Assisi



THE CANTICLE OF THE SUN

The "*Canticle of the Sun*," also known as "*The Canticle of Creatures*" is said to have been composed by Saint Francis. It is believed that most of the Canticle was written in late 1224, while Francis was at San Damiano, recovering from an illness. In this hymn Francis invites all of his brother and sister creatures—whether minerals, plants or animals — to praise their Creator.



Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is Yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To You, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and You give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens You have made them bright, precious, and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which You give Your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of You; through those who endure sickness and trial. Happy those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, they will be crowned.

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.

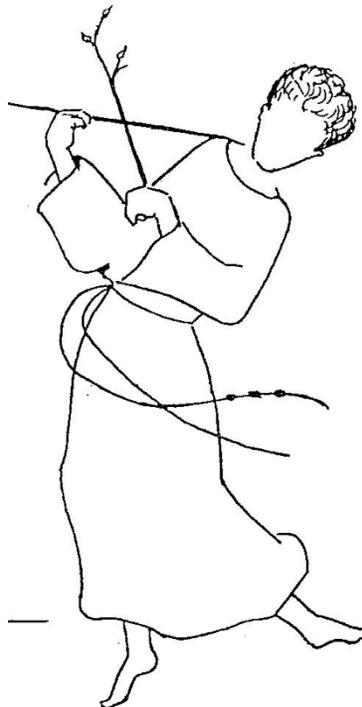
Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve Him with great humility.

Peace Prayer - While often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, the Peace Prayer wasn't actually written by the saint. However, it remains a popular traditional prayer.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.



O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.



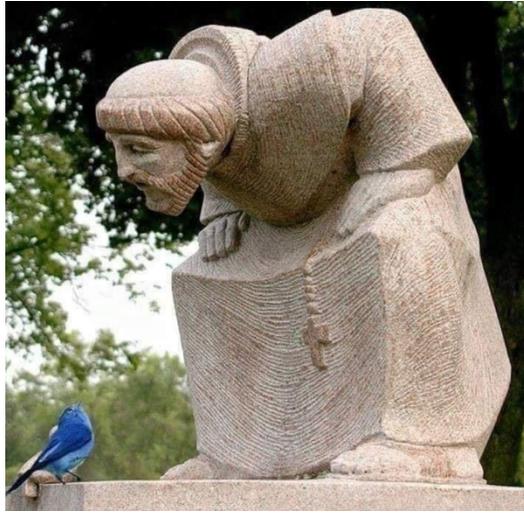


Monthly Themed PEACE PRAYER for Our Community
(Shared and prayed weekly by the NC Associate Community)

- January:** Prayer for an End to the Violence Against Immigrants & Refugees
February: Prayer for an End to the Violence of Racism & Discrimination
March: Prayer for an End to the Violence of Killing
April: Prayer for an End to the Violence of Disease and Addiction
May: Prayer for an End to Domestic Violence
June: Prayer for an End to the Violence of Corporate Greed
July: Prayer for an End to the Violence of Armed Conflict
August: Prayer for an End to the Violence of Poverty
September: Prayer for an End to the Violence to the Dignity of the Human Person and Laborers
October: Prayer for an End to the Violence Against All Creation & the Environment
November: Prayer for an End to the Violence of Hunger and Thirst
December: Prayer for an End to the Violence of Religious Intolerance

See the Addendum for Detailed Sample of Themed Prayer Services





Guide for Leaders of the Associate Way of Life



ORGANIZATION, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Associate Way of Life Co-Directors

The Associate Co-Directors are appointed by Congregational Leadership to oversee and promote the Associate Way of Life.

The Associate Co-Directors have responsibilities for the organization and administration of the Associate Way of Life for the Allegany Franciscan Congregation, including the spiritual development of Associates and encouraging positive communication through public relations and networking.

Organization and Administration

- Works collaboratively with the TAU Team and Local Associate Ministers.
- Prepares the annual budget for the Associates.
- In unison with the TAU Team and Local Associate Ministers, reviews and updates as needed: *The Transformative Journey of the FSA Associates Way of Life Guide*, the Directory, Associate Brochure, Necrology and Social Media.
- In collaboration with the Congregational Liaison, promotes and coordinates the involvement of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany with the Associates.

Spiritual Development

- Support the Local Associate Ministers (**LAMs**) by assuring access and use of resources available for Associates' growth and development of Franciscan-Clarian spirituality.
- Collaborate with the LAM and Associates to plan, provide opportunities, and encourage participation in retreats, days of prayer, commitment ceremonies, and Congregational gatherings, etc.

Communication

- The Associate Co-Directors provide on-going communication with and between the Congregational Leadership and Associate Liaison, Congregational Communication Team, Archivist, TAU Team, LAMs, and Associates, to assure clear, timely and consistent information regarding Associate activities.
- Send welcoming letters to new Associates and requests that the Congregational Communication Team add the Associate's contact information to the email and Directory lists.
- Send correspondence on behalf of the Associates of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, such as Mass Cards, Thank You notes, etc.
- Maintain a digital photograph of each Associate, as well as information regarding the date of death of deceased Associates for the Congregational Communication Team.

Public Relations and Networking

- Encourage Associates and Sisters to continue their efforts to make the Associate Way of Life known to the wider public.
- Collaborate with the LAMs to create outreach opportunities for inviting Sisters and others to “Come & See” the Associate Way of Life.
- Attend Regional and National meetings and events.
- Encourage Associates and Sisters to participate in inter-community Associate activities, such as Franciscan Federation Conferences and workshops, Intercongregational Associate Directors (IAD) and Franciscan Action Network (FAN) meetings / retreats, etc. and comparable activities in Africa, South America, and the Caribbean.

TAU (Transformational Associates Unified) TEAM

The **TAU Team** acts as an advisory group to the Associate Co-Directors. TAU Team members are appointed by Congregational Leadership to provide input for the ongoing development of the Associate Way of Life. As part of their leadership responsibilities, they are to review, revise and update the ***The Transformative Journey of the FSA Associates Way of Life Guide*** every 4 years following each General Chapter.

LOCAL ASSOCIATE MINISTERS (LAM)

Local Associate Ministers or Co-LAMs are selected by the local Associate community, then recommended to and appointed by the Associate Co-Directors.

The LAMs are responsible for:

- Ensuring that timely and adequate communication is established and relationships are built and maintained by fostering positive communication with members of their local community, as well as serving as a liaison to the Associate Co-Directors.
- Coordinating and fostering the Associate Way of Life in a local/specific geographic area and/or virtually
- Keeping the Associate Co-Directors informed of significant events, programs or changes in their local communities:
 - Any general written communications with ALL members of the local community, including content of actual meetings and attendance (such as, summary of minutes and handouts)
 - Annual schedule of meetings
 - Dates of ceremonies, change in status of members, including illness, etc.
 - Maintaining the following forms/records {Originals are to be sent to the Associate Co-Directors and a copy is to be maintained by the LAM(s)}:

- Prospective Associate Fact Sheet
- FSA Photo Release form
- Covenant of Association (Initial & Renewal of Commitment)
- Annual Associate Data Collection Update **(DUE to Co-Directors by Nov. 1)**
- Individual photograph of each member

Local Implementation and Coordination

The **LAM** (Local Associate Minister):

- Welcomes interested individual(s) to a local Associate Meeting
 - 1st time attendees should be introduced and all those present should BRIEFLY introduce themselves to the interested Inquirer.
 - After 1st meeting, contact that person to see if there are any questions.
 - Obtain contact information to share details regarding upcoming meetings and events.
 - Encourage the member who provided initial contact to follow-up with the prospective Associate (Inquirer).
- Facilitates the planning of the Monthly Associate Meeting, encouraging shared “Circular Leadership Roles” (refer to details on pg. 97). Local gathering time should allow for:
 - Prayer
 - Development of Franciscan-Clarian Spirituality
 - Allegany Franciscan activities and events
 - Business meeting and outreach opportunities
 - Hospitality and Socialization

For continuity among various Associate Communities, it is recommended to incorporate the Associate Mission and Vision Statements during the monthly meetings.

- Fosters the on-going formation of the Associates and their commitment to Franciscan-Clarian spirituality, Core Values and the Allegany Charism.
- Plans an annual retreat, initial Commitment Ceremony, and annual Renewal Ceremony for the local Associate community. *(The Sisters annually renew their vows on or around April 16th. Therefore, Associates may choose to conduct their Renewal Ceremony around this same time).*
- Arranges for the Inquirer to begin the Mentoring process, which can be found in ***The Transformative Journey of the Associate Way of Life*** Guide:
 - Assign a Local Contact person to support the Inquirer during the mentoring process
 - Recommend the Inquirer to the Mentoring Team
 - Encourage local members to provide prayerful support of the Inquirer
 - Recommend Franciscan literature and resources (refer to Sections 9 & 10 of the Guide)

Members of the Mentoring Team will be assigned to assist each prospective Associate (Inquirer) with orientation by sharing details regarding the Allegany Associate Way of Life and Franciscan-Clarian Spirituality. Although the Local Associate Minister or another qualified Associate or Allegany Franciscan Sister may participate in the mentoring process, it is the primary responsibility of the Mentoring Team to serve in this role. The Mentoring Team, consisting of three Associates selected and appointed by the Associate Co-Directors, will use the suggested syllabus and formation materials approved for use as the foundation of this training, as outlined in the *Transformative Journey of the Associate Way of Life* Guide.

- If the Inquirer already has a strong foundation in Franciscan Spirituality (e.g. Secular Franciscan) then the emphasis of their formation should be the History and Charism of the Allegany Franciscan Congregation.
- If the Inquirer is a former vowed Franciscan, their formation process should be discussed with the Associate Co-Directors.

Communication

- Inform Associates of the various Social Media options available: FSA Website; House of Prayer for All People (Trinity Gulph Mills, PA website); Facebook META (e.g. Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and Associates; Franciscan Center, Tampa; Mt. Irenaeus, Franciscan Federation, etc.), YouTube, etc.
- The Congregational Website (www.alleganyfranciscans.org) may be accessed using the “Associate Log In” and Password
- Ensure that local Associates receive Congregational and Associate mailings (electronic, US Mail).
- Encourage Associates to submit articles and/or photographs with captions to the Associate Co-Directors for publication (See **Communication Policy pg. 25**)



SUGGESTED SHARED “CIRCULAR LEADERSHIP” ROLES FOR MEMBERS OF EACH LOCAL COMMUNITY

LAM - (Local Associate Minister) a collaborative liaison between the Associate Leadership and the local community

- Builds strong, positive relationships among members through timely communication.
- Schedules speakers or obtains needed literature and resources, etc.
- Coordinates with the Facilitator to select topics & materials to create the meeting agenda.

Meeting Facilitator - keeps monthly meetings on track (*role may be rotated monthly*)

Leader of Prayer - volunteer who plans and leads prayer for monthly meetings (*role may be rotated monthly*)

Scribe / Secretary - records, maintains and distributes “Meeting Minutes” via mail/email

Treasurer - maintains financial records of funds collected and dispersed, such as donations made on behalf of the local group.

Minister(s) of Hospitality - coordinates the planning for and organization of volunteers who provide refreshments for each month’s meeting or event.

Contact Person for Inquirer(s) - prayerfully supports the assigned Inquirer(s) and collegially serves alongside members of the Associate Mentoring Team.

Minister(s) of Correspondence - writes and sends Thank You notes, Get Well Cards, Mass Cards, etc. on behalf of the Local Associate group.

LORD
make me an instrument
of YOUR PEACE.



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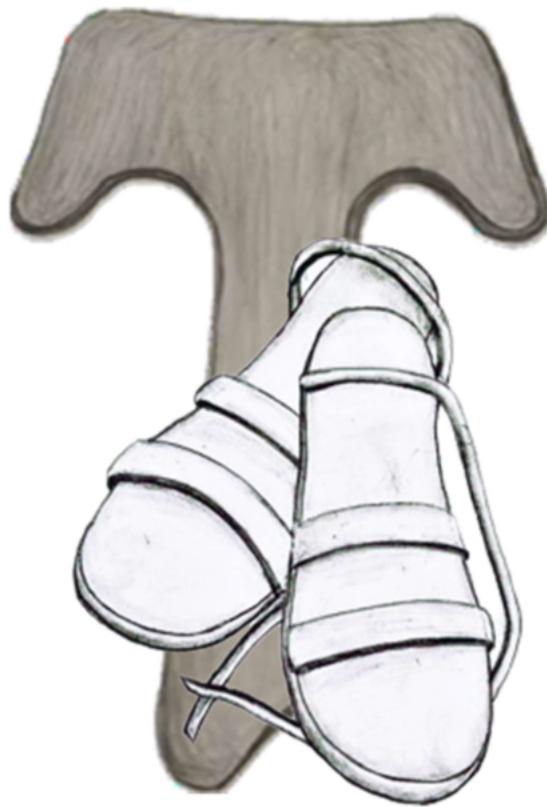
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Franciscan Networking



ORGANIZATIONS, WEBSITES and SOCIAL MEDIA

Franciscan Sisters of Allegany Website	https://www.alleganyfranciscans.org/
Franciscan Sisters of Allegany Facebook page (Facebook is also found on website)	https://www.facebook.com/FSAllegany/
Franciscan Action Network	https://franciscanaction.org/
Franciscans International	www.franciscansinternational.org
Franciscan Federation	www.franfed.org
National Catholic Reporter	www.ncronline.org
National Fraternity of Secular Franciscans	www.nafra-sfo.org/index.html
Pax Christi	www.paxchristiusa.org
Richard Rohr Daily Meditations: Center for Action & Contemplation	Meditations@cac.org email for FREE subscription
Sacred Space	www.sacredspace.ie

PERIODICALS and SERIES

The Cord, a Franciscan Spiritual Review, St. Bonaventure NY, Franciscan Institute. (quarterly)

The Franciscan Heritage Series, St. Bonaventure NY, Franciscan Institute. (various titles and topics printed annually since 2003)

Radical Grace, Albuquerque, NM, Center for Action and Contemplation. (a quarterly newsletter of the Center for Action and Contemplation, founded in 1986 by Richard Rohr OFM)

Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism, St. Bonaventure, NY, Franciscan Institute. (a publication of papers presented at conferences and workshops)

(Local Associate groups may wish to subscribe to **The Cord** or other publications and keep them in a central location, i.e. a small lending and circulating library for members.)

AUDIO VISUAL/DVD

25th Associate Anniversary DVD

Now You Know Media | Audio & Video Courses - <https://www.nowyouknowmedia.com/>

Short, Bill, OFM, *St. Francis of Assisi: A New Way of Being Christian* (audio 24 Lectures/8CD's).

Short, Bill, OFM, *The Treasure of a Poor Man: St. Francis of Assisi and Franciscan Spirituality*, (12 Lectures/5CD's)

RESOURCES IN PORTUGUESE

História das Irmãs Franciscanas de Allegany em português

Documentos da CRB-FFB

Fontes Franciscanas (Ed. Vozes)

Fontes Clarianas (Ed. Vozes)

Jesus, Mestre da Salvação: (O Evangelho de Mateus) Anselm, Grun, (Ed. Loyola).

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O Mestre da Vida: Augusto Cury (Ed. Sexante).

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Sinais dos Tempos – CNNB. Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil. 2010.

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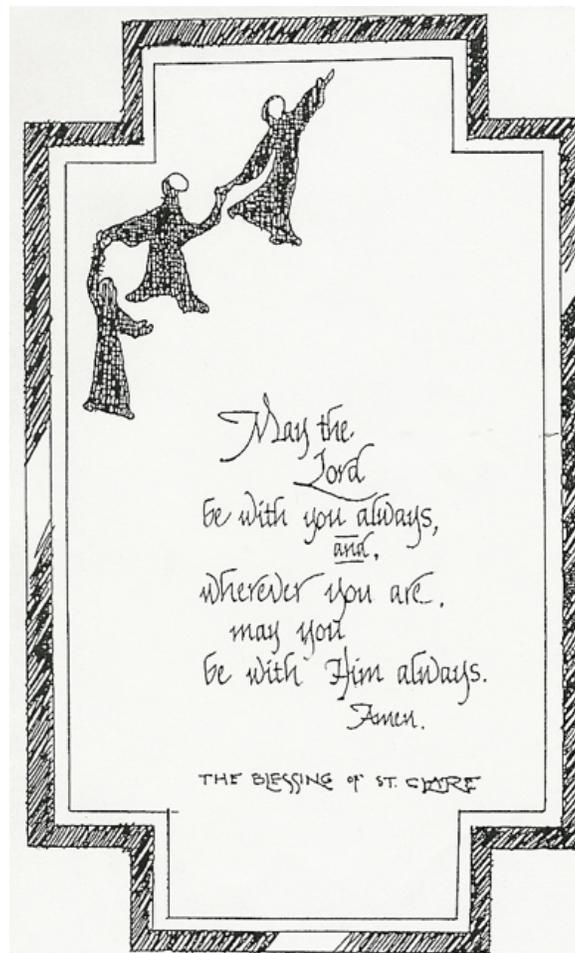
ADDENDUM



SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

ACRONYMS

FAN	Franciscan Action Network
FRAN FED	Franciscan Federation
FSA	Franciscan Sisters of Allegany
IAD	Intercongregational Associate Directors
JPIC	Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
LAC	Local Associate Coordinators
LAM	Local Associate Minister
LCWR	Leadership Conference of Women Religious
NACAR	North American Conference of Associates and Religious



SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

- ✚ The Franciscan Journey: Discernment and Reflection Guide
- ✚ Monthly Themed Peace Prayer for our Community

The Franciscan Journey

(A Discernment guide for those beginning the journey in the Franciscan way of life)



Table of Contents

	Sandals
	San Damiano Crucifix
	Stripping
	Leper
	Cave
	Wolf
	Portiuncula
	Crib
	Eucharist
	Mary
	Tau
	Creation
	Stigmata
	Transitus
	Extra Copies

Sandals

Following in the Footprints of Jesus



Sandals: Following in the Footprints of Jesus

FRANCISCAN VALUES:

JOURNEY

WALKING IN THE FOOTPRINTS OF JESUS

FOLLOWING YOUR HEART'S DESIRE

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Mark 10: 46-52

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE:

Hosea 11: 1-9 I loved Israel as a child

Isaiah 43: 1-5 I have called you by name

Psalms 139 The ever present God

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: 2 Celano 196

Perhaps it would be useful and worthwhile to touch briefly on the special devotions of St. Francis. Although this man was devout in all things, since he enjoyed the anointing of the Spirit, there were special things that moved him with special affection. Among other expressions used in common speech, he could not hear "the love of God" without a change in himself. As soon as he heard "the love of God" he was excited, moved, and on fire, as if these words from the outside were a pick strumming the strings of his heart on the inside.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Letter to Brother Leo

Brother Leo, health and peace from Brother Francis! I am speaking, my son, in this way--as a mother would--because I am putting everything we said on the road in this brief message and advice. If afterwards, you need to come to me for counsel, I advise you thus: In whatever way it seems better to you to please the Lord God and to follow His footprint and poverty, do it with the blessing of the Lord God and my obedience. And if you need and want to come to me for the sake of your soul, or for some consolation, Leo, come!

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Third Letter to St. Agnes 24-25

Therefore, as the glorious Virgin of virgins carried Christ materially in her body, you, too, by following in His footprints, especially those of poverty and humility, can, without any doubt, always carry Him spiritually...

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 25

Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ who made his own will one with the Father's, the sisters and brothers are to remember that, for God, they should give up their own wills. Therefore, in every kind of chapter they have let them seek first the kingdom of God and his justice (Mt 6: 33), and exhort one another to observe with greater dedication the rule they have professed and to follow faithfully in the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

The Dream p. 4

Of Love p. 72

Mountain Jonquil p. 92

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What type of commitment are you willing to give to this journey? Describe where you see yourself on this journey...

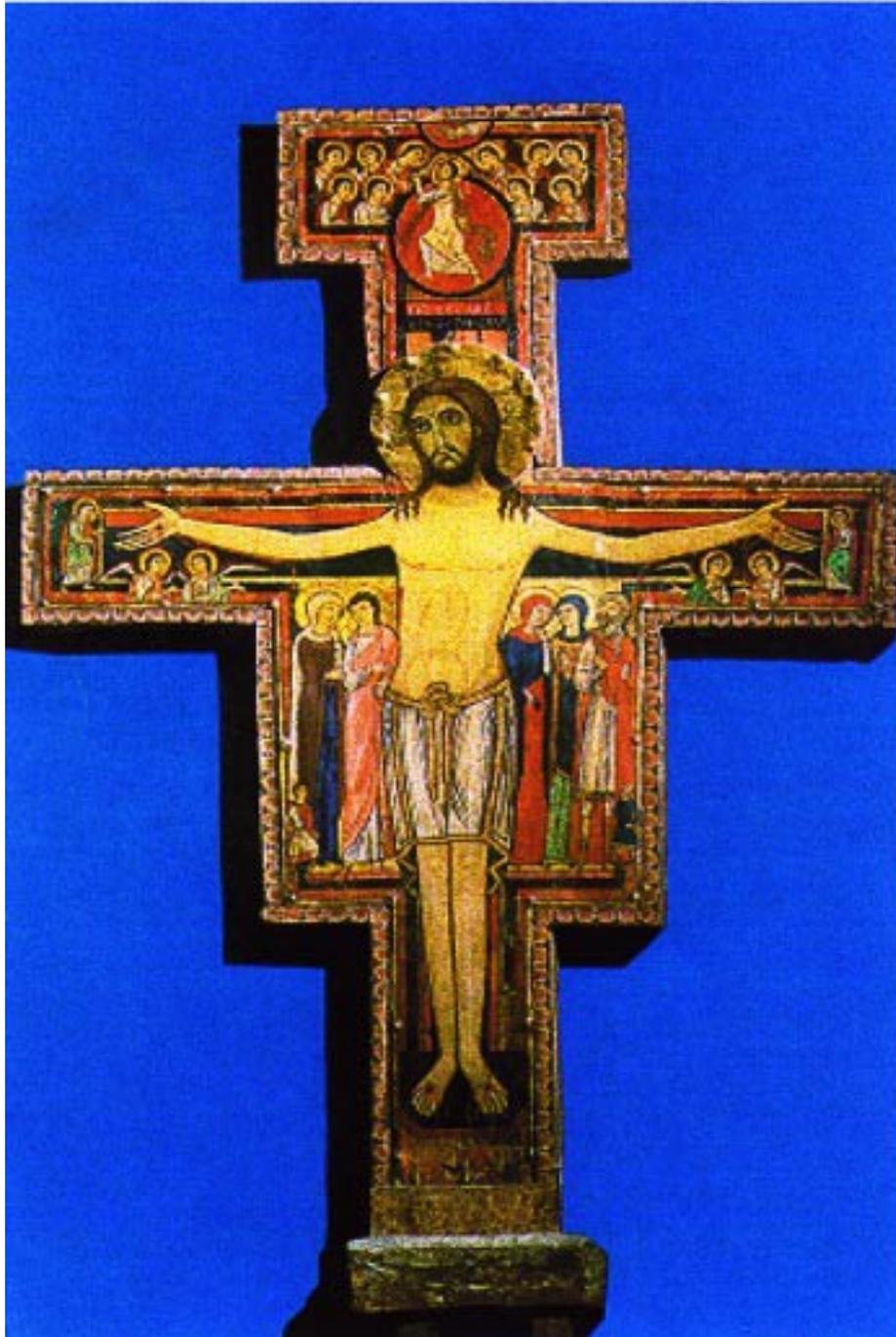
2. Commitment is made one day at a time. Can you make a "Yes" for today?

ACTIVITY:

1. What do you know about journaling? If you have been journaling already, for how long?

-
2. Name the significant events in your life, which have led you up to today, asking to be in discernment for religious life.

San Damiano Cross
Francis' Call to Conversion



San Damiano Cross: Francis' Call to Conversion

FRANCISCAN VALUES:

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
CALL TO SERVICE/REBUILD THE CHURCH

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 18: 1-6

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so you are in my hand.

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE:

1 Samuel 3: 1-10 Call of Samuel
Isaiah 43: 1-5 I have called you by name
Matthew 4: 18-22 Call of Disciples

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: 2 Celano 6: 10

Francis was walking one day by the Church of San Damiano, which was abandoned by everyone and almost in ruins. Led by the Spirit he went in to pray and knelt down devoutly before the crucifix. He was shaken by unusual experiences and discovered that he was different from when he had entered. As soon as he had this feeling, there occurred something unheard of in previous ages: with the lips of the painting, the image of Christ crucified spoke to him. "Francis," it said, calling him by name, go, rebuild my house; as you see, it is all being destroyed." Francis was more than a little stunned, trembling, and stuttering like a man out of his senses. He prepared himself to obey and pulled himself together to carry out the command.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Prayer Before the Crucifix



Most High,
glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart
and give me
true faith,
certain hope,
and perfect charity,
sense and knowledge,
Lord,
that I may carry out
Your holy and true command.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: First Witness of Thomas of Celano 18

The first work that Blessed Francis undertook, after he had gained his freedom from the hand of his carnally minded father, was to build a house of God. He did not try to build a new one, but he repaired an old one, restored an ancient one. He did not tear out the foundation, but he built upon it, always reserving to Christ his prerogative, although he was unaware of it, for no one can lay another foundation, but that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. When he had returned to the place where, as has been said, the church of San Damiano had been built in ancient times, he repaired it zealously within a short time with the help of the grace of the Most High. This is the blessed and holy place where the glorious religion and most excellent Order of Poor Ladies and poor virgins had its joyful origin, about six years after the conversion of the blessed Francis and through that same blessed man. The Lady Clare, a native of the city of Assisi, the most precious and the strongest stone of the whole structure, was its foundation. For, after the beginning of the order of brothers, when the said lady was converted to God through the counsel of the holy man, she lived for the advantage of many and as an example to countless others. She was of noble lineage, but she was more noble by grace; she was a virgin in body, most chaste in mind; a youth in age, but mature in spirit. She was steadfast in purpose and most eager in her desire for divine love; endowed with wisdom and excelling in humility; bright by name, brilliant by life, most brilliant by character

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 2

With all in the holy Catholic and apostolic Church who wish to serve the Lord, the brothers and sisters of this order are to persevere in true faith and penance.

They wish to live this evangelical conversion of life in a spirit of prayer, of poverty, and of humility. Therefore, let them abstain from all evil and persevere to the end in doing good because God the Son himself will come again in glory and will say to all who acknowledge, adore, and serve him in sincere repentance: Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world (Mt 25: 34).

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

Crucifix speaks p. 15

The Fool p. 21

Trinity of Towns p. 46

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. The San Damiano Cross is an icon that has many people significant to the life of the Christ included within the painting. Who are the significant people in your life story (who might be painted with you)?

2. In what ways do you provide service to others? To the Church? To the poor?

3. Do you feel a call to rebuild the Church? In what ways?

ACTIVITIES

1. Recall a time/place/event when you recognized God was real and present in your life. Describe the experience.

2. Journal about a figure or symbol represented in the San Damiano cross that touched you.

3. Draw or create your own cross in the style of the San Damiano cross, portraying the important people and events in your life.

Stripping Before the Bishop and Assisi

Francis' Call to Abandonment



Stripping: Francis' Call to Abandonment

FRANCISCAN VALUES

EMPTYING OF SELF/LETTING GO

RECONCILIATION

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 29: 11-14

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 12: 1-10 When powerless, I am strong

Romans 7: 13-25 I do not do what I want to do

Matthew 18: 21-35 Forgive seven times seventy

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: Legend of the Three Companions 19-20

The [Francis'] father hurried to the palace of the commune complaining to the city magistrates about his son and asking them to make him return the money he had taken from the house. When the magistrates saw how distraught he was, they sent a messenger to summon Francis to appear before them. He told the messenger that he had been made free by God's grace and, since he was a servant of almighty God alone, was no longer bound by the magistrates. The magistrates, unwilling to force the issue, told his father: "Because he is in the service of God, he no longer falls within our power. Realizing that he could accomplish nothing with the magistrates, he made the same complaint before the Bishop of the city. The Bishop, a discerning and understanding man, duly called him to appear in order to respond to his father's complaint. Francis answered the messenger, "I will appear before the Lord Bishop because he is the father and lord of souls."

He then came before the Bishop and was received by him with great joy. "Your father", the bishop said to him, "is infuriated and extremely scandalized. If you wish to serve God, return to him the money you have, because God does not want

you to spend money unjustly acquired on the work of the church. Your father's anger will abate when he gets the money back. My son, have confidence in the Lord and act courageously. Do not be afraid, for he will be your help and will abundantly provide you with whatever is necessary for the work of the church."

Then the man of God got up, joyful and comforted by the Bishop's words, and, as he brought the money to him, he said, "My Lord, I will gladly give back not only the money acquired from his things, but even all my clothes." And going into one of the Bishop's rooms, he took off all his clothes, and, putting the money on top of them, came out naked before the Bishop, his father, and all the bystanders, and said: "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. Until now I have called Peter Bernadone my father. But because I have proposed to serve God, I return to him the money on account of which he was so upset, and also all the clothing which is his, wanting to say from now on: 'Our Father who are in heaven' and not 'My father Peter Bernadone'." At that moment, the man of God was found to be wearing under his colored clothes a hair shirt next to his skin.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Salutation of the Virtues

Hail, Queen Wisdom, may the Lord protect you with your sister, holy pure Simplicity.

Lady, holy Poverty, may the Lord protect you with your sister, holy Humility.

Lady, holy Charity, may the Lord protect you with your sister, holy Obedience.

Most holy Virtues, may the Lord protect all of you, from Whom you come and proceed.

There is surely no one in the whole world who can possess any one of you without dying first.

Whoever possesses one and does not offend the others, possesses all.

Whoever offends one does not possess any and offends all.

And each one confounds vice and sin.

Holy Wisdom confounds Satan and all his cunning.

Pure holy Simplicity confounds all the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of the body.

Holy Poverty confounds the desire for riches, greed and the cares of this world.

Holy Humility confounds pride, all people who are in the world and all that is in the world.

Holy Charity confounds every diabolical and carnal temptation and every carnal fear.

Holy Obedience confounds every corporal and carnal wish, binds its mortified body to obedience of the Spirit and obedience to one's brother [and sister].

So that it is subject and submissive to everyone in the world, not only to people but to every beast and wild animals as well, that they may do whatever they want with it insofar as it has been given to them from above by the Lord.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Legend of St. Clare 7b-8

The Solemnity of the Day of Palms was at hand when the young girl went with a fervent heart to the man of God, asking him about her conversion and how it should be carried out. The father Francis told her that on the day of the feast, she should go, dressed and adorned, together with the crowd of people, to receive a palm, and, on the following night, leaving the camp she should turn her worldly joy into mourning the Lord's passion. Therefore, when Sunday came, the young girl, thoroughly radiant with festive splendor among the crowd of women, entered the Church with the others. Then something occurred that was a fitting omen: as the others were going to receive the palms, while Clare remained immobile in her place out of shyness, the Bishop, coming down the steps, came to her and placed a palm in her hands. On that night, preparing to obey the command of the saint, she embarked upon her long-desired flight with a virtuous companion. Since she was not content to leave by way of the usual door, marveling at her strength, she broke open—with her own hands—that other door that is customarily blocked by wood and stone. And so she ran to St. Mary of the Portiuncula, leaving behind her home, city, and relatives. There, the brothers, who were observing sacred vigils before the little altar of God, received the virgin Clare with torches. There, immediately after rejecting the filth of Babylon, she gave the world a bill of divorce. There, her hair shorn by the hands of the brothers, she put aside every kind of fine dress.

The First Letter to St. Agnes 30

What a great and praiseworthy exchange:

to leave the things of time for those of eternity,
to choose the things of heaven for the goods of earth,
to receive the hundred-fold in place of one,
to possess a blessed eternal life!

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 22

The truly poor in spirit, following the example of the Lord, live in this world as pilgrims and strangers. They neither appropriate nor defend anything as their own. So excellent is this most high poverty that it makes us materially poor, but rich in virtue. Let this poverty alone be our portion because it leads to the land of the living. Clinging completely to it let us, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, never want anything else under heaven.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

New Birth p. 7

Losing a Father p. 17

Bishop Guido p. 86

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What do you need to let go of in your life? How do you know this?

2. In what way are you naked before God? Explain.

ACTIVITIES

1. Look into the mirror and name 10 positive and realistic qualities about yourself (not about what you do).

2. As you look at your life, what things are not important in the overall picture? Make a list of those things. Go over the list and star those things you can "let go of". Then begin that process.

3. Are there things in your closet that you do not need? Are you willing to let go of them? Start a box of these things and give it to St. Vincent de Paul, Hospice, Goodwill or another donation organization in your area.

Embracing the Leper

Francis' Conversion Deepens



Embracing the Leper: Francis' Conversion Deepens

FRANCISCAN VALUES

CONVERSION

EMBRACING OUR FEARS

MINORES

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Luke 7: 36-50

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "Speak." "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts of both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

Luke 15: 11-32	The Prodigal Son
Luke 19: 1-10	The story of Zacchaeus
John 21: 15-19	Peter professes love three times

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: Legend of the Three Companions 4: 11

One day, while Francis was praying enthusiastically to the Lord, he received this response: "Francis, everything you loved carnally and desired to have, you must hate, if you wish to know my will. Because once you begin doing this, what before seemed delightful and sweet will unbearable and bitter; and what before made you shudder will offer you great sweetness and enormous delight." He was overjoyed at this and comforted by the Lord. Then one day, as he was riding his horse near Assisi, he met a leper. And even though he usually shuddered at lepers, he made himself dismount, and gave him a coin, kissing his hand as he did so. After he accepted the kiss of peace from him, Francis remounted and continued on his way. He then began to consider himself less and less, until, by God's grace, he came to complete victory over himself.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Francis' Testament 1-3

The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: while I was in sin, it seemed too bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards, I delayed a little and left the world.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Acts of the Process of Canonization, 6th witness, 2

Clare was certainly diligent about encouraging and protecting the sisters, showing compassion toward the sick sisters. She was solicitous about serving them, humbly submitting herself to even the least of the serving sisters, always looking down upon herself.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 21

Let all the sisters and brothers zealously follow the poverty and humility of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though rich beyond measure, He emptied himself for our sake and with the most blessed Virgin, his mother, he chose poverty in this world. Let them be mindful that they should have only those goods of this world which, as the Apostle says, "having something to eat and something to wear, with these we are content." Let them be happy to live among the outcast and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the lepers, and those who beg on the street.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

Meeting the Leper p. 12

This New Day p. 14

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What fears do you have regarding a commitment to following the journey of a Franciscan life choice?

2. Name and describe an experience of conversion in your life.

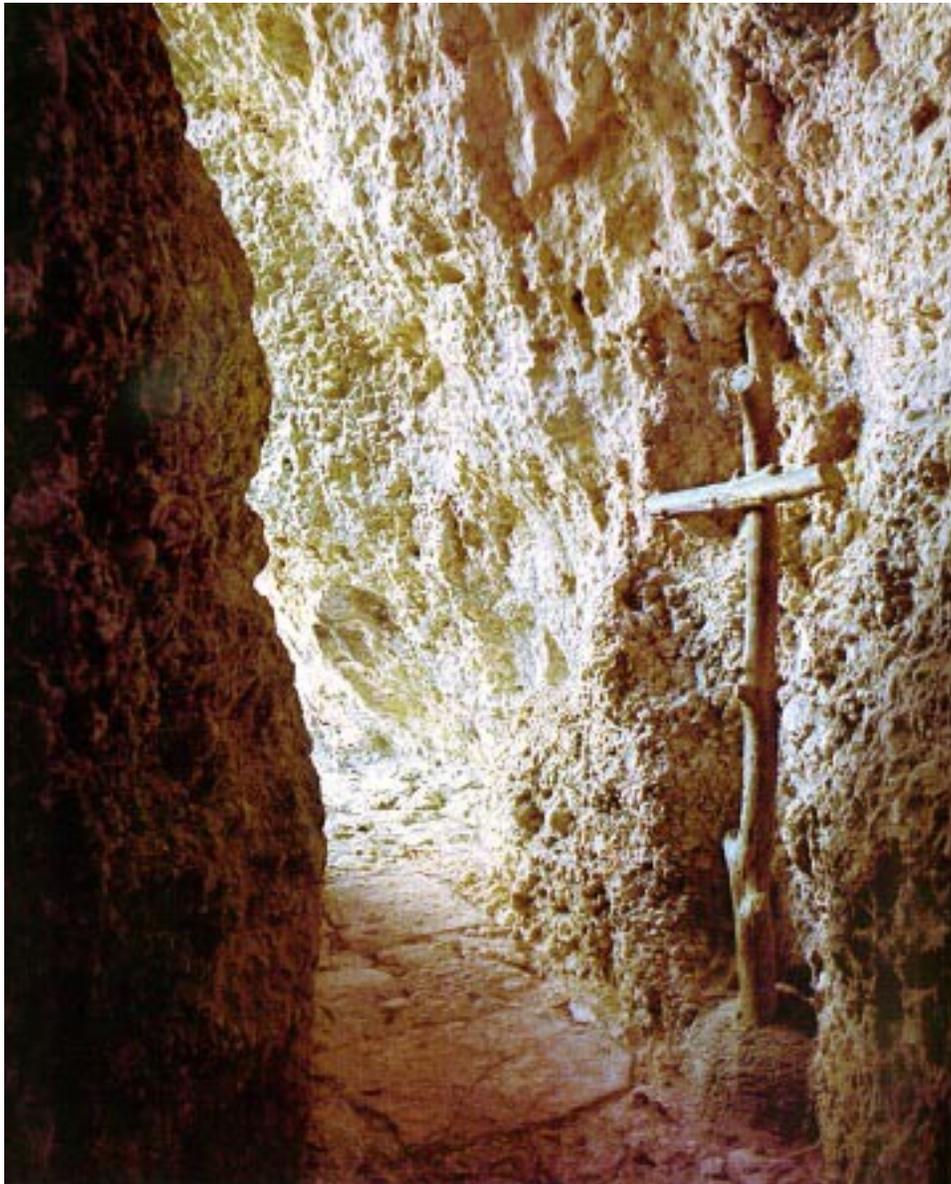
ACTIVITIES

1. How might you embrace your fears? What insights have you learned?

-
2. Name and reflect upon a time you have reached out to a "leper" in your life.

The Cave

Francis' Call to Contemplation



The Cave: Francis' Call to Contemplation

FRANCISCAN VALUES

PRAYER/CONTEMPLATION

HUMILITY

LISTENING HEART

SACRED SCRIPTURE: John 4: 4-42

Jesus had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone to the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is saying to you, 'Give me a drink', you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never thirst. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life..."

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

Luke 9: 28-36 The Transfiguration

Luke 1: 46-55 Mary's Magnificat

Psalm 42 My soul longs for God

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: 1 Celano 6

Changed in mind but not in body, [Francis] now refused to go to Apulia and was anxious to direct his will to God's. Thus he retired for a short time from the tumult and business of the world and was anxious to keep Jesus Christ in his inmost self. Like an experienced merchant, he concealed the pearl he had found from the eyes of mockers, and, selling all he had, he tried to buy it secretly. Now there was in the city of Assisi a man he loved more than all the rest. They were of the same age and the constant intimacy of their mutual love made him bold to share his secrets with him. [Francis] often brought him to remote places suitable for

talking, asserting that he had found a great and valuable treasure. This man was overjoyed, and since he was so excited about what he heard, he gladly went with Francis whenever he was summoned. There was a cave near the city where they often went and talked together about the treasure. The man of God, who was already holy because of his holy intention, was accustomed to enter the cave, while his companion waited outside, and inspired by a new and extraordinary spirit he would pray to his Father in secret. He acted in such a way that no one would know what was happening within. Wisely taking the occasion of the good to wisely conceal the better, he consulted God alone about his holy purpose. He prayed with all his heart that the eternal and true God guide his way and teach him to do his will. He endured great suffering in his soul, and was not able to rest until he accomplished in action what he had conceived in his heart. Different thoughts followed one after another, and their relentlessness severely disturbed him. He was burning inwardly with a divine fire, and he was unable to conceal outwardly the flame kindled in his soul. He repented that he had sinned so grievously and that he had offended the eyes of majesty. While his past and present transgressions no longer delighted him, he was yet fully confident of refraining from future ones. Therefore, when he came back out to his companion, he was so exhausted from his struggle that one person seemed to have entered, and another to have come out.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Paraphrase of the Our Father

Our Father: Most holy, our Creator, Redeemer, Consoler, and Savior.

Who are in heaven: In the angels and the saints, enlightening them to know, for you, Lord, are light; inflaming them to love, for you, Lord, are love; dwelling in them and filling them with happiness, for you, Lord, are Supreme Good, the Eternal Good, from Whom all good comes without Whom there is no good.

Holy be your name: May knowledge of you become clearer in us, that we may know the breadth of your blessings, the length of your promises, the height of your majesty, the depth of your judgements.

Your kingdom come: That you may rule in us through your grace and enable us to come to your kingdom, where there is clear vision of you, perfect love of you, blessed companionship with you, eternal enjoyment of you.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven: That we may love you with our whole heart by always thinking of you; with our whole soul by always desiring you, with our whole mind by always directing all our intentions to you, and by seeking your glory in everything, with all our strength by exerting all our energies and affections of body and soul in the service of your love and of nothing else; and we may love our neighbor as ourselves by drawing them all

to your love with our whole strength, by rejoicing in the good of others as in our own, by suffering with others at their misfortunes, and by giving offense to no one.

Give us this day: In remembrance, understanding, and reverence of that love which [our Lord Jesus Christ] had for us and of those things that He said and did and suffered for us.

Our daily bread: Your own beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Forgive us our trespasses: Through your ineffable mercy, through the power of the passion of Your Beloved Son, and through the merits and intercession of the ever Blessed Virgin and all your elect.

As we forgive those who trespass against us: And what we do not completely forgive, make us Lord, forgive completely, that we may truly love our enemies because of you, and we may fervently intercede for them before you, returning no one evil for evil and we may strive to help everyone in you.

And lead us not into temptation: Hidden or obvious, sudden or persistent.

But deliver us from evil: Past, present, and to come.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Second Letter to Agnes of Prague 20b

Gaze upon Christ, consider Christ, contemplate Christ, as you desire to imitate Christ...

Third Letter to Agnes of Prague 12-13

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity! Place your soul in the brilliance of glory! Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance! And transform your entire being into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 9

Everywhere and in each place, and in every season and each day the brothers and sisters are to have a true and humble faith. From the depths of their inner life let them love, honor, adore, serve, praise, bless, and glorify our most high and eternal God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With all that they are let them adore him because we should pray always and not lose heart (Lk 18:1); this is what the Father desires. In this same spirit let them also celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours in union with the whole Church. The sisters and brothers whom the Lord has called to the life of contemplation (Mk 6: 31), with a daily renewed joy, should manifest

their special dedication to God and celebrate the Father's love for the world. It was he who created and redeemed us, and by his mercy alone shall save us.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

The Cave p. 8

Of Mountain Hideaways p. 80

Mountain Man p. 94

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your image of God? What role does God play in your life?

2. How much time each day do you spend in prayer? Describe a typical prayer time. Do you have a favorite time or place of prayer? Or method? How do you balance prayer with ministry?

ACTIVITIES

1. Now that you have described one of your prayer times, would you like to experience other prayer styles? Would you like some resources?

2. Journal on your insights on your experience of aloneness and quiet with *God*.

3. Reread the *Paraphrase of the Our Father*; take either the entire prayer or a section and rewrite your own.

Taming the Wolf

Francis' Call to Peace Making and Justice



Taming the Wolf: Francis' Call to Peace Making and Justice

FRANCISCAN VALUES

NONVIOLENCE

JUSTICE/PEACEMAKING

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11: 3b-4a, 6-9

He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 12: 5-10 When I am weak, I am strong

John 10: 1-18 The Good Shepherd

Luke 9: 23-26 Take up your cross daily

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: The Little Flowers of St. Francis 21

At a time when St. Francis was staying in the town of Gubbio, something wonderful and worthy of lasting fame happened. For there appeared in the territory of that city a fearfully large and fierce wolf, which was so rabid with hunger, that it devoured not only animals but even human beings. All the people in the town considered it such a great scourge and terror—because it often came near the town—that they took weapons with them when they went into the country, as if they were going to war. But even with their weapons they were not able to escape the sharp teeth and raging hunger of the wolf when they were so unfortunate as to meet it. Consequently, everyone in the town was so terrified that hardly anyone dared go outside the city gate.

But God wished to bring the holiness of St. Francis to the attention of those people. For while the Saint was there at that time, he had pity on the people and decided to go out and meet the wolf. But on hearing this the citizens said to him, "Look out, Brother Francis. Don't go outside the gate, because the wolf which has already devoured many people will certainly attack you and kill you!"

But St. Francis placed his hope in the Lord Jesus Christ who is master of all creatures. Protected not by a shield or a helmet, but arming himself with the sign of the cross, he bravely went out of the town with his companion, putting all his faith in the Lord who makes those who believe in Him walk without any injury on an asp and a basilisk and trample not merely on a wolf but even on a lion and a dragon. So with his very great faith St. Francis bravely went out to meet the wolf.

Some peasants accompanied him a little way, but soon they said to him, "We don't want to go any further because that wolf is very fierce and we might get hurt." When he heard them say this, St. Francis answered, "Just stay here. But I am going on to where the wolf lives." Then in the sight of many people who had come out and climbed onto places to see this wonderful event, the fierce wolf came running with its mouth open toward St. Francis and his companion. The Saint made the sign of the cross toward it. And the power of God, proceeding as much from himself as from his companion, checked the wolf and made it slow down and close its cruel mouth. It is marvelous to relate that as soon as he had made the sign of the cross, the wolf closed its terrible jaws and stopped running, and as soon as he gave it that order, it lowered its head and lay down at the Saint's feet, as though it had become a lamb.

And St. Francis said to it as it lay in front of him, "Brother Wolf, you have done great harm in this region, and you have committed horrible crimes by destroying God's creatures without any mercy. You have been destroying not only irrational animals, but you even have the more detestable brazenness to kill and devour human beings made in the image of God. You therefore deserve to be put to death just like the worst robber and murderer. Consequently, everyone is right in crying out against you and complaining, and this whole town is your enemy. But Brother Wolf, I want to make peace between you and them, so that they will not be harmed by you anymore, and after they have forgiven you all your past crimes, neither men nor dogs will pursue you anymore." The wolf showed by moving its body and tail and ears and by nodding its head that it willingly accepted what the Saint had said and would observe it.

So St. Francis spoke again, "Brother Wolf, since you are willing to make and keep this peace pact, I promise you that I will have the people of this town give you food everyday as long as you live, so that you will never again suffer from hunger, for I know that whatever evil you have been doing was done because of the urge of hunger. But, my Brother Wolf, since I am obtaining such a favor for you, I want you to promise me that you will never hurt any animal or human. Will you

promise me that?" The wolf gave a clear sign, by nodding its head, that it promised to do what the Saint had asked.

And St. Francis said, "Brother Wolf, I want you to give me a pledge so that I can confidently believe what you promise." And as St. Francis held out his hand to receive the pledge, the wolf also raised its front paw and meekly and gently put it in St. Francis' hand as a sign that it was giving its pledge.

Then St. Francis said, "Brother Wolf, I order you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to come with me now, without fear, into the town to make this peace pact in the name of the Lord." And the wolf immediately began to walk along beside St. Francis, just like a very gentle lamb. When the people saw this, they were greatly amazed, and the news spread quickly throughout the whole town...

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Admonitions XI

Nothing should displease a servant of God except sin. And no matter how another person may sin, if a servant of God becomes disturbed and angry because of this, and not because of charity, he is storing up guilt for himself. That servant of God who does not become angry or disturbed at anyone lives correctly and without anything of his own. Blessed is the one for whom nothing remains except for him to return to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Legend of St. Clare 60-61

The savage frenzy of cruel wolves frequently disturbed the countryside; they would attack the people in those [areas] and would frequently feed on human flesh.

Therefore, a certain woman, Bona di Monte Galliano, in the diocese of Assisi, had two sons, one of whom the wolves dragged away. She had barely stopped crying when, behold, they pursued to the second boy with the same ferocity. For while the mother was in the house doing some of her domestic chores, a wolf fixed his teeth into the boy who was walking outside, dragged him off by his neck, and made for the woods as quickly as possible with its prey.

Some men who were in the vineyards, however, heard the cries of the boy [and] shouted to his mother, "See if you have your son, because we have just heard some unusual shouts!" The mother, learning that her son had been seized by the wolf, shouted to heaven, filled the air with her cries, and called upon the virgin Clare, "O holy and glorious Clare, return my poor son to me! Return," she said, "return my poor boy to his mother, because, if you don't, I will drown myself."

The neighbors ran after the wolf [and] found the boy who had been brought into the woods by the wolf and next to him a dog that was licking his wounds. The

ferocious beast had first thrust his fangs into the [boy's] neck; then, in order to carry off its prey more easily, it had filled its jaws with the boy's loins. But it had not left in either place any sign of its sudden attack.

After obtaining the answer of her prayers, the woman ran off with her neighbors to her helper and poured out abundant thanks to God and the holy Clare, showing everyone who wished to see the boy's various wounds.

A certain young girl from the village of Cannara was sitting in a field on a certain clear day and another woman had placed her head in her lap. Behold, a man-eating wolf suddenly made quick, furtive steps toward its prey. The young girl saw him, in fact, but she was not afraid since she thought it was a dog. While the woman directed her attention to inspecting the [other's] hair, which she had just been doing, the savage beast jumped on her, enclosed her face in his massive jaws, and carried off its prey to the woods. The dumbfounded woman got up immediately, and, recalling Saint Clare, cried out, "'Help, Saint Clare, help! I now entrust that young girl to you!" At that moment—it's wonderful to state—that girl who had been carried off in the teeth of the wolf was reprimanding it and was saying, "Will you take me further, you thief, after I have been entrusted to such a virgin?" Confused by this reproof, it immediately placed the girl gently on the ground and, as though it were a thief caught off guard, quickly departed.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 20

Let the brothers and sisters be gentle, peaceful and unassuming, mild and humble, speaking respectfully to all in accord with their vocation. Wherever they are, or wherever they go throughout the world they should not be quarrelsome, contentious, or judgmental towards others. Rather, it should be obvious that they are joyful, good-humored, and happy in the Lord as they ought to be. And in greeting others, let them say, "God, give you peace."

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

Herald of a King p. 20

Wolf of Gubbio p. 51

Francis Before the Sultan p.62

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who/what are the wolves in your life?

2. What needs to be tamed within you?

3. How have you been an instrument in healing or the taming of the wolf of another? Describe the experience.

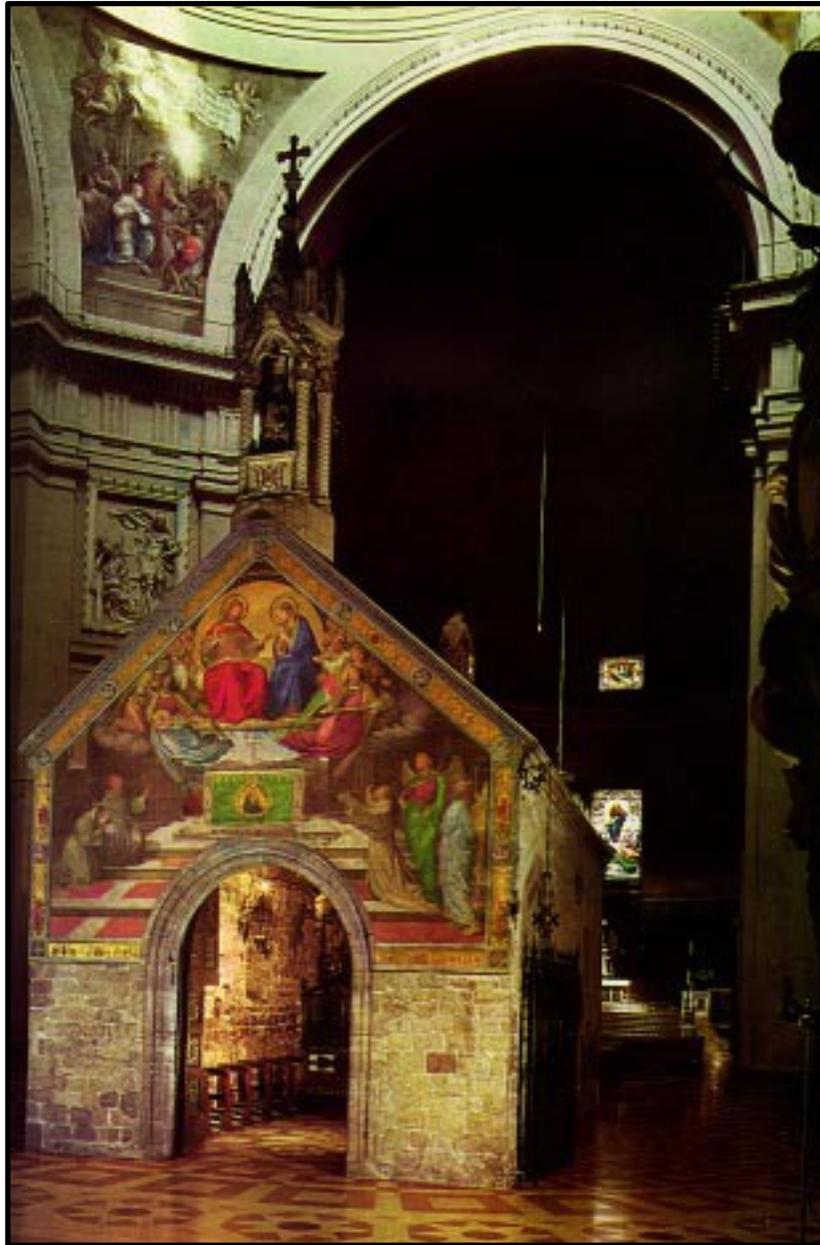
ACTIVITIES

1. Learn about the resources for justice and peace in your community. Are you involved in any? Which one and why?

-
2. Visit one of the places you mentioned that you are unfamiliar with. Describe the experience and what you have learned.

Portiuncula

Francis' Call to Fraternity/Communion



Portiuncula: Francis' Call to Fraternity/Communion

FRANCISCAN VALUES

FRATERNITY/COMMUNITY

HOSPITALITY

OBEDIENCE BASED IN LOVE

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Luke 9: 3-4

Take nothing for your journey: no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there; and leave from there.

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

Luke 10: 38-42 Jesus' friends in Bethany

2 Samuel 7: 11 House for the Lord to dwell

1 Peter 2: 4-5, 9 Living stones

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: 2 Celano 18

Francis, the servant of God, was small in stature, humble in attitude, a lesser by profession. While living in the world he chose a little portion of the world for himself and his followers, since he could not serve Christ unless he had something of this world. Since ancient times, prophetically, this place was called the Little Portion, since it was the lot ceded to those who wished to hold nothing of this world. In this place there was a church built for the Virgin Mother, who by her unique humility deserved, after her son, to be the head of all the saints. In is here the Order of Lesser Ones had its beginning. As their numbers increased, there "a noble structure arose upon their solid foundation." The saint loved this place more than any other. He commanded his brothers to venerate with special reverence. He wanted it, like a mirror of the Order, always preserved in humility and highest poverty, and therefore kept its ownership in the hands of others, keeping for himself and his brothers only the use of it.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Rule for Hermitages

Let those who wish to stay in hermitages in a religious way be three brothers or, at the most, four; let two of these be the "mothers" and have two "sons" or at least one. Let the two who are "mothers" keep the life of Martha, and the two "sons" the life of Mary and let one have one enclosure in which each one may have his cell in which he may pray and sleep. And let them always recite Compline of the day immediately after sunset; and strive to maintain silence, recite their Hours, rise

for Matins and seek first the kingdom of God and His justice. And let them recite Prime at the proper hour, and, after Terce, they may end their silence, speak with and go to their mothers. And, when it pleases them, they can beg alms from them as poor little ones, out of love of God. And afterwards let them recite Sext, None and, at the proper hour, Vespers. And they may not permit anyone to enter or eat in the enclosure where they dwell. Let those brothers who are the "mothers" strive to stay far from everyone; and because of obedience to their minister, protect their "sons" from everyone, so that no one can speak with them. And those sons may not talk with anyone except their "mothers" and with the minister and his custodian when it pleases them to visit with the Lord's blessing. The "sons", however, may periodically assume the role of the "mothers", taking turns for a time as they have mutually decided. Let them strive to observe conscientiously and eagerly everything mentioned above.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Form of Life 11-18

Let her console those who are afflicted. Let her also be the last refuge for those who are troubled...Let her preserve common life in everything...Let her consult with all her sisters regarding whatever concerns the welfare and integrity of the monastery, for the Lord frequently reveals what is best to the least among us.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 7-8

When their initial formation is completed, they are to be received into obedience promising to observe this life and rule always. Let them put aside all attachment as well as every care and worry. Let them only be concerned to serve, love, adore, and honor the Lord God, as best they can, with singleheartedness and purity of intention. Within themselves let them always make a dwelling place and home for the Lord God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so that, with undivided hearts, they may increase in universal love by continually turning to God and to neighbor.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

A Radical Man p. 39

Of Brotherly Love p. 41

Hot Porridge and Holiness p. 42

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who creates community for you now?

2. Reflect on and describe your ideal community.

3. What type of friend are you? Describe...

ACTIVITIES

1. What do you see yourself doing in 5 years? In 10 years? What are some of your dreams for yourself?

2. If a Franciscan way of life is a part of your dream, how do you envision the Franciscan family in 5 years? In 10 or more years? Dream...(there are no wrong answers)

The Crib

Francis' Response to the Incarnation



The Crib: Francis Responds to the Incarnation

FRANCISCAN VALUES

INCARNATION

RELATIONALITY

POVERTY

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Luke 2: 1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

Luke 1: 1-16	The Annunciation
Luke 2: 41-52	Finding in the Temple
John 1: 1-18	The Word became Flesh

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: 1 Celano 84-85

Francis' highest aim, foremost desire, and greatest intention was to pay heed to the holy Gospel in all things and through all things, to follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to retrace his footsteps completely with all vigilance and all zeal, all the desire of his soul and all the fervor of his heart. Francis used to recall with regular meditation the words of Christ and recollect his deeds with most attentive perception. Indeed, so thoroughly did the humility of the Incarnation and the charity of the Passion occupy his memory that he scarcely wanted to think of anything else. We should note then, as matter worthy of memory and something to be recalled with reverence, what he did, three years prior to his death, at the town of Greccio, on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was a certain man in that area named John who had a good reputation but an even better manner of life. Blessed Francis loved him with special affection, since, despite being a noble in the land and very honored in society, he had trampled the nobility of the

flesh under his feet and pursued instead the nobility of the spirit. As usual, Blessed Francis had

John summoned to him some fifteen days prior to the birthday of the Lord. "If you desire to celebrate the coming feast of the Lord together at Greccio," he said to him, "hurry before me and carefully make ready the things I tell you. For I wish to enact the memory of that Babe who was born in Bethlehem: to see as much as is possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he rested on hay." Once the good and faithful man had heard Francis' words, he ran quickly and prepared in that place all the things that the holy man had requested. Finally, the day of joy has drawn near, the time of exultation has come. From many different places the brethren have been called. As they could, the men and women of that land with exultant hearts prepare candles and torches to light up that night whose shining star has enlightened every day and year. Finally, the holy man of God comes and, finding all things prepared, he saw them and was glad. Indeed, the manger is prepared, the hay is carried in, and the ox and the ass are led to the spot. There simplicity is given a place of honor, poverty is exalted, humility is commended, and out of Greccio is made a new Bethlehem.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: First Version Letter to the Faithful

All those who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with their whole strength and love their neighbors as themselves, who hate their bodies with their vices and sins, who receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who produce worthy fruits of penance. Oh, how happy and blessed are these men and women while they do such things and persevere in doing them, because the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them and make Its home and dwelling place among them, and they are children of the heavenly [God] whose works they do, and they are spouses, brothers, [sisters] and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are brother [sister] to Him when we do the will of the [One] Who is in heaven. We are mothers, when we carry [Christ] in our heart and body through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to [Christ] through a holy activity, which must shine as an example before others.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: First Letter to St. Agnes of Prague 19-25

If so great and good a Lord, then, on coming into the Virgin's womb, chose to appear despised, needy, and poor in this world so that people who were in utter poverty, want and absolute need of heavenly nourishment might become rich in Him by possessing the kingdom of heaven, be very joyful and glad! Be filled with a remarkable happiness and a spiritual joy! Because, since contempt of the world has pleased you more than honors, poverty more than earthly riches, and you have sought to store up greater treasures in heaven rather than on earth, where rust does not consume, nor moth destroy, nor thieves break in and steal. Your reward is very rich in heaven! And you have truly merited to be called a sister, spouse and mother of the Son of the Most High Father and of the glorious Virgin. You know, I believe that the kingdom of heaven is promised and given by the Lord only to the poor for she who loves temporal things loses the fruit of love.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 32

Let the sisters and brothers always be mindful that they should desire one thing alone, namely, the Spirit of God at work within them. Always be obedient to the Church and firmly established in the Catholic faith let them live according to the poverty, the humility, and the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ which they have solemnly promised to observe.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

Of Lady Poverty p. 10

Christmas at Greccio p. 68

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How are you aware of the presence of Christ in your life?

2. Can you prepare a dwelling place for Christ? How is Christ born into your life?

ACTIVITIES

1. Can you envision the scene that was created by Francis? Describe it in your own words. Is there anything that surprised you? Or disappointed you?

2. Take some time praying with the nativity scene. Put yourself in the scene as one of the characters or animals. What do you see from your vantage point? What do you hear? What do you think? What are you saying?

The Eucharist

Francis' Relationship with the Body of Christ



Eucharist: Francis' Relationship with the Body of Christ

FRANCISCAN VALUES

AWE OF GOD

FIDELITY TO CHRIST/CHURCH

CELEBRATION

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 26: 26-29

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

John 13: 1-30 Washing of the Feet

Mark 6: 30-44 Feeding Five Thousand

Luke 24: 13-35 Road to Emmaus

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: 2 Celano 201

Toward the sacrament of the Lord's body Francis burned with fervor to his very marrow, and with unbounded wonder of that loving condescension and condescending love. He considered it disrespectful not to hear, if time allowed, at least one Mass a day. He received Communion frequently, and so devoutly that he made others devout. Following that which is so venerable with all reverence he offered the sacrifice of all his members, and receiving the Lamb that was slain, he slew his own spirit in the fire which always burned upon the altar of his heart. Because of this he loved France as a friend of the Body of the Lord, and even wished to die there, because of its reverence for sacred things. He once wanted to send brothers throughout the world with precious pyxes, so that wherever they should find the price of our redemption in an unsuitable place they might put it away in the very best place. He wanted great reverence shown to the hands of priests, since they have the divinely granted authority to bring about this mystery. He often used to say: "If I should happen at the same time to come upon any saint coming from heaven and some little poor priest, I would first show honor to the priest and hurry more quickly to kiss his hands. For I would say to the saint: "Hey,

St. Lawrence, wait! His hands may handle the Word of Life, and possess something more than human!"

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Letter to the Entire Order 26-29

Let everyone be struck with fear,
let the whole world tremble,
and let the heavens exult
When Christ, the Son of the Living God,
is present on the altar
in the hands of a priest!
O wonderful loftiness and stupendous dignity!
O sublime humility!
O humble sublimity!
The Lord of the universe,
God and the Son of God,
so humbles Himself
that for our salvation
He hides Himself under an ordinary piece of bread!
Look at the humility of God
and pour out your hearts before Him!
Humble yourselves,
that you may be exalted by Him.
Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves,
that He Who gives Himself totally to you
may receive you totally!

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Legend of St. Clare 28

How great was Saint Clare's affection and devotion to the Sacrament of the Altar is shown by their effect. In that serious illness that confined her to bed, she would sit upright and would be propped up and, sitting up [in this way], she made the most delicate cloth. From these she made over fifty sets of corporals enclosed them in silk or purple covers and sent them to various churches throughout the plains and mountains of Assisi. When receiving the Body of the Lord, she first shed burning tears and, approaching with trembling, she feared [Him who was] hidden in the Sacrament no less than [Him who was] ruling heaven and earth.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 12

Let them participate in the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ and receive his Body and Blood with great humility and reverence remembering the words of the Lord: "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life". Moreover, they are to show the greatest possible reverence and honor for the most sacred name, written words and most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things in heaven and on earth have been brought to peace and reconciliation with Almighty God.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

The Pope and the Beggar p. 36

Eucharist p. 79

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Describe CHURCH and its meaning to you.

2. What is your relationship to the Catholic Church? Describe your parish involvement.

3. In what ways are YOU sacrament?

ACTIVITIES

1. Describe your ideal experience/image of Church.

2. Take some time praying with a moving experience you have had during liturgy. Describe the experience and why it touched you.

Mary, Mother of God

Francis' Call to Inclusivity



Mary, Mother of God: Francis' Call to Inclusivity

FRANCISCAN VALUES

INCLUSIVITY

FEMININITY

SACRED SCRIPTURE: John 2: 1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him: "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they did and took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it had come from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

Luke 1: 16-38 The Annunciation
Luke 2: 41-52 Finding in the Temple
John 19: 25-27 At the Foot of the Cross

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: 2 Celano 198

Francis embraced the Mother of Jesus. Francis did so with inexpressible love, since she made the Lord of Majesty a brother to us. He honored her with his own Praises, poured out prayers to her, and offered her his love in a way that no human can express. But what gives us greatest joy is that he appointed her the advocate of the Order and placed under her wings the sons to be left behind, that she might protect and cherish them to the end.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Hail, O Lady,
 holy Queen.
 Mary, holy mother of God:
 who are the virgin made Church,
 chosen by the most holy Father in heaven,
whom He consecrated
 with His most holy beloved Son
 and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete,
in whom there was and is
 all fullness of grace and every good.
Hail His Palace!
Hail His Tabernacle!
Hail His Dwelling!
Hail His Robe!
Hail His Servant!
Hail His Mother!

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Third Letter to St. Agnes 18-19

May you cling to His most sweet Mother who gave birth to a Son whom the heavens could not contain. And yet she carried Him in the little enclosure of her holy womb and held him in her virginal lap...

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 17

Let the brothers and sisters keep the example of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, ever before their eyes. Let them do this according to the exhortation of Blessed Francis who held Holy Mary, Lady and Queen, in highest veneration, since she is "the Virgin made church". Let them also remember that the Immaculate Virgin Mary whose example they are to follow called herself "the handmaid of the Lord".

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

Mystical Marriage p. 25

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who has been mother to you? What are the qualities of a mother?

2. How have you been a mother to others?

ACTIVITIES

1. Describe how you relate to Mary. Does she have a role in your life?

2. Describe in detail women that you admire or respect in your life. What is it that draws your admiration and respect? (If you wish, make a collage of these women)

The Tau Cross

Francis' Call to Reconciliation



The Tau Cross: Francis' Call to Reconciliation

FRANCISCAN VALUES

METANOIA/CONVERSION

RECONCILIATION AND HEALING

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 9: 4

Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a Tau on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

Matthew 9: 2-8 Healing and Forgiveness of Sins

John 8: 1-11 Reconciliation

John 9: 1-41 Deepening Faith in Jesus

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: 2 Celano 49

While the saint was secluded in a cell on Mount LaVerna, one of his companions was yearning with great desire to have something encouraging from the words of the Lord, commented on briefly by St. Francis and written in his own hand. He believed that by this means he would be set free from, or at least could bear more easily, a serious temptation which oppressed him, not in the flesh but in the spirit. Though growing weary with this desire, he feared to express it to the most holy father. But what the man did not tell Francis, the Spirit revealed. One day Saint Francis called this brother and said: "Bring me paper and ink, because I want to write down the words of the Lord and his praises upon which I have meditated in my heart." What he had asked for was quickly brought to him. He then wrote down with his own hand the Praises of God and the words he wanted and, at the end, a blessing for that brother, saying: "Take this paper for yourself and keep it carefully till your dying day." The whole temptation disappeared immediately. The letter was preserved; and later it worked wonders.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: The Parchment given to Brother Leo

SIDE ONE: THE PRAISES OF GOD

You are holy, Lord, God who does wonderful things.
You are strong, You are great, You are the most high, You are the almighty King.
You, Holy Father, King of heaven and earth.
You are Three and One, the Lord God of gods;
You are the good, all good, the highest good,
Lord God, living and true.
You are love, charity.
You are wisdom; You are humility; You are patience;
You are beauty; You are meekness; You are security;
You are rest; You are gladness and joy; You are our hope,
You are justice, You are moderation, You are all our riches to sufficiency.
You are beauty, You are meekness;
You are the protector,
You are our custodian and defender;
You are strength; You are refreshment.
You are our hope, You are our faith, You are our charity,
You are all our sweetness,
You are our eternal life:
Great and wonderful Lord,
Almighty God, Merciful Savior.

SIDE TWO: A BLESSING GIVEN TO BROTHER LEO

May the Lord bless you and keep you;
May He show His face to you and be merciful to you.
May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace.
May the Lord bless you, Brother Leo.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Letter to Ermentrude 13-17

Pray and always be vigilant. The work you have begun well, complete immediately and the ministry you have assumed, fulfill in holy poverty and sincere humility. Do not be afraid, daughter. God, who is faithful in all His words and holy in all His deeds, will pour His blessings upon you and your sisters; and He will be your helper and the best consoler; He is our redeemer and our eternal reward. Let us pray to God for one another, for by carrying each other's burden of charity in this way we will easily fulfill the law of Christ. Amen.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 11

Since the sisters and brothers are to be totally conformed to the Gospel, they should reflect upon and keep in their hearts the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the word of God, as well as the words of the Holy Spirit which are 'spirit and life'.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

Apologia for Penance p. 74

Little Lamb p. 110

TURNED TO THE LORD by Thaddeus Horgan

Like Francis we are turned to God in Christ by the Spirit's power. And we continue to turn to God because God's life of love seeks response. Ongoing response results in God's life in us being intensified and made more complete. Responding totally to God, as Francis came to know, means being filled with greater joy. The Tau cross which Francis used as his signature represents this. Francis adopted this redemptive symbol after the fourth Lateran Council. Pope Innocent III spoke of it as a form of the Cross and a symbol for all who live in Christ. The Tau is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet and represents the end of time when Christ will be all in all. As such it is a sign of the totality of Christ. For Francis it specifically was a symbol of the reconciliation of humanity with God. Therefore, the Tau for Franciscans represents the victory of God's pursuit of humankind and God's definitive reign over the hearts of men and women—a reign of peace, of justice and joy.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What have been the crosses in your life?

2. Describe experiences of suffering in your life. Describe experiences of resurrection.

ACTIVITIES

1. Reflect on experiences of forgiveness and reconciliation you have given and have received.

Trace your hands on this page. Inside your hands write the names of persons to whom you are close. Outside your hands, write the names of those you need to reach out to in reconciliation. Can you do this now?

2. Take a picnic with Francis. Where would you go? What would you do? What might be said? What might you want to share with others?

Creation
Francis' Call to Interdependence



Creation: Francis' Call to Interdependence

FRANCISCAN VALUES

RESPECT FOR LIFE

INTERCONNECTEDNESS

CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1: 1-13

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And so it was. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Sea. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants, yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good...

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2: 1-10 We are God's work of art

Matthew 6: 25-34 Lily of the Valley

Romans 8: 18-27 All Creation groans

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: 1 Celano 81

How great do you think was the delight the beauty of flowers brought to his soul whenever he saw their lovely form and noticed their sweet fragrance? He would immediately turn his gaze to the beauty of that flower, brilliant in springtime, sprouting from the root of Jesse. By its fragrance it raised up countless thousands from the dead. Whenever he found an abundance of flowers, he used to preach to them and invite them to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed

with reason. Fields and vineyards, rocks and woods, and all the beauties of the field, flowing springs and blooming gardens, earth and fire, air and wind: all these he urged to love of God and to willing service. Finally, Francis called all creatures by the name of "brother" and "sister" and in a wonderful way, unknown to others, he could discern the secrets of the heart of creatures like someone who has already passed into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. O good Jesus, with the angels in heaven he now praises you as wonderful, who, when placed on earth, preached you as lovable to all creatures.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Cantic of the Creatures

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all blessing.
To you alone, Most High, do they belong,
And no human is worthy to mention your name.

Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures,
Especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who is the day and through whom you give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;
And bears a likeness of you, Most High One.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
In heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
And through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather
Through whom you give sustenance to you creatures.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water,
Which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
Through whom you light the night
And he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth,
Who sustains and governs us,
And who produces varied fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

Praised be you, my Lord, through those who give pardon for your love,
And bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
For by you, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised by you, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
From whom no one living can escape.
Woe to those whom death will find in your most holy will,
For the second death shall do them no harm.
Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks
And serve him with great humility.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Bull of Canonization

This woman was undoubtedly an eminent and most celebrated tree with far reaching branches that brought forth the sweet fruit of a religious way of life in the field of the Church. So many students of the faith ran and still run from everywhere to its refreshing shade and, in its delight, taste its fruit. This clear spring of the Spoleto Valley furnished a new fountain of living water for the refreshment and comfort of souls, which, already coming together in many streams in the territory of the Church, has irrigated the nursery gardens of the regions. This was a lofty candelabra of sanctity, strongly burning in the tabernacle of the Lord, to whose remarkable splendor many have and are still hastening, lighting their lamps by its light. Truly in a field of faith, this woman [Clare] planted and cultivated a vineyard of poverty, from which abundant and rich fruits of salvation have been gathered. This woman set up a garden of humility in the domain of the Church, bound by immense needs. Here she produced a great abundance in the area of religion, where a wide refreshment of spiritual nourishment was served.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 10

With all creatures the brothers and sisters should praise the Ruler of heaven and earth, and give thanks because, by the holy will and through the only Son with the Holy Spirit, God created all things spiritual and material, and created us in the divine image and likeness.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

A Wind in your Face p. 22

Of Larks and Sparrows p. 45

A Prayer for Every Weather p. 106

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Where and how do you find *God's* presence in creation?

2. All of creation is interdependent. Francis realized this. How do you recognize the interdependence of all of creation? What specific actions do you take in caring for the earth?

ACTIVITIES

1. Name concrete ways you witness respect for life.

2. Reread the Canticle of Creation, reflecting on it. Create your own...

The Stigmata

Francis Embraces the Passion of Christ



The Stigmata: Francis Embraces the Passion of Christ

FRANCISCAN VALUES

PASSION

COMPASSION FOR THE SUFFERING

SURRENDER

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 16: 24-28

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

John 18-19

Jesus' passion

Philippians 3: 7-14 I have forfeited everything

Job 27-42

Compassion in suffering

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: Major Life of Bonaventure 13: 3-5

With the seraphic ardor of desires, therefore, Francis was being borne aloft into God; and by compassionate sweetness he was being transformed into Him who chose to be crucified out of the excess of his love. On a certain morning about the Feast of the Exultation of the Cross, while Francis was praying on the mountainside, he saw a seraph having six wings, fiery as well as brilliant, descend from the grandeur of heaven. And when in swift flight, it had arrived at a spot in the air near the man of God, there appeared between the wings the likeness of a man crucified, with his hands and feet extended in the form of a cross and fastened to a cross. Two of the wings were raised above his head, two were extended for flight, and two covered his whole body. Seeing this, he was overwhelmed and his heart was flooded with a mixture of joy and sorrow. He rejoiced at the gracious way Christ looked upon him under the appearance of the Seraph, but the fact that he was fastened to a cross pierced his soul with a sword of compassionate sorrow.

He marveled exceedingly at the sight of so unfathomable a vision, knowing that the weakness of Christ's passion was in no way compatible with the immortality of the seraphic spirit. Eventually he understood from this, through the Lord revealing it, that Divine Providence had shown him a vision of this sort so that the friend of Christ's might learn in advance that he was to be totally transformed into the likeness of Christ crucified, not by the martyrdom of his flesh, but by the enkindling of his soul. As the vision was disappearing, it left in his heart a marvelous fire and imprinted in his flesh a likeness of signs no less marvelous. For immediately the marks of nails began to appear in his hands and feet just as he had seen a little before in the figure of the man crucified. His hands and feet seemed to be pierced through the center by nails, with the heads of the nails appearing on the inner side of the hands and the upper side of the feet and their points on opposite sides. The heads of the nails in his hands and his feet were black and round; their points were oblong and bent as if driven back with a hammer, and they emerged from the flesh and stuck out beyond it. Also his right side, as if pierced with a lance, was marked with a red wound from which his sacred blood often flowed, moistening his tunic and underwear.

As Christ's servant realized that he could not conceal from his intimate companions the stigmata that had been so visibly imprinted on his flesh, he feared to make public the Lord's sacrament and was thrown into an agony of doubt whether to tell what he had seen or to be silent about it. After the true love of Christ transformed the lover into his image, when the forty days were over that he spent in solitude as he had desired, and the feast of St. Michael the Archangel had also arrived, the angelic man Francis came down from the mountain, bearing with him the likeness of the crucified, depicted not on tablets of stone or on panels of wood carved by hand, but engraved on parts of his flesh by the finger of the living God. And because it is good to keep hidden the sacrament of the King, the man aware of the royal secret would then hide from men those sacred signs. Since it is for God to reveal what He does for his own great glory, the Lord himself, who had secretly imprinted those marks, openly revealed some miracles through them so that the hidden and marvelous power of the stigmata would display a brilliance of signs.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Office of the Passion 1-4

Holy Virgin Mary,
among the women,
born into the world there is no one like you;
daughter and servant of the most high and supreme King
and of the Father in heaven,
mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ,
spouse of the Holy Spirit.
Pray for us
with Saint Michael the Archangel
all the powers of the heavens
and all the saints,
at the side of your most holy Beloved Son,
our Lord and Teacher.
Glory to the Father...As it was in the beginning...
Let us bless the Lord God, living and true; let us always render Him praise,
glory, honor, blessing, and every good. Amen. Amen. So be it. So be it.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: The Versified Legend of the Virgin Clare 855-885

A bitter compassion for Christ's cross pierced [Clare's] mind, the sacred wounds forced tears from her eyes. That cross stirred different emotions within her soul: at times it elicits tears, at others it gives birth to consolation. The compassionate virgin cries over the suffering One. While she recalls salvation in the cross, praise and joy arise. This crying tempers because the world's restoration flows from the cross, because a sweet tear cleanses bitter weeping, pain wipes away guilt, a bruise washes away misfortune, a wound drives away envy. Hence her tears become sweet, compassion sweetens her mind, the cross becomes light, suffering beloved. He, to whom a strong love has bound her and to whom she clings in her heart's depth, did not withdraw from her spirit; rather she kept Him as if an extraordinary treasure in the ark of her mind, remembering Him continually and returning to Him frequently. Therefore she admonishes the ladies to weep over Christ, and teaches them by her example. When she would more frequently warn them, an abundance of tears would anticipate the goal of her word. While she marks the time and hour of Christ's cross, a greater sorrow takes hold of her mind: at the sixth and ninth hours, the nail of sorrow stands fixed. Once, while she was

praying at the ninth hour, that spirit of evil struck the Virgin's cheek, and so covered it with a bruise and the pupil of her eye with blood. This woman learns the Office of the Cross, as its lover Francis taught, and even recites it in a similar way. She ponders those words of the prayers which recount the five wounds. These songs are jubilant, delightful to her.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 30

As they announce peace with their lips, let them be careful to have it even more within their own hearts. No one should be roused to wrath or insult on their account; rather, all should be moved to peace, goodwill and mercy because of their gentleness. The sisters and brothers are called to heal the wounded, to bind up those who are bruised, and reclaim the erring. Wherever they are, they should recall that they have given themselves up completely and handed themselves over totally to our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, they should be prepared to expose themselves to every enemy, visible and invisible, for love of the Lord because he says: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

LaVerna p. 97

Hymn to LaVerna p. 100

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How is Christ present to you in times of suffering?

2. How do you experience your own limitedness? How can you embrace this?

ACTIVITIES

1. Name ways in which you embrace *God's* loving presence in your life.

-
2. Name those things you might need to let go of to enter religious life. What might you gain? Are you ready to make this decision?

1. What do you think will be the most difficult thing for you to embrace in a Franciscan way of life?

The Transitus

Francis' Death



The Transitus: Francis' Death

FRANCISCAN VALUES

TRUE/PERFECT JOY

FIDELITY

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Luke 24: 13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

OPTIONAL SACRED SCRIPTURE

John 21 Appearance at Lake Tiberias
Ephesians 1: 15-23 We are united in Risen Christ
1 Corinthians 15: 50-58 O death, where is your sting?

LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS: Major Life of Bonaventure 14: 5-6

When the hour of his passing was approaching, he had all the brothers staying in the place called to him and comforting them about his death with words of consolation, he exhorted them to divine love with fatherly affection. He spoke at length about preserving poverty and patience and the faith of the holy Roman Church, placing the holy Gospel ahead of other observances. As all the brothers sat around him, he stretched his hand over them, crossing his arms in the form of a cross, for he always loved this sign. And he blessed all the brothers, both present and absent, in the name and power of the Crucified. Then he added: "Good bye, all my sons, in the fear of the Lord! Remain in him always! Because a trial and tribulation is coming in the future, happy are they who will persevere in those things they have begun. I am hurrying to God, to his grace I entrust all of you." When he had finished this gentle admonition, the man most beloved of God ordered the Book of the Gospels brought to him and asked that the Gospel according to John be read to him from the place that begins: Before the feast of Passover. He, as best he could, broke out in this psalm: With my voice I cried to the Lord; with my voice I beseeched the Lord; and he finished it to the end. The just, he said, will await me until you have rewarded me. At last, when all of the mysteries were fulfilled in him, and that most holy soul was released from the flesh and absorbed into the abyss of the divine light, the blessed man fell asleep in the Lord.

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS: Song to Sister Death (Canticle of Creatures)

Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find in your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.
Praise and bless my Lord and give him thanks
and serve him with great humility.

WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE: Legend of St. Clare 44-46

It was finally seen that she was laboring for many days in her last agony during which the faith of the neighboring regions and the devotion of the peoples increased. She was honored daily as a real saint by the frequent visits of prelates and even cardinals. What is truly remarkable to hear is that when she was not able to take food for seventeen days, she was so invigorated by the strength of the Lord that she strengthened everyone who came to her in the service of Christ. In fact, when a kind man, Brother Raynaldo, encouraged her to be patient in the long martyrdom of so many illnesses, she responded with a very unrestrained voice, "After I once came to know the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ through his servant Francis, no pain has been bothersome, no penance too severe, no weakness, dearly beloved brother, has been hard. But since the Lord was very near and, as it were, already standing at the door, she wished the priests and her spiritual brothers to stand by and read the Passion of the Lord and holy words. When Brother Juniper appeared among them, that excellent jester of the Lord who uttered the Lord's words which were often warming, she was filled with a new joy and asked him if he had had anything new from the Lord. When he opened his mouth, he burst forth with words that were like burning sparks coming from the furnace of his fervent heart. The virgin of the Lord took great comfort in his parables. Finally she turned to her weeping daughters to whom she recalled in a praising way the divine blessings while entrusting them with the poverty of the Lord. She blessed her devoted brothers and sisters and called down the fullest graces upon the Ladies of the poor monasteries, those in the present and those in the future...On the day after the feast of St. Lawrence, that most holy soul departed to be crowned with an eternal reward; since the temple of the flesh was dissolved, the spirit passed happily to heaven. Blessed is that passing from the valley of misery that became for her the entrance to a blessed life.

TOR RULE AND LIFE: Article 31

In that love, which is God, all the brothers and sisters, whether they are engaged in prayer, or in announcing the word of God, or in serving, or in doing manual labor should strive to be humble in everything. They should not seek glory, or be self-satisfied, or interiorly proud because of a good work or word God does or speaks in or through them. Rather in every place and circumstance let them acknowledge that all good belongs to the Most High Lord and Ruler of all things. Let them always give thanks to him from whom we receive all good.

THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM

A Journey of Dreams p. 3

Perfect Joy p. 47

Sister Death p. 117

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Francis stated, "I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what you are to do" (2 Celano 214). What is it that you have come to believe you are being called to do with your life?

2. After these months of reflection on Franciscan values, do any in particular resonate with you? How so?

ACTIVITIES

1. At the end of your life, what values do you hope to be remembered by?

-
2. As you think of Francis' life, list all the words that come to your mind. Now see if you can take some of those words and create a poem or collage.

3. What do you need next??





Monthly Peace Prayers

A SIMPLE PRAYER FOR OUR COMMUNITY

By Jay L. Boulter (NC Associate)

Lord, make these cupped hands crucibles that are filled with your peace.
Within these crucibles transform any anger into love and pour it upon us.
Within these crucibles transform injury into pardon and dispense it among us.
Contain any discord within the crucible until it pours out as unity.
Cradle doubt within each crucible until it pours out as a stream of good faith.
Within our crucibles, hold back error until transformed to truth, ready to anoint
the heated brow.
Lift up any hands and hearts filled with darkness or despair to you, Lord of light
and hope.

Lord, grant that with the crucibles formed of these hands, we reach out not so
much seeking,
To be consoled by others ... as to console;
Not to be understood by others ... as to understand others;
Not to be loved ... as to love.

It is in stretching out our hands in giving to others and having our hands come
back empty, that puts something priceless in our heart. Amen.



JANUARY'S Theme:



“Prayer for an End to the Violence Against Immigrants and Refugees”

The greatest violence in our society today is ignorance.

Some conditions that compel a person to leave their homeland are armed conflict reunion with family, lack of opportunity, and a desperate need to provide for themselves and their families.

OPENING PRAYER:

Suggested Song:

♪ *Psalm 91: Be with Me* ♪
by Marty Haugen

“Without Borders, Without Flags”
by Fr. Alfredo Jose Goncalves, Brazil

RESPONSE: Be with me, Lord

R: Be with me, Lord

Where do you come from, where are you going?

I come from all places, I have no name. I know pain and hunger; I seek land, home, food, **Life!**

R: Be with me, Lord

Where do you come from, where are you going?

I come from underground, forgotten and dark, fetid, and filthy. I seek dignity and peace, light of day, **Citizenship!**

R: Be with me, Lord

Where do you come from, where are you going?

I come from the drainage ditch and from abandonment, I know nostalgia and I lose hope, I seek gestures of friendship, **Solidarity!**

R: Be with me, Lord

Where do you come from, where are you going?

I come from far and wide: Black, yellow, white indigenous. I am your “other,” different, migrant people. I am **Person! God’s creation!**

R: Be with me, Lord

Where do you come from, where are you going?

I come from the resistance, from the struggle, from a situation of senselessness, I come from discrimination, from prejudice. I know walls, laws, fears, loneliness; I want a world without borders or flags!

R: Be with me, Lord



There is a possibility that immigration reform will come up on the federal and state legislative agendas this year. Catholic Christians who understand the principles outlined in Catholic Social Teaching can make a difference by advocating for reform to their state and federal legislators.



RESPONSE: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts. (Psalm 96)

To bring the undocumented population in this country out of the shadows and give them a chance, over time, to achieve permanent residency and citizenship.

R: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

To preserve family unity by strengthening family-based immigration.

R: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts

To create legal avenues for migration, so that migrant workers, who labor in many important industries in our nation, are able to enter the country legally, and in a safe and orderly fashion.

R: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts

To give immigrants their day in court by restoring due process protections removed in previous legislation.

R: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts

To work with neighboring countries and the international community to address the root causes of migration, so that immigrants and their families ultimately can remain in their home countries and support their families in dignity.

R: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts

READING: "Pilgrim from Birth"
(Rotate Readers)

*Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo
(Scalabrinians) Honduras*

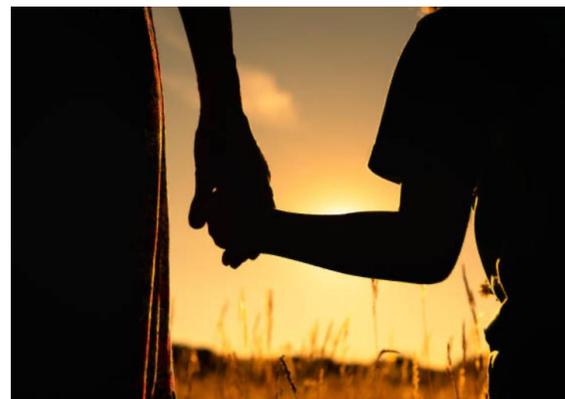
O Christ, pilgrim from birth
You made a life out of meeting others,
Not knowing where to rest your head,
You wanted every person, all of us pilgrims
to have hope.

We bring you the needs of all migrants:
Give them a place that will nourish them and
will make them strong of heart, firm in their
identity. Help them to live in justice, in
solidarity and peace.

In your love, see that they are welcomed. All
are made in your image, All are bound toward
community with sisters and brothers in faith.

May they walk, not more than necessary.
When they halt, may their walking not be in
vain. May we, migrants all, be blessed.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Whatsoever You Do* 🎵
by O. Alstott, R.J. Basastini & W.F. Jabusch



READING: "Jesus, the Refugee"

(Rotate Readers)

The Fire of Peace, pg. 27-28

Jesus, you were forced to flee into Egypt to avoid political persecution and know well the pain and suffering of refugees. Remember in your mercy refugees who have lost home and land, who are threatened by disease and hunger, who are separated from their families.

Jesus, the refugee, we ask you to direct the minds of politicians and the hearts of all people, so that sufferings of the displaced are relieved and their sorrows healed.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Christ Be Our Light* ✝️
by Bernadette Farrell **(Verse 2)**

READING: "I Believe"

(Rotate Readers)

Archbishop Dom Helder Camara, Brazil

I will not believe in the law of the strongest,
In the language of guns,
In the power of the powerful.

I want to believe in the rights of all,
In the open hand,
In the strength of the non-violent.

I will not believe in race or riches,
In privileges,
In the established order.

I want to believe that all human beings,
Are Human Beings.
And that the order of force and injustice
is a disorder.

I will not believe that I don't have to concern myself, with what happens far from here.

I want to believe that the whole world,
Is my home, in the field I sow,
And that all reap what all have sown.

I will not believe that I can combat oppression out there, if I tolerate injustice here.

I want to believe that what is right,
Is the same here and there,
And that I will not be free
While one human being is excluded.

I will not believe that war and hunger are inevitable, and that peace is inaccessible.

I want to believe in the love
of bare hands, in peace on earth.

I will not believe that any effort is in vain. I will not believe that the dream of human beings continues being only a dream,
And that death is the end.

But I dare to believe in the dream
of God:
A new heaven, a new Earth,
Where justice reigns.

Suggested Closing Song:

🎵 *Christ Be Our Light* ✝️
by Bernadette Farrell **(Verse 4)**





FEBRUARY’S Theme:
“Prayer for an End to the
Violence of Racism and
Discrimination”

Uprooting Racism

by Paul Kivel (Rotate Readers)

Discrimination is the institutionalization of social injustice based on skin color, gender, age, culture, religion, ethnicity and other differences.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with noticing differences. We did not choose our race, gender, or country of origin. We are not responsible for the fact that discrimination exists or that we have benefitted from it.

But, we are responsible for how we respond to discrimination based on those differences. We are responsible for the daily choices we make about how we live in a discriminating society.

OPENING PRAYER: “God’s Handiwork”
(ALL Recite Together)

A bouquet of flowers ...
A collection of many kinds ...
Different shapes ...
Different colors ...
Individually beautiful ...
Collectively even more beautiful ...
God’s handiwork all.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Gather Us In* 🎶
by Marty Haugen



Reflections: from *Just Faith Ministries:*
Communication for Divided Times
(Rotate Readers)

“For the Lord, your God, is the God of gods; the Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who has no favorites.

Deuteronomy 10:17

“How can you claim that you belong to the Lord Jesus if you allow discrimination? For as soon as you allow class distinction, you commit sin by violating the commandment to ‘Love one another’.”

James 2: 1, 9

“It is not enough to say that you are a child of God and then act as if it doesn’t affect your life, your commitments and the way you see the world.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.



Prayer for an End to Discrimination
by John Bucki, S.J.

Jesus, our brother, you reached across ethnic boundaries between Samaritan, Roman and Jew; you offered fresh insight to the blind and freedom to captives. Help us to break down the barriers in our community, enable us to see the reality of racism, discrimination, and bigotry, and free us to challenge and uproot it from ourselves, our society, and our world.

Prayers of the Faithful

RESPONSE: Jesus, our brother, keep us mindful of your love.

With all those who work for human rights, we pray that the spirit of God which resides in our hearts, may make us courageous to speak up and work to rid ourselves and our communities of violence and discrimination.

R: Jesus, our brother, keep us mindful of your love.

For all God's people, may our life of faith overflow each day into words and deeds that set free all those who are held in bondage of any form, we pray ...

R: Jesus, our brother, keep us mindful of your love.

For those who work for justice, peace, and equality for every woman, man and child; that their life may be borne up in courage each time that they are made to suffer for their faith, let us pray ...

R: Jesus, our brother, keep us mindful of your love.

For each of us, that we may heed the invitation to conversion and rid every form of prejudice from our heart, mind, and actions, let us pray ...

R: Jesus, our brother, keep us mindful of your love.

For all those who are victims of prejudice, hatred, and fear, that the presence of Christ may console, protect and heal them, let us pray ...

R: Jesus, our brother, keep us mindful of your love.



Suggested Song: 🎵 *One Bread, One Body* 🎵
by John Foley, S.J.

LITANY OF WOMEN (Rotate Readers)

Creator God, you have given the world great women throughout the ages; help us to draw strength from their lives.

RESPONSE: Blessed be her name

Eve, mother of the earth ...	R
Sarah, founder of the faith ...	R
Rebecca, woman of courage ...	R
Ruth, model of friendship ...	R
Naomi, faithful woman ...	R
Clare of Assisi, friend of the poor ...	R
Teresa of Calcutta, protector of the dying...	R
Dorothy Day, patron of peacemakers ...	R

RESPONSE: Blessed be their lives

For wives and mothers ...	R
For daughters, sisters and aunts ...	R
For single women and women religious ...	R
For old women, young women, poor women ...	R

ALL: Blessed be all women, those who have gone before us, those present with us now, and those yet to come.

LITANY OF THE BOAT PEOPLE (Rotate Readers)

by Jim Dinn

RESPONSE: Jesus, our brother, deliver us

From our fear of strangers ...	R
From our fear of difference ...	R
From our fear of Your example ...	R
From our paralysis ...	R
From our self-righteousness ...	R

Suggested Song: 🎵 *In Christ There is No East or West* 🎵 by John Oxenham (Verse 1, 3 & 4)

LITANY OF REPENTANCE: *PAX CHRIST, USA*
from Social Action by Rabbi Jack Riemer

ALL: We ask forgiveness for our complicity in the violence now unleashed in our world and we repent of the violence in our own hearts.

RESPONSE: Jesus, our brother, forgive us, we pray

For hardness of heart ...	R
For ignoring the poor ...	R
For refusing to listen ...	R
For lacking humility ...	R
From our fear of strangers ...	R
For failing to trust ...	R
For failing to act ...	R
For failing to love ...	R
For our silence ...	R

RESPONSE: Jesus, our brother, change our hearts

That we learn compassion ...	R
That we embrace nonviolence ...	R
That we act in justice ...	R
That we do your will ...	R
That we might be peace ...	R

We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to root out prejudice, for You have already given us eyes with which to see the good in **all** people, if we would only use them rightly.

Therefore, we pray to You, O God, for strength, determination, and the will, to **DO** instead of just pray for change, to **BECOME** instead of merely to wish.

Suggested Closing Song: 🎵 *We Shall Overcome*



by Z. Horton, F. Hamilton, G. Carawan & P. Seeger
(Verse 1, 2, & 3)





MARCH'S Theme:
"Prayer for an End to the Violence of Killing" (Murder, Capital Punishment, Abortion, Euthanasia, and Genocide)

RESPONSE: "Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13)

READING: Genesis 4: 8-16

And while they were together there, Cain attacked and killed his brother. Afterwards the Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?" "How should I know?" Cain retorted. "Am I my brother's keeper?" **R**

But the Lord said ... "What have you done? You are hereby banished from this ground, which you have defiled." **R**

Cain replied, "Lord ... everyone who sees me will try to kill me." So, the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one who found him would kill him, and said ... "I will give seven times your punishment to anyone who kills Cain." So Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. **R**

READING: Exodus 2: 11-12, 15



One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and he witnessed their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Glancing this way and that, and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. **R**

When Pharaoh heard of this, he sought to kill Moses. **R**

*Note that God punishes the murderer, Cain, with **exile**, not with vengeance. In fact, God explicitly prohibits vengeance against Cain. Moses, who commits premeditated murder is permitted to go into exile, in modern terms, prison. The killing of those who have taken a human life, either by human retaliatory violence or legally mandated murder, is not God's will.*

(The Biblical Truth about America's Death Penalty by Dale Recinella)

Suggested Song: 🎵 *There is a Wideness in God's Mercy* 🎵 by Frederick William Faber (**Verse 1**)

Reflection: Romans 12: 19-21

Beloved, do not look for revenge ... Vengeance is mine, says the Lord, I will repay ... Do not be conquered by evil, but rather conquer evil by doing good.

"Divine Love" by C. Houselander

The harder love is to achieve, the love of our enemies, of those who hate or persecute us, does not merely bring us pardon for our own sins, but is redemptive, and brings mercy not only to those who are its object, but to the whole world. Everyone who lives the Christ-life is adding to the divine love in the world, which is the only force opposed to hate.



A Prayer to Abolish the Death Penalty
by Sr. Helen Prejean, C.S.J.

God of Compassion, Your rain falls on the just and the unjust. Expand and deepen our hearts that we may love as You love, even those who have caused the greatest pain, by taking life.

There is in our land a great cry for vengeance as we fill up death rows and kill the killers in the name of justice, in the name of peace.

Jesus, our brother, You were executed at the hands of the state, but were not overcome by hatred. Help us to reach out to victims of violence, so that enduring love may help them heal.

Holy Spirit of God, You strengthen us in the struggle for justice. Help us to work tirelessly for the abolition of state-sanctioned death and to renew our society, in its very heart, so that violence will be no more.

Amen

READING: Matthew 2: 13-16

When the Magi departed, behold, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said ...
"Take the child and His mother, flee into Egypt ... Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." Herod, became furious and ordered the massacre of all the boys two years and younger in Bethlehem and its vicinity.

"First They Came" by Pastor Martin Niemoller

First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist, so I said nothing.
Then they came for the Socialist Democrats, but I was not a Socialist Democrat, so I did nothing.
Then they came for the trade unionists, but I was not a trade unionist, so I did nothing.
And then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew, so I did little.
Then, when they came for me, there was no one left to stand up for me.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Pie Jesu* 🎹
by Andrew Lloyd Webber



"God Weeps with Us Who Weep and Mourn" by T. Troeger

God weeps with us who weep and mourn, God's tears flow down like ours; and God's own heart is bruised and worn from all the heavy hours.

Through tears and sorrow, God, we share
A sense of Your vast grief;
The weight of bearing every prayer,
For healing and relief.

The burden of our questions, Why?
The doubts that they engage,
And as our friends and lovers die,
Our hopelessness and rage.

Excerpt from **"Violence"** by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. The beauty of nonviolence is that in its own way and in its own time, it seeks to break the chain-reaction of evil.

READING: from **"Night"** by Elie Wiesel

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in the camp that turned my life into one long night ...
Never shall I forget the smoke.

Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.

Wherever men and women are persecuted because of ... race, religion or political views, that place must -- at that moment -- become the center of the universe. Human suffering anywhere, concerns men and women everywhere.

Without faith in God, no action would be possible, and action is the only remedy to indifference, the most insidious danger of all.

"Remember the Fruits" (found on a piece of paper in Ravensbruck Concentration Camp)

Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will, but also those of ill will. But do not remember all the suffering they inflicted upon us; remember all the fruits we have brought, thanks to this suffering – our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, the courage, the generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of this, and when they come to judgment, let all the fruits that we have borne, be their forgiveness.



“Why Stand So Far Away”

by Ruth Dick based on Psalm 10

Why stand so far away my God?
Why hide in times of need?
The proud unbridled, chase the poor
And curse you in their greed.

Why do you hide, when full of lies,
They murder and betray?
They wait to pounce upon the weak,
As lions stalk their prey.

The weak are crushed and fall to earth;
The wicked strut and preen.
Why in these cruel, chaotic times
Cannot your face be seen?

Arise, O God, and lift your hand;
Bring justice to the poor.
Come help us stop the flow of blood!
Let terror reign no more!

READING: “The Way of the Cross”

based on Luke 24:32-46

by Oscar Romero

Now two others were lead away with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there ... Then Jesus said, “*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*” Then he breathed his last.

RESPONSE: “Jesus, my brother, help me.”

Can I see Christ in the needy person, the tortured person, the prisoner, the murderer, the one thrown away with so much indignity? **R**

Jesus said, “*Do not judge, and you will not be judged.*” – grant me the compassion to seek the good in others, as You have sought the good in me. **R**

Jesus said, “*Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.*” – grant me the mercy to build up others, as You have built me up. **R**

Jesus said, “*Pardon and you shall be pardoned.*” – grant me the grace to forgive as You have forgiven me. **R**

Closing Prayer: Our Father (*join hands and pray together as Jesus taught us, OR may be sung*)



***Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Your name,
Your Kingdom come.
Your will be done, here on earth,
as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread,
and forgive our trespasses, as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from all that is evil.***

***For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power,
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen.***

APRIL'S Theme: "Prayer for an End to the Violence of Disease and Addiction"

How can disease be "violence?" Consider this: more than 11 million children have been left orphaned by AIDS, in Africa alone; parents addicted to drugs are often incarcerated or otherwise unable to care for their children who are then adjudicated to foster homes or raised by grandparents.

OPENING PRAYER:

Response: 🎵 *Psalm 91: Be with Me* 🎵
by Marty Haugen **(REFRAIN ONLY SUNG)**

🎵 **Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble, be with me, Lord, I pray.** 🎵

A Prayer for Health Care for the Needy

By Tom Cordaro (Rotate Readers)

Reflect for a moment on what would happen to your community if all the people between the ages of 15 and 60 were removed? What would happen to the young and the old? To the systems of education, commerce, government, and health care? This is the legacy of AIDS / HIV in many parts of the world. **R**

"Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble, be with me, Lord, I pray. **R**

Jesus did not turn away from the Canaanite woman who begged Him to heal her daughter. May we open our hearts to hear the cry of those who are sick and have no money for treatment. **R**

Help us to change our country's priorities, so that more funding will be available for works of healing, than for weapons of war. **R**

Teach us to respect our bodies and to care for them as temples of the Holy Spirit. Help us to see that we are all members of the same body, and that when one member is ill, we all suffer. **Amen.**

Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble, be with me, Lord, I pray.

AIDS Prayer: *Catholic Relief Services, USA*
(Rotate Readers)

Response: **(SUNG)** based on *Psalm 34: 18-22*

🎵 **The Lord hears the cry of the poor,
Blessed be the Lord.** 🎵

God of the Poor ...

AIDS does not discriminate by race, religion, gender or economic class, but people do. Help us to respond to the cry of the poor for AIDS medications, for health care, for food, for education, for communities of support. **R**

God of Compassion ...

Help us to step toward and embrace our sisters and brothers who have AIDS, those who are an ocean away and those in our own communities. Stand with us, in solidarity, beside them. **R**

God of Orphans ...

In Africa and around the world, You see the children with AIDS and the children of those who have died of AIDS; call us who live to become a global village to care for the ill and help raise these children in love and in hope. **R**

"For Those Enslaved to Drugs and to All Forms of Addiction" by Tom Cordaro (Rotate Readers)

Brother Jesus, You said, "*God has anointed me, God has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from God and a day of vindication by our God, to comfort all who mourn.*"

Come, heal our brothers and sisters who are trapped in the deadly grasp of drugs and all forms of addiction. Set free our communities held hostage to fear and mistrust.

Give us the grace and courage to announce a year of favor from God and a day of vindication, as we rebuild our communities, our schools, the lives and dreams of our young people, and the families that are torn apart, as a consequence of addiction.

Amen

Suggested Song: 🎵 *I Heard the Voice of Jesus*
Say 🎵 by Horatius Bonar (Verse 1 & 2)

Prayer to Mary for the Sick by Rabboni



Mary, healer of the sick, be at the bedside of:
(Rotate readers)

- all the world's sick people;
- those who are unconscious and dying;
- those who suffer from Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, and all those who care for them;
- those who suffer from incurable diseases
- those who have begun their agony;
- those who have abandoned all hope of a cure;
- those who weep and cry out in pain;
- those who cannot receive care because they have no money;
- those who ought to be resting, but are forced by poverty, to work;
- those who turn in their hospital beds, in vain, for a less painful position;
- those who pass long sleepless nights;
- those who are tormented by the cares of a family in distress;
- those who must renounce their most cherished plans for the future;
- those, who above all, do not believe in a better life;
- those who rebel and curse God;
- those who do not know that Christ suffered like them and for them;
- those who nurse and care for the sick;
- those who work to alleviate disease and conduct medical research.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *You Are Mine* 🎵
by David Haas (Verses 1, 2, & 3)

"A Potter Shaping Clay" AIDS Office: South African
Conference of Catholic Bishops

ALL Recite:

We believe that we are part of God's dream for the Church and the World. That God is shaping and reshaping us, as the potter shapes the clay, through our response to the AIDS pandemic, the ravages of all diseases, especially Alzheimer's, and all forms of addiction, to be like Jesus, the compassionate one, as we seek to continue His mission in the world.

We confess that we become discouraged and disheartened with the weight of people's suffering.

We confess that we sometimes grow weary and forget that God is with us when we feel overwhelmed by the enormity of people's pain, their grinding poverty, their desperation, and sense of hopelessness.

We confess that we sometimes forget that God does provide and that our needs will be met.

We commit ourselves to being gentle, to be helping and nurturing. To do what we can for the orphans, children and others whose lives are bent or broken by AIDS, impacted by all diseases, especially Alzheimer's, and all forms of disease and addiction.

We commit ourselves to shaping, with gentle hands, the fragile, vulnerable clay, of each precious person that God has placed in our path. We will treat them with the same loving patience and dignity that we ourselves feel in the hands of the Divine Potter.

We will open our ears and hearts to listen, and to join hands together, as God leads us forward on the next part of the journey, the journey we are on together, as we continue along the way, the way of salvation. **Amen**



Suggested Song: 🎵 *Amazing Grace* 🎵
by John Newton (Verses 1, 2, 3 & 4)

MAY'S Theme: "Prayer for an End to Domestic Violence"

The greatest costs of domestic violence are often to its silent victims – the children who are watching. Many of these children grow up to repeat the cycle of violence in their own relationships, either as abusers or as victims.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Only In God* 🎵
by Dan Schutte, SJ, based on Psalm 55 & 62

Response: (ALL sing Refrain / Rotate Readers)

**Only in God will my soul be at rest,
from him comes my hope, my salvation.
He alone is my rock of safety, my strength,
my glory, my God.**

The psalmist expresses the feelings of many domestic violence victims, the pain of being betrayed and injured by a loved one. **R**

Inside, lives malice and mischief,
inside, lives destruction; tyranny and treachery
are never absent. For I see violence and strife,
and they make their rounds day and night. **R**

If it were an enemy who taunted me, I could bear that. It is not my adversaries who deal insolently with me; I could hide from them. But it is you – my equal, my companion, my dear friend, with whom I am bound intimately, that causes my distress. **R**

How long will fear rule my life, holding me in its grip like a child, in a dark and lonely grave?
Fear keeps me from living fully, from sharing my gifts; it takes pleasure in imprisoning my soul.
Fear that pretends to comfort, has so long dwelled within me; that it truly is my enemy. **R**

In God alone there is rest for my soul, from him comes my safety; for he alone is my rock, my safety, my stronghold. With him I stand unshaken.
Pour out your heart to him; trust in him, God is your refuge. **R**

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. (Colossians 3:19)

Reflection: (ALL Recite)

We believe, that as a community of faith, we are charged with bringing a message of hope and healing to victims of domestic violence. Some victims who would never contact law enforcement may turn to their pastor, church member or **friend** for guidance. Churches **and friends** should be sanctuaries where victims find a safe place to speak their truths and find the support. They need to become whole again. Unfortunately, due to a lack of education about the severity of domestic violence, the potential for serious injury or death to the victim, or **unwillingness to get involved**, we have not been as responsive to this issue as **we need to be**. We confess that people and churches have too often ignored the physical, sexual, and emotional violence that is perpetrated against women and children, and we acknowledge that Scripture has too often been misused to justify, excuse, and in some cases condone the abuse.

Likewise, **we** are all called to love the batterers by holding them accountable for their behavior. We believe batterers can change their abusive behaviors, but we recognize that they must be the ones to make the choice to live another way. Victims are not responsible for their batterer's behavior. We believe that we must take action to end domestic violence through education, advocacy, responsible Biblical interpretation, and theological reflection that help to clarify the messages of Scripture and illuminate the divine call to love, life and hope. We are committed not only to responding to domestic violence in more appropriate ways, but to the prevention of abuse through educating our community about healthy relationships and non-violent behavior.

North Carolina Council of Churches Policy Statement on Domestic Violence (3/2005)

Suggested Song: 🎵 *For the Beauty of the Earth*
🎵 by Folliot Sandford Pierpoint (Verse 4)

Prayer for Resolving Conflict in the Home
by Charlotte Zalot, OSB

(ALL Recite)



God of Peace –
How frightening the sounds and actions
of anger –
Shouting, screaming, hitting, fighting.

Protect those who are victims –
Wives, children, husbands, pets.
Shelter them from harm.

Give hope to the despairing.
Give calm to the unruly.
Replace hatred with love,
Injury with pardon.

Resolve conflict,
And fill the home with
peace.



Psalm 91 – Under God’s Protection

Those who dwell in the shelter of the Almighty,
who abide under the wings of Infinite Love, will
raise their voices in prayer.

“My refuge and my strength, in You alone will I
trust. You will deliver me from the webs of fear
and from all that separates and divides.

You protect me as an eagle shields its’ young,
I will not fear the shadows of the night, nor the
confusion that comes by day; nor the dreams that
awaken me from sleep; nor the daily changes that
life brings.

For You have sent Your angels to watch over me, to
guide me in all my ways; though I walk among
those who roar like the lion, or are as stealthy as
the adder, in Your strength will I be saved.”

And the Lord says, “I will protect you who call upon
My Name. When you call I will answer. I will be
with you in times of trouble. I will rescue you and
dwell in your heart as Loving Companion Presence
forever.”



Suggested Song: 🎵 *On Eagle’s Wings* 🎵
by Michael Joncas (Verse 1 & 4)

The Clenched Fist by JustFaith (Rotate Readers)

The clenched fist;
The threat of violence;
The willingness to hurt, beat, maim
and kill the other;

The clenched fist;
The warning of physical harm;

The clenched fist;
A sign of fear;
The opposite of love.

The open palm;
Ready for handshakes
Or joining hands in prayer;
Courageous;
Determined;
Unafraid;
A sign of love.

Gracious God, source of wonder and mystery,
We pause to consider the possibilities of our lives.

(ALL raise a clenched fist and say...)

We can do what we are told is normal;
Retaliate, threaten, oppress, dominate,
exploit, and destroy. OR, ...

(ALL open your palms)

We can extend a hand of friendship,
a hand that shares and cares for the distress
of others. The quality of our lives will not
be determined by how long we live, but by
the depths of our love and compassion.

Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit
of LOVE, says the Lord. Amen

Suggested Song: 🎵 *We Shall Overcome*
🎵 (Verse

3, 4 & 7)

The Lord will see us through ... someday!

JUNE'S Theme: "Prayer for an End to the Violence of Corporate Greed"

OPENING REFLECTION: *by JustFaith*

St. Paul tells us, "Where sin abounds, grace abounds even more." On the rubble of greed, God can birth generosity. In the chaos of suffering, God can bring healing. In the midst of injustice, God can make justice flow like a river. The bricks that can build prisons or barriers, are also the bricks that can build homes and hospitals and schools - - The City of God

Suggested Song: 🎵 *The City of God* 🎵
by Dan Schutte and the St. Louis Jesuits
(Verse 1 & Refrain)

READING: Jeremiah 22:13

And woe to you ... for you are building your great palace with forced labor. By not paying just wages, you are building injustice into its walls and oppression into its doorframes and ceilings.

Prayer for Leadership *by Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB.*

In seeking a leader, let us seek more than development - - though development we hope for, more than security - - though security we need; more than satisfaction of needs - - though many things we desire.

Give us leaders who will lead this nation to virtue. Without seeking to impose our kind of virtue on the virtue of others.

Give us enough insight ourselves to choose as leaders those who can tell strength from power, growth from greed, leadership from dominance, and real greatness from the trappings of grandiosity.

Give us, O God, leaders whose hearts are large enough to match the breadth of our own soul and give us souls strong enough to follow leaders of vision and wisdom.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *The City of God* 🎵
by Dan Schutte and the St. Louis Jesuits
(Verse 1 & Refrain)

READING: Ecclesiastes 5: 8-11

If you see some poor man being oppressed by the rich, with miscarriage of justice anywhere throughout the land, don't be surprised! For every official watches a higher official ... and so the matter is lost in bureaucracy and red tape.

He who loves money shall never have enough. The foolishness of thinking that wealth can buy happiness! The more you have, the more you spend.

READING: Sirach 5:1-10

Do not set your heart on unjust possessions ... Do not say, "His compassion is great, He will forgive my many sins..." for with Him are both mercy and retribution, and His anger does not pass from sinners ... Do not take comfort in ill-gotten gains for they will be of no profit on the day of ... judgment.

All recite Verse 2 of Song, "*O Holy City, Seen of John*" by W. Russell Bowie, based on Revelation 21

*O shame to us who rest content,
While lust and greed for gain,
In street and shop and tenement,
Wring gold from human pain,
And bitter lips in blind despair,
Cry, "Christ has died in vain."*

READING: James 5:1-6

Look here, you rich ... You have spent your years here on earth having fun, satisfying your every whim in luxury and pleasure. You have stored up treasure for the last days.

You have condemned and killed the good men who had no power to defend themselves against you.

Behold the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields ...

Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay.

Their cries have reached ears of the Lord of Hosts.



the

All recite Verse 3 of Song, "O Holy City, Seen of John" by W. Russell Bowie, based on Revelation 21

*Give us, O God, the strength to build
The City that has stood
Too long a dream, whose laws are love,
Whose ways, the common good,
And where the shining sun becomes
God's grace for human good.*

REFLECTION by Living God's Justice

**RESPONSE: Come Holy Spirit and show us
what is true**

In a world of great wealth where many go hungry,
and fortunes are won and lost by trading money; **R**

In a world of great knowledge where many die
in ignorance and every piece of information
has a price in the market place; **R**

In a world of easy communication, where words
leap between continents and we expect to see
a picture to illustrate each item of news; **R**

In a Church which speaks a thousand accents,
divided over doctrine, creed and ministry,
more anxious for itself than for the Gospel; **R**

In a Church touched by the flame of Pentecost,
moved to generous sacrifice and costly love,
interpreting the will of God with new insight. **R**

All recite Verse 2, 3, & 1 (NOT Refrain) of Song,
"Send Down the Fire" by Marty Haugen

*Call us to learn of your mercy,
Teach us the way of your peace;
Give us hearts that feel, Give us hands that heal,
Make us walk in the way of your peace.*

*Call us to answer oppression,
Teach us the fire of your truth;
Give us righteous souls,
'Til your justice rolls,
Make us burn with the fire of your truth.*

*Call us to be your compassion,
Teach us the song of your love;
Give us hearts that sing,
Give us deeds that ring,
Make us ring with the song of your love.*

Intercessions / Prayers of the Faithful

RESPONSE: Pardon us, O Lord!

For our words and deeds of impatience and anger, **R**

For our words and deeds of selfish grasping, **R**

For words and deeds of unkindness, **R**

For the sins of which we are most ashamed, **R**

For those who pursue wealth and power at the
expense of the poor and powerless, **R**

For those who regard the poor and homeless
with indifference **R**

For the poor who are oppressed and the needy
who groan. **R**

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Bring Forth the Kingdom* 🎵
by Marty Haugen (Verse 2 & 3)



We Are Takers by Walter Brueggemann

RESPONSE: You are the giver of all good things

All good things are sent from above:

Rain and sun,
Day and night,
Justice and righteousness,
Bread to the eater and
Seed to the sower,
Peace to the old,
Energy to the young,

Joy to the babes.

R

We are takers, who take from You,
Day by day, daily bread,
Taking all we need as You supply,
Taking in gratitude, wonder and joy.

R

Then we take more,
Taking more than we need,
Taking more than you give us,
Taking from our sisters and brothers,
Taking from the poor and the weak.

R

Taking because we are frightened and greedy,
Taking because we are anxious and fearful,
Taking because we are driven and uncaring.

R

Give us peace beyond our fear, and so
end our greed.

Give us well-being beyond our anxiety,
and so end our fear.

Give us abundance beyond our drivenness,
and so end our uncaring.

R

Turn our taking into giving ...

R

Since we were created in Your giving image:

Make us giving, like You,

Giving daily and not taking,

Giving in abundance ... not taking,

Giving in joy ... not taking,

Giving as He gave Himself up for us all,

Giving, never taking.

Amen



Suggested Song: 🎵 *We Are Called* 🎵
by David Haas ([Verse 1-2](#))

JULY'S Theme: "Prayer for an End to the Violence of Armed Conflict"



Opening Reflection: We dare to dream of a world where war and terror are afraid to show their face.

DISARMAMENT: A Franciscan Call

by Sr. Rosemary Lynch, OSF, Pace e Bene, Elder (Rotate Readers)

Francis summarized his belief in the "familyhood" of all life in his "Canticle of Creation." How could he damage, injure or kill any part of this sublime gift? *Can't we see the colossal wounds which war inflicts on Sister Mother Earth and beyond?*

Francis' insight on disarmament ... "If we have possessions, we would need arms to defend them." *Can we envision disarmament as a cherished inheritance, a contemporary task?*

Francis's conviction of the brotherhood of all persons impressed even the 'enemy' Sultan who said, "Woe is me, if the knights of the West come armed only with love like this brother. But, as long as they come armed with weapons, we can easily defeat them."

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace* 🎵 *by Sebastian Temple*

Bearing Witness to Peace *(Rotate Readers)*
Prayers Without Borders, pg. 70, Philippines

Lord God, we come to You in our need.
Create in us an awareness of the massive forces that threaten our world today. Give us a sense of the urgency to activate the forces of goodness, justice, love and peace.

Where there is armed conflict, let us stretch out our arms to our brothers and sisters.

Where there is abundance, let there be simple lifestyle and sharing.

Where there is poverty, let there be dignified living and constant striving for just structures.

Where there are wounds of division, let there be unity and wholeness.

Help us to be committed to the building of Your kingdom. Not seeking to be cared for, but to care. Not expecting to be served, but to place ourselves in the service of others. Not aspiring to be materially secure, but to place our security in your love.

Teach us Your spirit, for only in loving imitation of You, can we discover the healing springs of life that will bring new birth to our world.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *O God of Every Nation* 🎵
by William W. Reid (Verses 1-4)

How Do You Explain? *By Saah Charles N'Tow, Liberia (Rotate Readers)*

How do you explain peace to a child born in war?
How do you talk about trust, when hatred is all she knows?

How do you speak about Rights, when Wrongs abound?
How do you describe tomorrow, when today is such a mess?

How do you describe joy to an embittered child, a child accustomed to unparalleled horror and hate?
How do you describe a home to a child in war, when life in temporary camps is so routine and real?

What do you say about having a family in the midst of chaos, when the family he knows are abusers and users?

What do you tell her about respect and love, when slavery and sex are the reasons she is kept alive?

What do you say about life and its attendant joy, when body counts are the only joys he is taught to share?

What do you tell him about school, play and work, amidst the heartless carnage and devastation around?

How can you describe trust, when trusting is a matter of must?

What do you say about friendship, when the best friend he has, is the weapon he carries?

What do you tell her about hope, when her life feels like a slippery slope?

How do you tell her she is a child, a beautiful child, when her beauty and age have brought her so much pain?

How do you talk about peace to a child born in war?

Suggested Song: 🎵 *For the Healing of Nations* 🎵
by Fred Kaan & John Wade ([Verses 1-2](#))

Reflection: by Oscar Romero, 1979, El Salvador

“Praying and expecting everything to come from God and **not doing anything yourself** is not praying! It is laziness; it’s alienation. It is passivity, and conformity to the norm.

This is not the time, my dear brothers and sisters, to say: *“It is God’s will.”* Many things happen that are not God’s will. But, when people, who can contribute something of themselves to improve the situation, ask God for the courage to do so ... that IS prayer.”

Assisi Pledge for Peace by Pope John Paul II, February 2002

ALL recite:

We commit ourselves to proclaiming our firm conviction that violence and terrorism are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion ... and we commit ourselves to doing everything possible to eliminate the root causes of terrorism.

We commit ourselves to educating people to mutual respect and esteem, to bring peaceful and fraternal coexistence between people of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions.

We commit ourselves to fostering a culture of dialogue, to increase understanding and mutual trust between individuals and peoples, for this is the premise of authentic peace.

We commit ourselves to defending the right of everyone to live a decent life in accordance with their cultural identity and to freely form a family of their own.

We commit ourselves to frank and patient dialogue, to refuse to consider our differences as insurmountable barriers, to recognize that encounters of diversity can be opportunities for reciprocal understanding.

We commit ourselves to forgiving one another for past and present errors and prejudices, to support a common effort to overcome selfishness and arrogance, hatred and violence, and to learn from the past that peace without justice is no true peace.

We commit ourselves to taking the side of the poor and helpless, to speak out for those who have no voice, and to work effectively to change these situations.

We commit ourselves to taking up the cry of those who refuse to be resigned to violence and evil, to make every effort to offer, in our time, real hope for justice and peace.

We commit ourselves to encouraging all efforts to promote friendship between peoples, for in the absence of solidarity and understanding, technological progress exposes the world to a growing risk of destruction and death.

We commit ourselves to urging leaders of nations to make every effort to create and consolidate, on the national and international levels, a world of solidarity and peace, based on justice.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Let There Be Peace on Earth* 🎵



by S. Miller, J.Jackson & D. Kodner

AUGUST’S Theme: “Prayer for an End to the Violence of Poverty”



We don’t usually think of poverty as “violence,” but the brutal reality of material poverty is that one lacks sufficient

economic goods to lead a fully human life. Sadly, this describes perhaps 70% of the human family.

OPENING PRAYER: Psalm 34: 18-22
(Rotate readers)

Response: 🎵 *The Cry of the Poor* 🎵
by John Foley, S.J. (REFRAIN ONLY SUNG)

🎵 **The Lord hears the cry of the poor,**
Blessed be the Lord. 🎵

When the just cry out, the Lord hears and rescues them from all distress. **R**

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those whose spirits are crushed. **R**

Many are the troubles of the just, but the Lord delivers them from all of them. **R**

God watches over all their bones; not a one, will be broken. **R**

Evil will slay the wicked; those who hate the just are condemned ... **R**

READING: from JustFaith

Although “traditional” distribution or hand out of charity may sometimes be all that is possible, Christians need to begin thinking about “collectivized” charity - - charity directed toward a radical change in the foundation of society that involves challenging social structures of injustice

and replacing them with structures designed to benefit all people.

The gift of God’s compassion is never received and tested in the crucible of community. We will never be a truly compassionate people unless we enter the life of another person ... walking a mile in his or her shoes.

In My Prayer by Attique Swati, Pakistan
(Rotate readers)

In my prayer, make me a baby girl, who when born, is considered to be a burden or curse on the family, that I may know what it is to feel unwanted.

In my prayer, make me a girl, whose brothers are the only ones sent to school - - that I may understand that before our Creator, we are equal, but before men one is deprived.

In my prayer, make me a young girl, who is not married - - that I may know the fear of how property will hinder my choice for marriage.

In my prayer, make me a young girl married in a family exchange - - that I may experience how miserable it is to marry a person of double or triple my age.

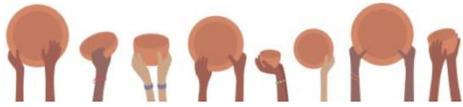
In my prayer, make me a widow who has no way to earn a living - - so that I may understand that without any source of income, how can I bring sweets home for my children?

In my fast, make me an empty bowl - - that you may fill the hollow space in me with love.

In my almsgiving, make me a grain of rice - - that in the company of others, my gifts may feed a starving world.

O our Lord, give me strength - - that I can share the sadness of all humanity, my fellow beings and bring a light of hope to them. **Amen**





Suggested Song: 🎵 *Where Charity and Love Prevail* 🎵 by Paul Benoit (Verses 1-2)

READING: "Come Lord"
by Archbishop Dom Helder Camara

Come Lord,
Do not smile and say you are already with us,
Millions do not yet know you, and to those who do,
does it make a difference?
What is the point of your presence if our lives
do not alter?

Change our lives, shatter our complacency.
Make your word our life's purpose.
Take away the quietness of a clean conscience.
Press and stretch us comfortably. For only then,
is that other peace, Your peace, made possible.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Whatever You Do* 🎵
by Fr. Willard F. Jabusch (Verses 1, 2, & 6)

READING: by Archbishop Oscar Romero

The guarantee of one's prayers is not by saying a lot of words. The guarantee of one's petition is easy. Simply ... How do I treat the poor? Because this is where God is. The degree to which you approach them, or the scorn with which you approach them... That is how you approach your God. What you do to them, you do to God. The way you look at them, is the way you look at God.

CLOSING PRAYER: from Blessed Frederic Ozanam,
based on prayer of Shaikh Kheir
(Rotate Readers)

RESPONSE: Allah says, "The broken ones are my beloved." (taken from *The Quran*)

O God, you love the poor and dispossessed.

When Jesus came, he was not sent into the world of the powerful, but into the impoverished streets and hearts of His time. **R**

O God, your spirit moves among us. We feel the power of Christ in our midst. We hear His call to feed the poor, clothe the naked and love the unloved. **R**

Lord, the poor and lowly are Your intimate friends. We ask in a special way for Your spirit to make us generous servants of the poor. **R**

Prayers and Intercessions of the Faithful:
(Rotate Readers)

RESPONSE: Keep us mindful of Your love

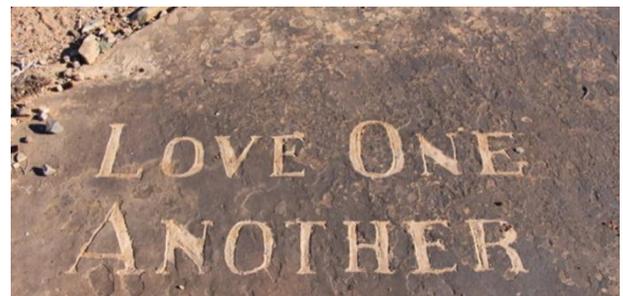
For the Church, that we might be divested of every preference we may have for domination, privilege, prestige, and wealth, we pray ... **R**

For the nations of the world, that every law and structure of society be founded on mercy and an unselfish concern for the betterment of others, we pray ... **R**

For people everywhere, that their generous service to the poor may be blessed and be an inspiration to all, we pray ... **R**

For the poor and all disadvantaged people, that we may come to love and care for them as Jesus did, we pray ... **R**

ALL: Loving God, in the presence of the poor, Your love is made supremely manifest. Jesus commanded us to feed the hungry and give dignity to those upon whom the forces of evil have trodden. Dispel our fears; quiet our timid heart. Move us to share our abundance with the poor. Do not allow us simply to pity them, but to have mercy and worship Your presence in their midst.
Amen



Closing Song Recited Together: Love One Another

Love one another, love one another,
As I have loved you.

And care for each other, care for each other,
As I have cared for you.

And share each other's burdens,
and share each other's joys.

And love one another, and love one another,
And bring each other home.

**SEPTEMBER'S Theme: "Prayer for an End to
the Violence to the Dignity of the Human Person
and Laborers"**

OPENING PRAYER: *by Pope Benedict XVI*

ALL Recite

We are not some casual or meaningless product
of evolution.

Each of us is the result of a **thought of God.**

Each of us is **WILLED.**

Each of us is **LOVED.**

Each of us is **NECESSARY.**



READING: Psalm 8: 1-8; Hebrew 1:5

**RESPONSE: O Lord, we are fearfully and
wonderfully made.**

O Lord our God, how awesome is Your name
through all the earth! **R**

When I see the Heavens, the works of Your hands,
the moon and the stars that You set in place - -
what are humans that You are mindful of them? **R**

Yet You have made them little less than a god,
and crowned them with glory and honor. **R**

You have given them rule over the works of
Your hands, put all things under their feet. **R**

To which of the angels did God ever say,
"You are my son?" **R**



Violence Against Human Dignity

Adapted from Caritas, Columbia

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Hear O Lord* 🎵
by Ray Repp (First 2 lines of Refrain ONLY)

RESPONSE: *(sung)*

**Hear O Lord, the sound of my call; Hear O Lord
and have mercy.**

For our brothers and sisters whose human rights
have been violated ... **R**

For children forced to work at the expense of their
education ... **R**

For young girls and boys who are trafficked for sex
at the expense of their innocence ... **R**

For women and men who suffer the humiliation
of prostitution ... **R**

For those who suffer the indignity of 'un' or 'under'
employment ... **R**

For those who work under degrading conditions... **R**

For those who live their lives as virtual slaves ... **R**

For those who are denied an education and the
right to vote ... **R**

For those who are subjected to torture and other
atrocities ... **R**

For those who have died by violent acts and the
denial of human rights ... **R**

"Doers, Not Just Hearers"

**RESPONSE: Help us be doers who act.
Help us to seek justice.**

When we hear about workers who cannot afford health care for themselves and their families. **R**

When we hear about workers who are offered only part-time work, so that they are excluded from benefits. **R**

When we hear about farm workers who work long hours for low pay and are exposed to dangerous pesticides. **R**

When we hear about immigrants who toil at hard jobs no one else will do, and then are denied a path to citizenship. **R**

When we hear of loyal employees who have lost their jobs because of downsizing or corporate takeover. **R**

When we hear of clothes and toys manufactured in “sweat shops” because “cheap” is more important than just. **R**

Amen

Suggested Song: 🎵 *They’ll Know We Are Christians*

By Our Love 🎵 by Fr. Peter Scholtes **(Verses 1-3)**

LITANY by Diann Neu (Rotate Readers)

RESPONSE: Blessed be the hands ...

Blessed be the works of Your hands, O Holy One. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have touched life. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have nurtured creativity. **R**

Blessed be the hands that held pain. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have embraced compassion. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have tended gardens. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have closed in anger. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have opened in friendship. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have planted new seeds. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have harvested ripe fields. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have cleaned, mopped, washed, and scrubbed. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have become gnarled with age. **R**

Blessed be the hands that are wrinkled and scarred from doing justice. **R**

Blessed be the hands that have reached out and been received. **R**

Blessed be the hands that hold the promise of the future. **R**

Blessed be the works of Your hands, O Holy One. **R**

Suggested Song: 🎵 *I Heard the Voice of Jesus*
Say 🎵 by Horatius N. Bonar

READING: “Nickel and Dime: On NOT Getting By in America” by Barbara Ehrenreich

(Rotate Readers)

What is harder for the non-poor to see, is poverty as acute distress:

The lunch that consists of Doritos or hot dog rolls, leading to faintness before the end of shift. The “home” that is also a car or a van. The illness or injury that must be “worked through,” with gritted teeth, because there is no sick pay or health insurance, and the loss of one day’s pay, will mean no groceries for the next.

These experiences are not part of a sustainable lifestyle, even a lifestyle of chronic deprivation and relentless low-level punishment. They are, by almost any standard of subsistence, emergency situations. And that is how we should see the poverty and so many millions of low-wage Americans – as a state of emergency. (p. 214)

The appropriate emotion, we should all be feeling, is not guilt, but SHAME. Shame at our own dependency on low-wage earners. When someone works for less pay than she or he can live on – when for example, she or he goes hungry, so that we can eat more cheaply and conveniently. She or he has made you a gift of her or his abilities, health, and life.

The “working poor,” as they are approvingly termed, are in fact the major philanthropists of our society. They neglect their own children, so that the children of others will be cared for; they

live in substandard housing, so that other homes will be shiny and perfect; they endure privation, so that inflation will be low and stock prices high. To be a member of the working poor is to be an anonymous donor, a nameless benefactor, to everyone else.

Someday they are bound to demand to be paid what they're worth. There'll be a lot of anger ... but the sky will not fall, and we will all be better off for it, in the end." (p. 220-221)

Suggested Song: 🎵 *You Are Mine* 🎵 by David Haas ([Verses 1-4](#))

OCTOBER'S Theme: "Prayer for an End to the Violence Against All Creation and the Environment"

OPENING REFLECTION:

The whole universe is God's dwelling. Earth, humanity's home, is a very small, uniquely blessed corner of that universe, gifted with natural beauty and many blessings. Humans are never so much at home, as when God dwells with them. In the beginning, the first man and woman walked with God in the cool of the day.

READING: Genesis 1: 1-26, 31
(Reader selected to share this Bible reading)

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Sing Out Earth and Skies* 🎵 by David Haas ([Verses 1-4](#))

OPENING PRAYER: "God's Dwelling" by Habel

RESPONSE: All the Earth is filled with the presence of God.

Creator God, whose renewing breath fills our planet, may we discern Your vibrant presence among us as ...

Fountain of life ... Pulse of life ... Breath of life ... **R**
... Quivering in the forest,
... Vibrating in the land,
... Pulsating in the wilderness,
... Shimmering in the rivers. **R**

Earth is a sanctuary, a sacred planet, filled with the presence of God. **R**

Together this day, let us sense and acknowledge the face of God in all creation. **R**

Amen

READING: (*Rotate Readers*)

RESPONSE: Lord, we cry to You in our time of need.

God created the world, but entrusts it to human beings. Caring for and cultivating the world involves ... joyful appreciation for the God-given beauty and wonder of nature; and protection and preservation of the environment. **R**

(*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, USCCB*)
Indiscriminate applications of "advances in science and technology ... has led to the painful realization that we cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas, and to the well-being of future generations. **R**

(*Pope John Paul II, The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility, no. 6*)

May those with power in business and government, humbly place their power at the service of the common good ... **R**

READING: "For the Earth" by Thomas John Carlisle
(*Rotate Readers*)

Creator God, help us to harness:
The wind ... The water ... The sun ...
And all the ready and renewable sources of power.
Teach us to Conserve ... Preserve ... Use wisely ...
The blessed treasures of our wealth-stored earth.
Help us to share Your bounty,
Not to Waste it ... Nor pervert it into peril ...
For our children, or for our neighbors in other lands.

You who are Life, and Energy, and Blessing,
Teach us to Reverence and Respect ...
Your tender world. **Amen**



READING: “Renewing the Earth”

by US Catholic Bishops, 1992

It is the poor and the powerless who most directly bear the burden of current environmental carelessness. Their lands and neighborhoods are more likely to be polluted or to host toxic waste dumps, their water to be undrinkable, their children to be harmed. Too often, the structure of sacrifice involved in environmental remedies seems to exact a high price from the poor and from workers.

Penitential Litany *by US Conference of Bishops*
(Rotate Readers)

RESPONSE: Lord, have mercy

We confess, O Lord, as creatures privileged with the care and keeping of Your creation, that we have abused Your gifts of creation through arrogance, ignorance, and greed ... **R**

We confess, O Lord, that we have risked permanent damage to Your handiwork; we confess impoverishing creation’s ability to bring You praise ... **R**

We confess, O Lord, that the races and cultures of the earth, reflect the richness of Your creation and that we have too often mistreated and inflicted injustices upon the poor, minorities and the marginalized ... **R**

O Lord, how long will it take before we awaken to what we have done? How many waters must we pollute? How many forests must we destroy? How much soil must we erode and poison? O Lord, how long will we deny the cries of the poor? **R**

For those who struggle with addiction, including our nation’s addiction to lifestyles dependent on oil, and in discovering new ways of living that care for creation ... **R**

How much of the earth’s atmosphere must we contaminate? How many species must we abuse and extinguish? How many people must we degrade and kill with toxic waste, before we learn to love and respect your creation, and our sisters and brothers? Before we learn to love and respect our fragile planet home? **R**

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer

May those who are aware of negligence or injustice in the management of natural resources, have the courage to proclaim the truth; and may we all accept responsibility for our use of fossil fuels. **R**

Lord God, Your peace demands justice for all and calls us to transform ourselves, our communities, our nation, and our world into good stewards of Your creation. **R**

In our sorrow for what we have done, we repent. We ask You, O Lord, to forgive our sins and send Your Spirit to renew us and the face of the earth. **R**
Grant this through Christ our Lord **Amen**

Suggested Song: 🎵 *For the Beauty of the Earth*
🎵

by F.S. Pierpoint (Verses 1-2)

READING: “Divine Goodness”

by St. Thomas Aquinas

“And because the Divine Goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, God produced many and diverse creatures; that what was wanting in one in representation of the divine goodness, might be supplied by another ...

Thus, the whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly and represents it better, than any single creature whatever.”

Psalms 104

You make springs gush forth in the valleys: they flow between hills and give drink to all the beasts of the field. On their banks, dwell the birds of heaven and from their branches they sing their song.

You water the hills, and the earth drinks its fill of Your gift. I will sing to the Lord all my life, make music to my God while I live. Bless the Lord, my soul.

St. Francis of Assisi, who saw the Divine Goodness in all of creation from the smallest ant to the farthest star, help us to approach the use of natural resources with GRATITUDE rather than greed, and with RESPECT for the INTERCONNECTEDNESS of all creation.



St. Francis ...

Pray for us.
Amen.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *All Creatures of Our God and King* 🎶 by William H. Draper

NOVEMBER'S Theme: "Prayer for an End to the Violence of Hunger and Thirst"

OPENING REFLECTION: *There are people in the world that God cannot appear to them, except in the form of bread.* ~ Gandhi

OPENING PRAYER: "For the Hungry"
by Tom Cordaro

SUNG RESPONSE: (Refrain Only)
🎵 *Like a Shepherd* 🎶 by St. Louis Jesuits)

Like a shepherd he feeds His flock, and gathers the lambs in His arms, holding them carefully close to his heart and leading them home.

(Rotate Readers)

Lord Jesus, when you saw the hungry multitudes, You said to Your disciples, "You feed them yourselves." Today, dear Jesus, the hungry multitudes include an ever-growing number of women and children in our world. They are as near as our neighbors and as far away as Africa and Asia. **R**

Just as You instructed the disciples to take account of what they possessed and begin sharing with the hungry, give me the wisdom to number my

blessings and the faith to share my loaves and fishes with those who have none. **R**

Give me the courage to speak to those in power on behalf of the hungry, whether they be friend or foe, whether they be politically important or inconsequential. As long as there is hunger in the world, may I never grow weary of loving tenderly and seeking justice. **R**

READING: Matthew 25: 35, 40, 42, & 45
(Rotate Readers)

Come, blessed of my Father ... For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me water. When you did it for these, my brothers, you were doing it to me!

Away you cursed ones ... For I was hungry and you wouldn't feed me, thirsty and you wouldn't give me anything to drink. When you refused to help the least of these my brothers, you were refusing help to me.

READING: Tobit 2: 1a-2a
(Rotate Readers)

It was Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks, and a big dinner was prepared for me. When I saw all the food, I said to my son Tobias, "Go, my boy, and seek a poor man among the Israelites captive here and he shall share my dinner."



Suggested Song: 🎵 *Whatever You Do* 🎶 by Fr. Willard F. Jabusch
(Verse 1)

PRAYER: *by Catholic Relief Services*
(Rotate Readers)

God, our Creator, to those who are hungry and thirsty, give food and water.

To those who are not hungry and thirsty, give a hunger and thirst for justice.

Help us to share in the creation of a more just and peaceful world.

Bless us this Thanksgiving season, so that we may live in harmony and unity with one another. Renew our Christian commitment to the global family.

READING: *by JustFaith*

SUNG RESPONSE: 🎵 *Christ Be Our Light* 🎵
by Bernadette Farrell (Verse 1 & Refrain)

Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst. Make us Your bread, broken for others, Shared until all are fed.

Christ be our Light, shine in our hearts, Shine through the darkness. Christ be our Light! Shine in Your church gathered today.

(Rotate Readers)

God gave us life and sustains our lives ... with good ... with bread ... and this bread is given to us all. The world was created, so that all people might know life. And the food that is given by God, is food intended for all, not just a few ... **R**

O God, an empty plate is a plate of pain. It is a serving of suffering. It is the menu for broken lives, broken families, broken hope. **R**

The bread is nowhere to be found. Taken by someone else. Hoarded by someone else. Unshared. What shall we do, O God? **R**

Give us this day our daily bread ...
As we this day, share daily bread ...
And lead us not into temptation ...
But deliver us from INDIFFERENCE ...
That Your Kingdom may come ... **R**



REFLECTION: "Some Water"
– A Vietnamese Prayer

SUNG RESPONSE: (Refrain Only)
🎵 *Rain Down* 🎵 *by Jaime Cortez*

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people. Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of Life.

(Rotate Readers)

I pray to God: Please let the rain come down,
So I can get some water to drink ... **R**

If I can get some water to give my rice field,
my rice field will make a good harvest ... **R**

Then I will have plenty of full rice bowls and
I will have rice straw to burn for cooking ... **R**

Lord God, you water the earth and it brings forth
food, send rain to those places that suffer
drought and famine ... **R**

You provided water for the Israelites to quench
their parched throats in the desert. Provide clean
water for those without safe drinking water ... **R**

You said that whenever we give a cup of water
to the least, we give it to You. Help us to be good
stewards of this precious and vital resource ... **R**

REFLECTION: *(Rotate Readers)*

The poor and the rich stand side by side,
To all, God's arms are opened wide.
God beckons us to come, draw near,
Then comforts us and dries our tears.

And we, in turn, must show God's care,
To all in need or in despair.
That when our earthly course is run,
We hear these words of God's own Son.

"The least, to whom you gave your hand,
Will walk with you to God's own land.
By serving others and Your Lord,
You've gained your life and your reward!"



Suggested Closing Song: 🎵 *We Are Called* 🎵
by David Haas

to respect each other as brothers and sisters
under their father, Abraham. **Amen**

Suggested Song: 🎵 *We Are Called* 🎵
by David Haas (**Verses 1 & 3**)

REFLECTION: (*Rotate Readers*)

RESPONSE: **For all peoples walk,
each in the name of its god.** (*Micah 4:5*)

“Who may climb the mountain of the Lord and enter where he lives? Who may stand before the Lord? Only those with pure hands and hearts, who do not practice dishonesty and lying. They will receive God’s own blessings, planted in their lives by God Himself. These are the ones allowed to stand before the Lord and worship.”
(*Psalms 24: 3-6*) **R**

“ ... they gathered in a large crowd ... Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking ... of the mighty acts of God.”
(*Acts 2:6-11*) **R**

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendant, heirs according to the promise.”
(*Galatians 3: 28-29*) **R**

“... every authentic prayer is called forth by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every person,” Christian or otherwise.
(*World Day of Prayer for the Peace in Assisi – Pope John Paul II.*) **R**

Suggested Song: 🎵 *In Christ There Is No East or West* 🎵 by John Oxenham (**Verses 1**)

READING: (*Rotate Readers*)

DECEMBER’S Theme: “Prayer for an End to the Violence of Religious Intolerance”

Suggested Song: 🎵 *All Are Welcome* 🎵
by Marty Haugen (**Verses 1, 4 & 5**)

OPENING PRAYER: *ALL Recite*

Lord God, Father of all, we come before you now to pray for all of your children, but especially the children of Abraham: Muslim, Christian and Jew; that they will learn to appreciate their shared prophetic heritage; celebrate their monotheistic tradition; and come to a greater understanding of and tolerance for, the ways their respective beliefs are practiced. That all will see and come



“Prayer is necessary. Without it, we see only our point of view and ignore the perspective of our enemies. Prayer breaks down those distinctions. To do violence to others, you must make them enemies. Prayer on the other hand, makes enemies into friends.

When we have brought our enemies into our hearts in prayer, it becomes most difficult to maintain the hostility necessary for violence ... Thus, prayer undermines the propaganda and policies ... designed to make us hate and fear our enemies.”
~ *Jim Wallis*



“Every day ask God to pour love for your brothers and sisters into your heart, and to put love for you into theirs. God can deny nothing to a community that prays this way, because it is His will that we love one another.

Look on the call to brotherly love as the entry into an immense mystery since it is your gateway into God Himself.”

~ *The Jerusalem Community Rule of Life*

“Prayer and sacrifice must be used as the most effective spiritual weapons in the war against war, and like all weapons, they must be used with deliberate aim: not just with a vague aspiration for peace and security, but against violence and war.

This implies that we are also willing to sacrifice and restrain our own instinct for violence and aggressiveness in our relations with other people. We may never succeed in this campaign, but, whether we succeed or not, the duty is evident.”

~ *Thomas Merton*

Suggested Song: 🎵 *Gather Us In* 🎵
by *Marty Haugen* (Verses 1, 2, 4)

“**God of Many Names**” by *Bill Hudson, USA*

Awesome God ... of the immensity of cosmic time and space.

Intimate God ... at home in each human heart.

Energizing, organizing God ... drawing us together in global solidarity.

**ALL: God of many names,
God of no name,
Father, Mother,
We thank you and praise you.**

Forgive us for every time and every way that we separate ourselves from our sisters and brothers in whose hearts You dwell through other images, other experiences, cultures, and revelations. We long for the fullness that only our solidarity can reveal.

**ALL: God of many names,
God of no name,
Father, Mother ...
Alert us to your urgency,
Your tireless struggle for solidarity. Amen**

CLOSING PRAYER: *ALL Recite*

Guide us, O Lord, away from all the prejudices history has left us: guide us toward the unity of Your Kingdom.

Forgive us, O Lord, of all that we have done to set one person against another: forgive us the polarities we have created and accepted within the Church.

Suggested Song: 🎵 *One God* 🎵
by *Barbra Streisand* (see lyrics below)

Millions of stars, placed in the sky by One God ...
Millions of us, lift up our eyes to One God ...
So many children calling to Him,
By many a different name ...
One Father ... loving each the same.

Many the ways, all of us pray to One God ...
Many the paths, winding their way to One God ...
Brothers and sisters, there were no strangers,
After His work was done ...

For your God ... and my God ... are One

Millions of stars, placed in the sky by One God ...

Millions of us, lift up our eyes to One God ...
So many children calling out loud,
By many a different name,
One Father ... Loving each the same.

Many the ways, all of us pray to One God ...
Many the paths, winding their way to One God ...
Brothers and sisters,
There were no strangers,
After the work was done ...

By our God ...
Yes, your God and my God ...
Are One!

