

**St. Padre Pio  
Secular Franciscan Fraternity  
Prayer Book**

The following prayer book arose from a need within community. It is a compilation of prayers, reflections, and liturgical celebrations that have been utilized by the brothers and sisters of St. Padre Pio Secular Franciscan fraternity. The sources have been cited when possible. Many of the prayers, liturgical celebrations, etc. which we had utilized, are now no longer available. It, therefore, became necessary for us to develop a book that had everything we needed in one place.

Judy Puetz ofs-Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

### **Dedication**

This prayer book is dedicated to all members of  
St Padre Pio Secular Franciscan Fraternity.

Special Thanks to:

Fr. Albert Haase ofm  
Peter Gruning ofs  
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Manuel Cortez ofs  
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Mark Guilford ofs

St. Francis, St. Clare, and St. Padre Pio,  
Pray for us

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# I. Prayer and Elements of Prayer

## Practical thoughts on Prayer

### I. Before You Pray

#### Step One: Select a time.

"But we cannot pray "at all times" if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it." CCC 2697

"The choice of the time and duration of the prayer arises from a determined will, revealing the secrets of the heart. One does not undertake contemplative prayer only when one has the time: one makes time for the Lord, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter.

One cannot always meditate, but one can always enter into inner prayer, independently of the conditions of health, work, or emotional state. The heart is the place of this quest and encounter, in poverty and in faith." CCC 2710

*"Making time for God regularly is a fundamental element for spiritual growth; it will be the Lord Himself who give us the taste for His mysteries, His words, His presence and action, for feeling how beautiful it is when God speaks with us; He will enable us to understand more deeply what He expects of me."*

-Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, August 17, 2011

There is no magical time for prayer. An important aspect to consider is what works best for you. Be real about what is truly happening in your life. Some important questions to consider include:

When are you most receptive?

When are you most uninterrupted?

What time is most consistently open?

Keep in mind that at times the answers to these questions may change. Be open and flexible when need be.

Another aspect to consider is your responsibilities to other people. Questions to consider include:

What commitment have you made to your spouse?

What commitment have you made to your family?

What commitments have you made to your job or ministry?

While God is active in every part of our lives, might any of these commitments be sacrificed or reprioritized in order to meet your commitment to God and deepen your relationship with Him? Bring your vocation and commitments to God for His guidance and direction.

Other points to consider:

Start slow.

Be realistic. (God does not place unrealistic demands upon us and neither should we.)

Be consistent.

Grow gradually.

## **Step Two: Select a Scripture Passage ahead of Time**

*“Through His Word God speaks to man.” CCC 2700*

*“Oftentimes we become discouraged and do not know how to pay attention or recognize the desire of our heart. We become distracted and empty of any fruit in prayer, or due to our own humanity or wounded hearts, we are afraid to take steps to meditate and deepen our relationship with God on our own and so we rely on someone else’s meditation.*

*From time to time, we take up a book of ‘meditations’, which presents us, ready-made, with the contemplation we ought to produce for ourselves. Often fearfulness robs us of the confidence to take steps on our own.”*

*-Hans Urs von Balthazar, Prayer (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 7*

## **How do you find a Scripture Passage?**

Pray with the readings for daily Mass or for the upcoming Sunday Mass

Slowly read through the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John

Slowly read through the Psalms

## **Step Three: Take a moment to consider how God is gazing upon you.**

Pause before you begin prayer and recognize the love God has for you and that He has called you to prayer and desires a relationship with you. Ask the Holy Spirit for help and guidance.

## **Step Four: Pay attention to your desires.**

In prayer, the deepest desires of our hearts are truly God’s desires for us that being lifted to the surface. Many of us grew up not paying attention to our desires believing, “I only want what God wants”. While this is very pious, it does not lead to a very deep

relationship with God. Consider this: How would you feel being in a relationship with another human being who never shared his/her heart with you? Who “only wanted what you want”?

Do you pay attention to what surfaces in your heart as you pray? Do you see these as important? Begin to pay attention and listen. This may be God speaking to you! As these desires surface, talk to God about them. You may even wish to make a note of them in your journal. In the future, we will be looking closer at discernment to begin to learn what is from God, what is from us, and what is from the enemy.

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros Region, 2017

### **Becoming more attuned to the Holy Spirit during Personal Prayer**

It is important to keep in mind, with any prayer method we choose to utilize, that these methods are only a means to an end, not an end in themselves. The prayer method we use and our strict adherence to it should never override the movement of the Holy Spirit who is bringing us into a deeper relationship with God. The danger can be that we become hyper-focused on the method we use instead of how the Holy Spirit desires us to encounter God. The Spirit of God operates when and how He wishes. In the middle of our methodical preparation, He may decide to visit us. In which case, we surrender to His operation and immediately put the prayer method aside.

Personal prayer can be described as “the expression of our relationship to God under the influence of the Holy Spirit”<sup>1</sup>. Much is implied in this definition. First, we can reflect on the practical ways of improving prayer by improving our response to the Holy Spirit during prayer as well as our relationship with God outside of prayer. In this discussion, we will be focusing on personal prayer made during times when we have withdrawn from activity. While it is certainly important to continue to express ourselves in relationship with God during activity, both must happen together as time for personal prayer fuels our activity, elevates all that we do, and makes it fruitful.

*“Some see prayer as a flight from the world in reaction against activism; but in fact, Christian prayer is neither an escape from reality nor a divorce from life.” (CCC 2727)*

Our prayer will always reflect the quality of our relationship with God. If we desire to improve our prayer, we must first improve that relationship. Many of us erroneously entertain the false assumption that to improve prayer we must learn the right method or technique. Hence, we run after each prayer method or fad until we find the one that works or that provides an “experience of God”. When that fails us, we rush hurriedly to the next thing hoping that this new method of prayer will fix our “prayer problem”. Essentially, prayer is not much different from human friendships. For instance, are we not wary of glowing expressions of love and concern that never flow into actions? Do

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<sup>1</sup> Richard J. Hauser S.J., In His Spirit (North Palm Beach, Beacon Publishing, 1982), p.77

we not feel betrayed when we are met by someone who is two-faced; who says one thing but does another? How about when we are used? The same is true with the Lord. Our words of love to Him during prayer are only as meaningful as our habitual relationship to Him. There are no tricks or short cuts, and it is foolish to “expect some particular method to compensate for an indifferent or lukewarm relationship”<sup>2</sup>. Jesus puts the matter in terms of the state of our heart, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Mt. 6:21) If our heart’s treasure is truly the Lord then all that occurs in personal prayer and all we do outside of it will reflect this reality. We will then have no difficulty in praying.

However, we cannot achieve this unity of heart on our own and through our own efforts. It requires that we cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit is always urging and compelling us to love and serve God and others and to move beyond our selfishness and self-centered concerns. This is the tension of our lives here on earth; between love and selfishness. Our hearts need to yield ever more to the Holy Spirit who is always calling us to move beyond ourselves to God and others. As we engage in the process of ongoing daily conversion, we will find that both formal and spontaneous prayer become a natural expression of our habitual quality of heart.

### **Growing in self-knowledge becomes a means to discover obstacles to the Spirit**

“The biggest problem in improving our relationship with the Lord is discovering the many different ways in which our hearts are directed primarily toward our own interests and only secondarily, or not at all, toward the Lord’s service.”<sup>3</sup> This requires a continual awareness of the motivations underlying our daily actions and behaviors. We may find upon reflection, that what we had thought we were doing for the Lord, we were really doing for ourselves. Certain attitudes in our relationship with others stand out as obvious obstacles to the Spirit’s work, these include pettiness, jealousy, lust, dislike, hatred, as well as inordinate attachments to money, power, or prestige. In these, it is apparent that our hearts are not seeking God’s kingdom. These obvious sinful tendencies, while significant, are not the major barrier in improving our general relationship with God.

There is a much deeper level, that we never place in the category of sin, but which is not in tune with the Spirit and therefore can impact prayer in a negative way. At this level, our hearts are not on God but on ourselves. Sadly, we do not even know it. They are very subtle obstacles and each of us has our own particular pattern related to our personality and vocation in life. These may include, anxiety and feelings of incompetence which may lead us to become focused on task performance, ambitious thoughts in order to gain a reputation for ourselves, desire for prestige in order to build our own kingdom instead of the Lord’s, small infidelities to the Lord in an attempt to be pleasing to others, cowardice in the face of conflict, inability to develop and/or maintain proper boundaries, rooting our identities in things other than God, hypersensitivity,

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<sup>2</sup> Hauser, In His Spirit, p. 78

<sup>3</sup> Hauser, In His Spirit, p 79



defensiveness, and more. When we become aware of these tendencies and repent, our hearts will be converted and we will experience a profound growth in our relationship to God and subsequently in our prayer. Overcoming these, however, is not in our power. We must give them to God and wait for Him to heal and root out this selfishness.

It is in these areas especially that spiritual direction can be beneficial. All of us, as Secular Franciscans, are encouraged to find a good spiritual director to help us uncover these hidden motives and obstacles. Finally, a daily examination of conscience can assist us in becoming aware of our habitual motivations and is at the heart of improving our responsiveness to the Holy Spirit in our daily lives.

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros, 2017

### **Self-Knowledge**

“Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” (Matthew 7:3-5)

#### **Writing of St. Francis**

Blessed is the servant who does not regard himself as better when he is esteemed and extolled by men than when he is reputed as mean, simple, and despicable; for what a man is in the sight of God, so much he is, and no more. (Admonition 20)

#### **From the Life of St. Francis**

“And that he might perfectly show himself to be contemptible, and to afford to the rest an example of true confession, he was not ashamed, when he had offended in anything, to confess it when he was preaching, before all the people. Nay more, if he chanced to have any evil thought about anyone, or happened to let fall an angry word, he would straightway confess the sin to him against whom he had thought or said anything evil and beg his pardon. His conscience (witness of all innocence) guarded itself with all solicitude and did not let him rest until soothing words had healed the mental wound. Assuredly in his noteworthy deeds of every kind he craved not notoriety but profit, avoiding admiration by every means that he might never fall into vanity.”  
(Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano, Chapter XIX)

True self knowledge, that which comes from God, acknowledges two realities present within our soul. First, there is a deep understanding of the beauty and dignity of our soul created in the image and likeness of God. We acknowledge that, in our baptism, God dwells within our soul, filling it with supernatural riches and that we are His son or daughter. We know deeply that we are loved and have a clear knowledge of our true identity. Second, we acknowledge the presence of sinful tendencies, dispositions, and movements in our dignified soul. We know that we are flawed and have a tendency

toward selfishness and sin. The presence of both the inherent greatness and riches the soul receives from God who dwells within it and the soul's deficiencies, sinful tendencies, and sin inflicted wounds are balanced and in harmony. If we focus on the first reality while ignoring the second, we can fall into presumption, arrogance, and pride. If we focus on the second while ignoring the first reality, we run the risk of despairing of the love and mercy of God. A healthy balance of both is necessary to tend toward God and His will for us. So how do we learn to know ourselves better? We can spend time with God daily in prayer and meditation. We can frequent the Sacraments of the Church. "In His light we see light." (Psalm 36:10) As we draw closer and closer to God, He will reveal to us more clearly the deep love He has for us and the gifts He has lovingly placed within our souls as well as the areas of our hearts that need His healing or purification. This will move us to be grateful to Him, to trust and praise Him, to seek His healing, and to humble ourselves in surrendering to His will in our lives.

**Make some time to prayerfully ask these questions:**

1. Who am I really? What do I find hardest to face about myself? Bring this to Jesus in prayer and listen to what He says about this.
2. Find another section in Scripture which illustrates the Virtue of Self-Knowledge. Find another statement of Jesus or an incident in His life that illustrates this virtue. Find a place in our Rule or Constitutions that deal with the Virtue of Self-Knowledge.
3. Pray the following prayer, "Lord, help me to know, accept, and love myself. Give me the courage to increase the gifts you have given me and eradicate the weaknesses that prevent me from being all that you are calling me to be. Show me how, Lord, and grant me Your grace and Peace. Amen."
4. Pay attention to the movements of your heart. When you lose your peace and become angry, frustrated, or losing hope, stop and prayerfully ask God to reveal your heart to you. Is there something that you need to be aware of? Is there something you need to change? If so, bring that to prayer and make a resolution to follow where God is leading.

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros, 2018

### **Rules for the Discernment of Spirits** **St. Ignatius of Loyola**

**Rule #1: In the persons who go from mortal sin to mortal sin, the enemy is commonly used to propose to them apparent pleasures, making them imagine sensual delights and pleasures in order to hold them more and make them grow in their vices and sins. In these persons the good spirit uses the opposite method, pricking them and biting their consciences through the process of reason.**

**Rule #2: In the persons who are going on intensely cleansing their sins and rising from good to better in the service of God our Lord, it is the method contrary to**

that in the first Rule, for then it is the way of the evil spirit to bite, sadden and put obstacles, disquieting with false reasons, that one may not go on; and it is proper to the good to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations and quiet, easing, and putting away all obstacles, that one may go on in well doing.

*(Two Fundament Orientations are described here. This requires self-awareness and spiritual maturity. Is the soul moving towards God or away from God?)*

**Rule #3: Of Spiritual Consolation.** I call it consolation when some interior movement in the soul is caused, through which the soul comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord; and when it can in consequence love no created thing on the face of the earth in itself, but in the Creator of them all. Likewise, when it sheds tears that move to love of its Lord, whether out of sorrow for one's sins, or for the Passion of Christ our Lord, or because of other things directly connected with His service and praise. Finally, I call consolation every increase of hope, faith, and charity, and all interior joy which calls and attracts to heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, quieting it and giving it peace in its Creator and Lord.

**Rule #4: Of Spiritual Desolation.** I call desolation all the contrary of the third rule, such as darkness of soul, disturbance in it, movement to things low and earthly, the unquiet of different agitations and temptations, moving to want of confidence, without hope, without love, when one finds oneself all lazy, tepid, sad, and as if separated from his Creator and Lord. Because, as consolation is contrary to desolation, in the same way the thoughts which come from consolation are contrary to the thoughts which come from desolation.

*(These two rules simply define what constitutes consolation and desolation in the spiritual sense. Keep in mind that oftentimes events in our lives can lead to one or the other. Essentially, spiritual desolation and the thoughts associated with them are of the enemy and are to be rejected.)*

**Rule #5:** In time of desolation never make a change; but be firm and constant in the resolutions and determination in which one was the day preceding such desolation, or in the determination in which he was in the preceding consolation. Because, as in consolation it is rather the good spirit who guides and counsels us, so in desolation it is the bad, with whose counsels we cannot take a course to decide rightly.

**Rule #6:** Although in desolation we ought not to change our first resolutions, it is very helpful intensely to change ourselves against the same desolation, as by insisting more on prayer, meditation, on much examination, and by giving ourselves more scope in some suitable way of doing penance.

**Rule #7:** Let him who is in desolation consider how the Lord has left him in trial in his natural powers, in order to resist the different agitations and temptations of the enemy; since he can with the Divine help, which always remains to him, though he does not clearly perceive it: because the Lord has taken from him his great fervor, great love and intense grace, leaving him, however, grace enough for eternal salvation.

**Rule #8:** Let him who is in desolation labor to be in patience, which is contrary to the vexations which come to him: and let him think that he will soon be consoled, employing against the desolation the devices, as is said in the sixth Rule.

*(Do not make a change to a spiritual resolution made before the desolation occurs. Do change yourself in order to act against the desolation through increased prayer, self-examination, and penance. Meditating on those passages in Scripture that speak of God's love, faithfulness, and closeness can be of help during this time. These steps will help to lessen the depth of the desolation and shorten its duration. Consider the desolation as an opportunity to grow in virtue by resisting temptation; God is permitting you to struggle so that you can realize the strength you have in Him. Be patient as you realize that the desolation will not last forever and consolation will return.)*

**Rule #9:** There are three principal reasons why we find ourselves desolate. The first is, because of our being tepid, lazy or negligent in our spiritual exercises; and so, through our faults, spiritual consolation withdraws from us. The second, to try us and see how much we are and how much we let ourselves out in His service and praise without such great pay of consolation and great graces. The third, to give us true acquaintance and knowledge, that we may interiorly feel that it is not ours to get or keep great devotion, intense love, tears, or any other spiritual consolation, but that all is the gift and grace of God our Lord, and that we may not build a nest in a thing not ours, raising our intellect into some pride or vainglory, attributing to us devotion or the other things of the spiritual consolation.

*(Desolation can occur because of our own faults or negligence, in order to test us so that we may know how truly we love God, to stretch us to extend ourselves further in His service and praise, and to give us true understanding and humility. All is a gift from God. Remember that consolation belongs to God and is not ours to acquire or keep. When you feel lost or in the dark, stop and place yourself in a position to be found. God will find you.)*

**Rule #10:** Let him who is in consolation think how he will be in desolation which will come after, taking new strength for then.

**Rule #11:** Let him who is consoled see to humbling himself and lowering himself as much as he can, thinking how little he is able for in the time of desolation without such grace or consolation. On the contrary, let him who is in desolation

**think that he can do much with the grace sufficient to resist all his enemies in his Creator and Lord.**

*(When in consolation, store up strength by considering how you will act during times of desolation. Remember humility.)*

**Rule #12: The enemy acts like a woman, in being weak against vigor and strong of will. Because, as it is the way of the woman when she is quarreling with some man to lose heart, taking flight when the man shows her much courage; and on the contrary, if the man, losing heart, begins to fly, the wrath, revenge, and ferocity of the woman is very great, and so without bounds; in the same manner, it is the way of the enemy to weaken and lose heart, his temptations taking flight, when the person who is exercising himself in spiritual things opposes a bold front against the temptations of the enemy, doing diametrically the opposite. And on the contrary, if the person who is exercising himself commences to have fear and lose heart in suffering the temptations, there is no beast so wild on the face of the earth as the enemy of human nature in following out his damnable intention with so great malice.**

**Rule #13: Likewise, he acts as a licentious lover in wanting to be secret and not revealed. For, as the licentious man who, speaking for an evil purpose, solicits a daughter of a good father or a wife of a good husband, wants his words and persuasions to be secret, and the contrary displeases him much, when the daughter reveals to her father or the wife to her husband his licentious words and depraved intention, because he easily gathers that he will not be able to succeed with the undertaking begun: in the same way, when the enemy of human nature brings his wiles and persuasions to the just soul, he wants and desires that they be received and kept in secret; but when one reveals them to his good Confessor or to another spiritual person that knows his deceits and evil ends, it is very grievous to him, because he gathers, from his manifest deceits being discovered, that he will not be able to succeed with his wickedness begun.**

**Rule #14: Likewise, he behaves as a chief bent on conquering and robbing what he desires; for, as a captain and chief of the army, pitching his camp, and looking at the forces or defenses of a stronghold, attacks it on the weakest side, in like manner the enemy of human nature, roaming about, looks in turn at all our virtues, theological, cardinal and moral; and where he finds us weakest and most in need for our eternal salvation, there he attacks us and aims at taking us.**

*(The enemy weakens and flees when confronted boldly. Resist with the strength of Christ! Like a false lover, the enemy tries to keep things secret and hidden in the darkness. Bring everything into the light! The enemy concentrates on your weak point, like a military commander. Know yourself! Be aware! Understand! Take Action!)*

## Notes and Insights

The Rules of Discernment in the Spiritual Exercises is the clearest and most concrete teaching on discernment in our Catholic tradition.

The “Good spirit” refers to God, the Holy Spirit, and/or the angels and the saints. The “Bad spirit” refers to the world, the flesh (concupiscence), and the devil/evil spirits.

When discerning, **NOTICE** or be aware of the movement of your heart. **DISCERN** the direction of this movement. Is it leading you towards God (consolation), or away from God (desolation). By the movements direction, we can know its origin; if towards God, it is from the good spirit; if away from God, it is from the bad spirit. **ACT** to accept or reject the movement. We accept any movement whose direction is towards God and reject any movement that leads away from God.

**Note:** For a more detailed explanation of the Rules for the discernment of spirits, please speak to your spiritual director and/or read *Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide to Everyday Living* by Timothy Gallagher, OMV.

### **Rules for the Greater Discernment of Spirits** **St. Ignatius of Loyola**

*These rules are for those further along on the spiritual journey. They have taken time to become more alert of the movements in their heart. At this time, they recognize how the enemy is operating and now he is using a different strategy and different tactics because his previous plan of attack has been discovered.*

**Rule #1** It is proper to God and to his angels, in their movements, to give true joy and spiritual gladness, taking away all sadness and disturbance that the enemy induces; to whom it is proper to militate against that joy and spiritual consolation, bringing apparent reason, subtleties, and persistent fallacies.

**Rule #2** It is of God our Lord alone to give consolation to the soul without preceding cause; because it is proper to the Creator to enter, go out, to move it interiorly, drawing it totally in love of his divine majesty. I say without cause, without any previous sentiment or knowledge of some object, through which such a consolation comes, by means of its acts of understanding and will.

**Rule #3** With cause both the good angel and the bad can console the soul, for contrary ends: the good angel for the profit of the soul, that it may grow and rise from good to better; and the bad angel for the contrary, and later on to draw it to his damnable intention and malice.

**Rule #4** It is proper to the bad angel, who takes on the appearance of an angel of light, to enter with the devout soul and to go out with himself; that is, to bring good and holy thoughts, conformed to such a just soul, and afterwards, little by

**little, he endeavors to go out, bringing the soul to his hidden deceits and perverse intentions.**

*(Unless these souls are discerning, the bad spirit will hide the spiritual diminishment that occurs. For example, he may exploit our concerns for social justice at the expense of charity toward those closest to us.)*

**Rule #5 We should give much attention to the course of the thoughts; and if the beginning, middle, and end is all good, inclined to all good, it is a sign of the good angel; but if in the course of the thoughts that he brings, it ends in something bad, or distractive, or less good than the soul had proposed to do before, or it weakens it, or disquiets, or troubles the soul, taking away the peace, tranquility, and quiet, which it had before, it is a clear sign that it proceeds from the bad spirit, the enemy of our profit and eternal salvation.**

*(Keep in mind that it is hard to reason with a tiger when your head is in its mouth. Giving attention to the course of our thoughts is important in distinguishing the source, helping us to understand, and then to take action.)*

**Rule #6 When the enemy of human nature has been perceived and known by his serpent's tail and the bad end to which he induces, it profits the person who was tempted by him, to look immediately at the course of the good thoughts that he brought, and the beginning of them, and how little by little he procured to make him descend from the sweetness and spiritual gladness in which he was, till he brought him to his depraved intention; so that with such an experience known and noted he may guard himself in the future from his customary deceits.**

*(In this the adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", applies.)*

**Rule #7 In those who proceed from good to better, the good angel touches such a soul sweetly, lightly, and gently, as a drop of water that enters a sponge; and the bad touches it sharply and with noise and disquiet, as when the drop of water falls on a stone; and in those who proceed from bad to worse the above-said spirits touch in a contrary way; the cause of which is that the disposition of the soul contrary or similar to the said angels; for when it is contrary, they enter with clamor and sensible disturbances, perceptibly; and when it is similar, they enter with silence, as in their own house through an open door.**

**Rule #8 When the consolation is without cause, although there is no deception in it, since it is of God our Lord alone, as has been said, nevertheless the spiritual person to whom God gives such consolation should, with much vigilance and attention, look at and distinguish the time itself of such an actual consolation from the time following, in which the soul remains warm and favored with the favor and remnants of the past consolation; for frequently, in this second time, through his own reasoning by associating and drawing consequences from ideas and judgments, or through the good spirit, or through the bad, he forms different**

**proposals and opinions that are not given immediately by God our Lord; and therefore they must be very well examined before entire credit is given them or they are put into effect.**

*(Once again, Be aware! Understand! Take action!)*

Note: For a more detailed explanation of the following rules, please speak to your spiritual director and/or read *Spiritual Consolation: An Ignatian Guide for the Greater Discernment of Spirits* by Timothy Gallagher, OMV.

### **Discernment of Spirits: Spiritual Consolations**

As has been mentioned in previous reflections, it is vital to pay attention to the movement of our hearts, to discern and understand the spirits that are operating within us and then to either accept or reject them. Unless we become accustomed to a certain degree of silence, the spiritual life will never deepen. We remain people who are unable to listen; tossed about by every impulse or movement that makes itself known or felt.

Within the course of our spiritual journey, we will experience consolations and desolations. These are the sunny and cloudy days in our relationship with God; the ups and downs of our spiritual lives. In knowing how to prudently conduct ourselves during these times, we can be liberated from captivity to deception and discouragement. Recognizing that these movements happen, as well as why and what to do when they happen, can awaken hope in us and set us free.

As human beings, we will encounter many happy and uplifting experiences which are truly gifts from our loving Creator. Keep in mind, however, that not all of these can be defined as spiritual experiences since not all have a direct connection to our lives of faith and our pursuit of God's will. The joy in our heart when we are with those we love, when we gaze upon nature, enjoy a good meal or a fine glass of wine, when we use our gifts and talents, when we are receiving or giving love and affirmation, or listening to beautiful music are consolations to be sure, but they would not be considered spiritual consolations. A fair amount of these non-spiritual consolations can resolve many problems as well as being good and healthy in our spiritual lives. In addition, God may use them as a gateway to spiritual ones. Be that as it may, it is crucial that we know the difference.

A genuine spiritual consolation is always caused by God and is given to strengthen and draw us closer to Him. It can be defined simply as a "heart felt" experience; one which inflames us with the love of God. It is an experience where our hearts are opened entirely to Him leading us to deeper levels of sacrifice and self-giving. A desire to make ourselves more and more available to God, to commit ourselves to a greater degree, to surrender ourselves in a deeper way to what He asks of us, and to endure hardships for His sake and the sake of others may arise in our heart. We may shed tears, like our Seraphic Father, when we reflect on the love that motivated God to become incarnate,



to suffer and die for us, and which has not been received nor returned in gratitude. These moments of consolation serve to increase our hope, faith, and charity, and will produce in us an interior joy that attracts us to Heavenly things or to the things of salvation. They can vary in duration, (being either long or short), and intensity, (being either gentle or strong).

Our conduct during these times is critical. As members of the Franciscan Order, we are well versed in detachment. Therefore, the same posture is advisable for these wonderful moments of spiritual high. We are grateful, but not attached, as we continue to seek the Giver of the gift and not the gift itself. Remaining grateful, but humble and modest, is always a good rule of thumb.

Finally, it is helpful to consider prayerfully how we will conduct ourselves when the consolation ends and draw strength for a time of future desolation. Newsflash: times of desolation will occur just as times of consolation occur. The only place we will ever experience uninterrupted spiritual consolation is when we arrive in Heaven. Reflecting on how little we are capable of during times of desolation without God's grace or consolation will help to keep our feet firmly on the ground as well as our spiritual lives in perspective.

St. Bonaventure noted that St. Francis, "would never let any call of the spirit go unanswered; when he experienced it, he would make the most of it and enjoy the consolation afforded him in this way for as long as God permitted it. If he was on a journey, and felt the near approach of God's spirit, he would stop and let his companions go on, while he drank in the joy of this new inspiration; he refused to offer God's grace an ineffectual welcome."

**Note:** For a more detailed description of this topic, please speak to your spiritual director or explore the various works of Timothy Gallagher, OMV.

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros Region, 2023

## **Spiritual Desolations**

When faced with desolations we may panic and impatiently gravitate to sources outside of God to relieve our distress. Because of this, they can gravely injure us if we do not know how to deal with them.

A desolation is a heavy movement of the heart toward discouragement, sadness, and/or despair on the level of faith. They can be non-spiritual or spiritual and it is necessary to be aware of the difference. Non-spiritual desolations may include a depletion of emotional or physical energy, the sadness that occurs when an unkind word is said to us, exhaustion from being too busy, an illness, suffering a loss, grief, or suffering from clinical depression. All of these can lead to but are not considered in themselves spiritual desolations. Maintaining a healthy balance of work, rest, exercise, and silent prayer will prevent us from accumulating too much non-spiritual desolation. If we lead busy lives, it is necessary to find ways to recover our energy and pay attention to the

needs of our humanity. Finding time for silence and prayer, to be creative, and to enjoy family and friends will all assist us in developing a healthy spiritual life.

A spiritual desolation is a darkness of soul, a dryness of spirit (CCC 2731), a confusion, a lack of peace, a movement toward low or earthly things, disquiet from various agitations/temptations, a lack of confidence, a lack of hope or love, a feeling of being totally slothful, tepid, or sad, as if separated from God.

There is absolutely no shame in experiencing spiritual desolations. What matters most is that we are first, aware. Secondly, that we name and understand it. Lastly, that we reject it so that we are not held captive by it. The lie that is conveyed to us during a spiritual desolation is that what we are seeing and experiencing now is the way it will always be. The spiritual desolation presents itself as our spiritual identity. The enemy whispers to us, "See who you are? You are a person who does not love God and whom God does not love." This must always be rejected because it is not rooted in the truth.

So how do we reject a spiritual desolation?

- 1) Know that God always sends spiritual consolation and permits spiritual desolations, which are always from the enemy.
- 2) Never make a change to any spiritual proposal you had in place the day before the spiritual desolation occurred. For example, if you had determined a day ago to go to Confession and then are now experiencing a spiritual desolation, you may not feel like going to Confession. Don't analyze it or try to figure it out...just GO! Oftentimes, it will be the spiritual proposal that you are tempted to forego that ends up being the most helpful and/or fruitful. Doesn't it make sense now why the enemy will want to send a spiritual desolation? He wants to impede our progress toward God.
- 3) When tempted to change our spiritual proposals, change ourselves instead.

How do we change ourselves instead?

- 1) Add more prayer. For example, by petitioning God for help.
- 2) Meditate on scriptural passages that speak of God's love and goodness or remember God's fidelity in previous moments of darkness and spiritual desolation.
- 3) Examine ourselves and participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- 4) Add more penance such as simple services of love or waiting fifteen minutes before gratifying ourselves.

As we change ourselves intensely against the spiritual desolation, its duration may be shortened, and its intensity lessened. Keep in mind that if there is a history of severe trauma, depression, or other issues involving the need for intense healing, working with a professional may be necessary.

Why does God permit spiritual desolations?

- 1) We may be negligent in small ways to the spiritual resolutions we have made, and God is making us aware so that we can change.
- 2) The spiritual desolation has been permitted as a trial so that we will be challenged and grow.
- 3) In order that we learn humility and know that only God can give us consolation.

God loves us where we are, but He loves us too much to keep us there! Therefore, everything can become an opportunity to grow closer to God! If you are experiencing a spiritual desolation, have courage, you are not alone. All of us have experienced them at one time or another and will continue to do so as our journeys continue. Recall these practical steps and patiently wait until the darkness disappears. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reminds us that “from the darkness the Lord will cause a new day to dawn.” (General Audience, February 22, 2012).

**Note:** For a detailed explanation of the previous topic, please speak to your spiritual director or the works of Timothy Gallagher, OMV

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros Region, 2023

### **You cannot reason with a tiger when your head is in its mouth**

It is common knowledge that the spiritual journey will be filled with trials. In the lives of the saints, especially our beloved St. Francis, we know this to be true. Some of these trials occur because of our own inner woundedness, our attachments, or the sins of others. Yet, others occur through the deceit and temptations of the enemy of our salvation. We are engaged in a spiritual battle and knowing our enemy and his tactics can help us avoid becoming sidetracked.

In his book, The Devil You Don't Know: Recognizing and Resisting Evil in Everyday Life, Fr. Louis Cameli suggests that “the signs of the Tempter’s ordinary and typical activity can be categorized in four ways: deception, division, diversion, and discouragement.” These four areas may seem unrelated to the sensualized notion of demonic activity we hear about in the movies. The ordinary ways we will experience the Tempter influencing us will be through exploitation, manipulation, and confusion. The purpose is to lead us to become divided in mind and heart with the intention of separating us from the God

who has fashioned us for Himself. The discouragement, frustration, and confusion this produces may lead us to pause or even abandon our journey toward God.

Before we begin our discussion, it is important to set a firm foundation. First, we cannot believe in the devil as we believe in God. We place all our faith in Jesus Christ who is the victor over the devil, sin, and death. However, our enemy is intelligent, concealed, powerful, and extraordinarily destructive. If we are truly serious about being faithful followers of Jesus Christ and following His will, we will encounter hostile forces that will try to subvert our journey. Fr. Cameli states, "While our first and continuous response must be praise and thanksgiving, it is foolhardy to think that we have arrived at our heavenly destination and full transformation." We continue to live a life of ongoing daily conversion subject to trials, struggles, and temptations that accompany us along our journey. Unfortunately, we continue to remain ignorant of what is going on and can sabotage our own progress without realizing it.

This reality does not mean we need to wring our hands in fear. The enemy is a creature of God and not an equal of God. The only power he can have over us is that which we give him. We can, however, be vigilant and alert. "Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8-9) We can be alert by testing the spirits in discernment with a good spiritual director. It is extremely helpful to have someone objective providing us with feedback, even if that feedback is something we do not want to hear. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)

Coupled with being alert and aware of the movements in our heart is resistance. How do we resist? We begin by realizing that it is impossible to have the strength to resist without holding close to faith in Jesus Christ. The masters of the spiritual life note that, "the enemy behaves like a spoiled child in being weak when faced with strength and strong when faced with weakness. For it is proper to a child when he is fighting with a firm adult, to lose heart and to flee when the adult confronts him firmly, and, on the contrary, if the adult begins to flee, losing heart, the anger, vengeance, and ferocity of the child grow greatly and know no bounds. In the same way it is proper to the enemy to weaken and lose heart, fleeing and ceasing his temptations when the person who is exercising himself in spiritual things confronts the temptations of the enemy firmly, doing what is diametrically opposed to them; and on the contrary, if the person who is exercising himself begins to be afraid and lose heart in suffering the temptations, there is no beast so fierce on the face of the earth as the enemy of human nature in following out his damnable intention with such growing malice." -St. Ignatius of Loyola

In the life of St. Francis, we read the following, "The enemy of the human race, observing him, strove to lure him from the good he had begun by striking fear and dread in him. There was in Assisi a deformed, hunchbacked woman, whom the devil, appearing to the man of God, recalled to him. He threatened to inflict him with her deformity unless he reneged on the plan he had conceived. But the very brave knight of

Christ, shunning the devil's threats, prayed all the more fervently within the cave that God would direct his path." -The Legend of the Three Companions.

As we read this passage, we recognize that the enemy uses fear to manipulate and influence us away from fulfilling God's will and purpose. In his response, Francis, aware of his own heart and recognizing the deception, prayed fervently for the strength to confront his own fear. We must do the same. Many of our choices and decisions are motivated by fear. We are afraid of not being in control, of making mistakes, or of what others may think of us or believe about us. The list of our fears is endless and the enemy, who knows our weak points, will exploit every single one of them.

This wisdom was brought home to me as I watched the movie, Darkest Hour. In one scene, Winston Churchill is frustrated with members of his war cabinet. They have been pressuring him to appease Adolf Hitler and to initiate peace terms. At that time, the British army was stranded at Dunkirk waiting to be evacuated. In reply to the pressure to capitulate, Churchill responds, "When will the lesson be learned? You cannot reason with a tiger when your head is in its mouth!" Once you have succumbed to the trap of the enemy, it is extremely difficult to extricate yourself. Only the virtue of humility will free you.

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros Region, 2023

### **Lessons for a Greater Discernment of Spirits** **The Enemy Disguises Himself as an Angel of Light**

As we continue our discussions on discernment, let's take a moment to review. We have described for the most part what occurs in those whose spiritual lives are just beginning. Recall that it is fairly easy to distinguish the good spirit from the bad spirit; the good spirit is recognized by consolations and the bad spirit through desolations. At a certain point however, the enemy realizes that his plan of attack has been clearly perceived, easily rejected, and overcome. Now the strategy changes and the bad spirit has to implement more subtle and hidden strategies to move a more advanced soul away from God's good and holy plans.

For these souls, it will be extremely important to pay attention to the beginning, the middle, and the end of all thoughts and inspirations since the bad spirit will take on the appearance of an "angel of light". According to this rule, "it is proper to the bad angel, who takes on the appearance of an angel of light, to enter with the devout soul and to go out with himself; this simple means that the bad spirit begins by bringing good and holy thoughts, conformed to such a just soul, and afterwards, little by little, he endeavors to go out, bringing the soul to his hidden deceits and perverse intentions." These words echo St. Paul's teachings that "even Satan masquerades as an angel of light." (2 Cor 11:14)

Let's take a moment to examine what this means for us. According to Fr. Timothy Gallagher, author of Spiritual Consolation: An Ignatian Guide for the Greater

Discernment of Spirits, when the rule states that Satan, “enters with the devout soul and goes out with himself”, simply put the bad spirit begins by bringing good and holy thoughts which are completely in accord with a soul that has progressed on the spiritual journey. Then after a time, the bad spirit “little by little brings the soul to his hidden deceits and perverse intentions.” In other words, he “goes out with himself”. Since many souls who have advanced in the spiritual life are familiar with the tactics of the enemy, they cannot be so easily tempted during times of spiritual desolation. They have grown aware, they understand, and they take action, so the evil spirit disguises his deceits through “good and holy thoughts” which are completely conformed to the thoughts of an advanced soul.

Once this attempt to deceive through “good and holy thoughts” has occurred, there then follows a time when the bad spirit attempts to lead the dedicated person “little by little” to accept the deceits proposed. Indeed, unless these souls are discerning, the bad spirit will succeed in hiding the spiritual diminishment that follows. It is a subtle “twisting of the truth” which is the hook that leads such devoted souls to be caught.

Those who are serious about the spiritual journey and growing closer to God, are encouraged to find a faithful and knowledgeable spiritual director who can accompany them in their journey of discernment, especially as they progress. We simply cannot be objective when we are trying to uncover these subtle obstacles. It is simply impossible to see clearly when you are experiencing these deceits.

What might this look like in real life? What might we experience? Strangely enough, someone recently shared their story, and it reminded me of how this rule can be applied and how easily we can be deceived. This person has experienced the Lord in a powerful way and has felt such a strong desire to return to God what she has received. She is a very dedicated young wife and mother with a rich and fruitful prayer life. Recently, however, she has been feeling a desire to serve the Lord in a deeper way in return for all that He has done for her. She works full-time as a nurse and has recently volunteered in various ministries within her parish. Over time this has taken a toll on her life at home. Her husband and children have felt abandoned, and she has noticed that she has become more irritable as her patience has worn thin. Not only this but she is growing resentful of the duties that her vocation as a wife and mother require her to fulfill. These feelings have produced a sense of guilt and shame. Her spirit is in turmoil and her spouse and children feel resentful and unloved. The solution to this dilemma lies in accurately reflecting upon what has occurred, looking at the fruits that are manifesting themselves within and around her, and then rejecting the bad spirit’s no longer hidden deceits.

In our own lives too, it is important to be aware of the spiritual movements within our hearts, seek to understand the origin of these movements as coming from the good spirit or the enemy, and take action accordingly; accepting what is from the good spirit or rejecting what is from the bad spirit.

In the life of this young wife and mother, all she needed was an understanding that service and dedication to God can be achieved within her own home and amongst her own children. At this time in her life, she could please God in a supernatural way by

making the ordinary extraordinary. Upon realizing and accepting this truth, she experienced a great sense of relief, peace, and reassurance. Here was the Spirit of God confirming her discernment. She could now reject the attempts of the bad spirit's hidden deceit. What was it? It was simply to convey to this young wife and mother that she could only please God by turning her back on her vocational posture and serving in ministry within her parish. Serving in ministry is a good thing, but for this young wife and mother, it was a good that had been twisted, for it was not what God wanted of her. As faithful and dedicated souls, we too may experience times when this rule is operative. The bad spirit may attempt to deceive us by taking on the appearance of an "angel of light". He may exploit our concern for social justice at the expense of charity towards our neighbor; particularly the neighbor nearest to us. We may initially feel as if we are on the right track only to be left picking up the pieces of a broken relationship or dealing with the guilt of a harsh and judgmental attitude toward someone who may have a different view on a social issue or taking care of the poor. I suspect that, as Franciscans, these hidden deceits will exploit our desire to serve and to be in the forefront of promoting justice. May God give us the grace to be aware, to understand, and to embrace the good and reject the bad.

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros Region, 2023

### **Spiritual Nuggets for Prayer and Reflection**

1. Remember your suffering. It can become the womb of your compassion or the fire of your anger.
2. Your image of God will either catapult you to selfless acts of love, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, or it will keep you hiding in the bushes out of fear.
3. Frustration is God's way of calling you to a deeper surrender and the very best prayer, "Not my will but yours be done."
4. Listen to your life. The situation you find yourself in, the people you encounter, your deepest feelings, and your most creative thoughts are the megaphone through which God communicates to you.
5. God's will is revealed in the present moment's unmet need or required duty.
6. Grace is God's ardent longing and enthusiastic invitation to enter into a deeper relationship with you.
7. Every experience of God's ardent longing and enthusiastic invitation to a deeper relationship begs for your intentional and deliberate response in order to blossom into what God wants.
8. Transitions usually take two years. When you find yourself disoriented or paralyzed during a time of transition, don't look back and try to relive the past. The future unfolds in its own way, in its own time. Patient waiting is a form of faith, surrender, and trust.
9. There are no shortcuts to spiritual growth, and it does not happen by osmosis. It requires a response to God's grace, intentional dedication, and patience.
10. Christian prayer requires authenticity, transparency, and honesty. Pray from where you are and not from where you think you should be. No emotion or feeling is inappropriate to bring before God.

11. When moved to silence when praying, follow it. Silence is the language of God; everything else is mere translation.
12. Fear and the ego are two obstacles to spiritual growth. Fear paralyzes; the ego obsesses over self-concern, self-image, self-gratification and self-preservation.
13. You are hot-wired for God and God alone. Nothing outside yourself can satisfy the longing and restlessness of the human heart.
14. Thoughts matter in the spiritual life. They start a chain reaction that awakens desires that strengthen your ego obsession and then get played out in action. Change your thinking to change your behavior.
15. It's not happiness that will make you grateful; it's gratitude that will make you happy.
16. Worry is an insult to God.
17. Guilt about the past and worry about the future are learned behaviors. They are not natural. Become like a child and learn to live in the present moment.
18. Forgiveness is a spiritual practice that sets a prisoner free-and the prisoner is yourself.
19. A holy "no" to a specific request is more authentic and takes more courage than a stretched, reluctant "yes".
20. God is not an unknowable Mystery but an endlessly knowable Mystery.
21. If you understand it, it's not God.
22. Even when you discover a discernment made in good faith was wrong, God honors your effort.
23. Feelings are an unsure guide in the spiritual life. Just because you feel that God has abandoned you, God cannot abandon you because "in God we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). And just because you felt you have experienced God, test the experience by its fruits because even the devil can disguise himself as an angel of light (see 2Cor 11:14)
24. Where the grace of God calls you, the grace of God will keep you.
25. Spiritual maturity is characterized by the movement from a superficial cosmetic spirituality focused on obedience to the law to a cardiac spirituality based on unconditional love.
26. Mindfulness, in the Christian sense, is the beginning of mysticism.
27. Spiritual discouragement and distaste-called by Ignatius of Loyola "desolation"-is one of the sneakiest tricks of the devil.
28. Find your own spiritual path, follow it, and never apologize for it.
29. Just showing up and going through the motions of prayer, even when you get nothing out of it, is a wonderful example of fidelity-and God honors that.
30. Trying to rid yourself of distractions in prayer becomes another distraction.
31. Spiritual growth doesn't always rid you of personality defects and character flaws. St. Paul had a thorn in his flesh; St. Jerome struggled with anger; Mother Teresa of Calcutta was controlling; Saints Alphonsus Liguori and Ignatius Loyola wrestled with scrupulosity.
32. Doing the will of God does not insulate or protect you from devilish temptations, emotional storms, or physical hurricanes.



33. Eucharistic adoration must lead to eucharistic action. To adore the Bread of Life is to be challenged to become the Bread of Life to others.

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### **LITTLE BEAN PLANT by Jerry Galipeau**

"Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You too must be patient." (James 5:7-8). These words, taken from the second reading appointed for the Third Sunday of Advent, are challenging for those of us living in the twenty-first century.

Patience is a virtue that seems wanting these days. I remember well a little project that my third-grade teacher, Sister Della William, invited us to do. In class we were each given a small paper cup, some potting soil, and a single bean. We planted the bean in the cup and were told to bring it home and begin to water it regularly. We were told that when the plant began to grow, we were to bring it back to school with us. I remember being so anxious about that project. Every morning, I would run downstairs from my bedroom to examine that cup that my mother had placed on the kitchen counter, near the window. I watered it faithfully every morning before leaving school. As time went on, first one, then another, and then most of my classmates brought their burgeoning little plants to school. I continued to rush downstairs every single morning and found nothing growing in my little cup. I remember feeling so badly that perhaps the seed had been a dead one, or that I had over-watered the soil, or had not watered it enough.

Eventually, there was a plant growing in our classroom for every student, all except for me. I told Sister that I had given up on my plant; she told me to be patient, to keep watering the soil, which I did. My excitement about the plant waned. And then, of course, it happened. Before picking up my brown lunch bag with "Jerry" written on it in pencil in my mother's perfect penmanship, I saw something green in that cup. My bean plant had begun to grow! I was so excited when I brought it to school that day. Sister Della William just looked deeply into my eyes, and without a word exchanged between us, I knew that her glance was that reassurance, that patience would, and had, won out.

In today's world of instant communication, we become frustrated when people do not return our text messages or reply to our social media posts in an instant. I think this attitude can creep into our spiritual lives as well. "Come on, God; I need an answer now!" Saint James' words to us in that second reading are akin to Sister Della William's words to me in that third-grade classroom. Patience is something we need to cultivate, like that little bean plant. "You too must be patient."

Why not take the time right now, in a moment of silent prayer, to ask the Lord, for who's coming we long, to bring you a spirit of patience in a world of impatience. Ask the Lord to assist you in cultivating a heart that is ready for his coming.

## II. Forms of Prayer

### **24 Reasons to Spend a Holy Hour with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration**

1. You are greatly needed!  
“The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic Adoration.” (Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenaе*)
2. This is a personal invitation to you from Jesus.  
“Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love.” (Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenaе*)
3. Jesus is counting on you because the Eucharist is the center of life.  
“Every member of the Church must be vigilant in seeing that the sacrament of love shall be at the center of the life of the people of God so that through all the manifestations of worship due him shall be given back ‘love for love’ and truly become the life of our souls.” (Pope John Paul II, *Redeemer of Man*)
4. Your hour with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament will repair for the evils of the world and bring about peace on earth.  
“Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Jesus and ready to make reparation for the great evils of the world. Let your adoration never cease.” (Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenaе*)
5. Day and night Jesus dwells in the Blessed Sacrament because you are the most important person in the world to him!  
“Christ is reserved in our churches as the spiritual center of the heart of the community, the universal Church, and all humanity, since within the veil of the species, Christ is contained, the invisible heart of the Church, the Redeemer of the world, the center of all hearts, by him all things are and of whom we exist.” (Pope Paul IV, *Mysterium Fidei*)
6. Jesus wants you to do more than to go to Mass on Sunday.  
“Our communal worship at Mass must go together with our personal worship of Jesus in Eucharistic adoration in order that our love may be complete.” (Pope John Paul II, *Redeemer of Man*)
7. You grow spiritually with each moment you spend with Jesus!  
“Our essential commitment in life is to preserve and advance constantly in Eucharistic life and Eucharistic piety and to grow spiritually in the climate of the Holy Eucharist.” (Pope John Paul II, *Redeemer of Man*)
8. The best time you spend on earth is with Jesus, your Best Friend, in the Blessed Sacrament!  
“How great is the conversation with Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, for there is nothing more consoling on earth, nothing more efficacious for advancing along the road of holiness!” (Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*)
9. Just as you can’t be exposed to the sun without receiving its rays, neither can you come to Jesus exposed in the Blessed Sacrament without receiving the divine rays of his grace, his love, his peace.  
“Christ is truly the Emmanuel, that is, God with us, day and night, he is in our midst. He dwells with us full of grace and truth. He restores morality, nourishes

- virtue, consoles the afflicted, strengthens the weak.” (Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*)
10. If Jesus were actually visible in church, everyone would run to welcome him, but he remains hidden in the Sacred Host under the appearance of bread, because he is calling us to faith, that we may come to him in humility.  
“The Blessed Sacrament is the ‘Living Heart’ of each of our churches and it is our very sweet duty to honor and adore the Blessed Host, which our eyes see, the Incarnate Word, whom they cannot see.” (Pope Paul VI, *Credo of the People of God*)
  11. With transforming mercy, Jesus makes our heart one with his.  
“He proposes his own example to those who come to him, that all may learn to be like himself, gently and humble of heart, and to seek not their own interest but those of God.”
  12. If the Pope himself would give you a special invitation to visit him in the Vatican, this honor would be nothing in comparison to the honor and dignity that Jesus himself bestows upon you with the invitation of spending one hour with him in the Blessed Sacrament.  
“The divine Eucharist bestows upon the Christian people an incomparable dignity.” (Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*)
  13. Jesus is really there!  
“I myself am the living bread come down from heaven.” (Jn 6:35)
  14. Day and night Jesus dwells in the Blessed Sacrament because of his infinite love for you!  
“Behold I will be with you always even to the end of the world,” because “I have loved you with an everlasting love, and constant is my affection for you.” (Mt 28:20; Jer 31:3)
  15. The specific way that Jesus asks you to love him in return is to spend one quiet hour with him in the Blessed Sacrament.  
“Where your treasure is, there is your heart...” “Could you not watch one hour with me?” (Mt 6:21; 26:40)
  16. When you look upon the Sacred Host, you look upon Jesus, the Son of God.  
“Indeed, this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks upon the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life. Him I will raise up on the last day.” (Jn 6:40)
  17. Each moment that you spend in His Eucharistic Presence will increase his divine life within you and deepen your personal relationship and friendship with him.  
“I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly.” “I am the vine, and you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him shall bear much fruit because without me, you can do nothing.” (Jn 15:5)
  18. Each hour you spend with Jesus will deepen his divine peace in your heart.  
“Come to me all of you who are weary and find life burdensome and I will refresh you...” “Cast all of you anxieties upon the one who cares for you...” “My peace is My Gift to you.” (Mt 11:28; 1 Pt 5:7; Jn 14:17)
  19. Jesus will give you all the graces you need to be happy!  
“The Lamb on the throne will shepherd them. He will lead them to the springs of life-giving water.” (Rev 7:17)

20. For peace in our country!  
“When my people humble themselves and seek my presence...I will revive their land.” (2Chr 7:14)
21. Jesus is infinitely deserving of our unceasing thanksgiving and adoration for all he has done for our salvation.  
“worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor, glory, and praise.” (Rev 5:12)
22. Each hour that you spend with Jesus on earth will leave your soul everlastingly more beautiful and glorious in heaven!  
“They who humble themselves shall be exalted...” “All of us, gazing on the Lord’s glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from glory to glory into his very image.” (Lk 18:14; 2Cor 3:18)
23. Jesus will bless you, your family, and the whole world for this hour of faith you spend with Him in the Blessed Sacrament.  
“Blessed are they who do not see and yet believe...” “Faith can move mountains...” “What is needed is trust...” “Behold I come to make all things new.” (Jn 20:29; Mk 11:23; Mk 5:36; Rev 21:5)
24. Each moment you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament brings joy, pleasure, and delight to his Sacred Heart!  
“My joy, my pleasure, my delight is to be with you.” (Prov 8:31)

## **One Way to Spend a Holy Hour in Eucharistic Adoration**

### **Three suggestions**

1. Be silent. Don’t rattle prayers or silently review stresses. Be still exteriorly and interiorly.
2. Be attentive. It’s not a reading hour—reading should be an entry point to prayer.
3. Be alert. Sit, stand, or kneel respectfully. Quick tip: If you get sleepy, stand up!

### **Minute by minute**

There is no one way to pray a holy hour. The following might help if you get lost in the hour, but feel free to structure your holy hour to suit your needs.

#### **:00-:05-Begin**

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you. Make acts of faith, hope, and charity. Tell God how you believe, trust, and love him. Ask for more faith, hope, and charity.

#### **:05-:15-Adoration**

Adore God. He holds the universe like a seed in the palm of his hand. He is all powerful, all good, more beautiful than we can imagine, and more real than the small things that we grasp so easily. Imagine Christ sitting with you.

**Tell him:** “ O my God, I adore your divine greatness from the depths of my littleness; you are so great, and I am so small.” Or “Glory be...” Repeat as long as necessary.

**Quick Tip:** Scriptural helps for adoration: Exodus 33:18-23; Song of Songs 2:8-17; Matthew 2:1-11; John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15-20; Philippians 2:6-11.

### **:15-:25-Contrition**

Express sorrow for your sins. It's not your love for God, but his for you that saves. Examine your conscience. Express sorrow not only for your sins but also for the sins of the world. Pray: "O my Jesus, I am so sorry. Forgive me." (Imagine Jesus on the cross; kiss each wound).

**Quick Tip:** Script for contrition: 1Cor 13:4-7; Colossians 3:5-10; 1Timothy 1:12-17; James 3:12-17; 1John 1:5-2:6; Penitential Psalms: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 142.

### **:25-:40-Meditation**

Contemplate God's action. You may wish to meditatively pray the Stations of the Cross or a Rosary. Or use a scriptural meditation. Read a brief Gospel passage. Imagine a scene. Notice Christ's reactions. Think of three ways the passage applies to your own life. Meditate on each line.

Use a doctrinal meditation. Read Scripture or Catechism passages that apply to a doctrine of the Church. Appreciate God's plan and find ways it applies to you. (Perhaps: Sunday, the Resurrection; Monday, the Incarnation; Tuesday, Mercy/confession; Wednesday, the Holy Spirit; Thursday, the Eucharist; Friday, the Passion of Christ; Saturday, Mary).

Or, deepening your examination of conscience, look at your own life. Which kind of pride do you most fall into? Selfishness (valuing comforts most). Pray for the opposite virtues: Charity (serving others first), Fidelity (putting Christ's opinion first), Discipline (accepting your crosses).

### **:40-:50-Thanksgiving**

Express gratitude for all God's gifts. He didn't just create you; he sustains your existence out of love in every moment. Thank him for literally everything, and be specific; food, shelter, clothing, health, family, friends, teachers, coworkers, home, and most of all spiritual gifts—faith, hope, love, this time of prayer, the Catholic faith, the disciples who reached you. Thank God for answers to prayer. Thank him for the crosses. Thank him for creating you and caring so much for you that he died for you.

**Quick Tip:** Scriptures for thanksgiving; Genesis 1; Genesis 8:15-22; Job 1:13-22; Daniel 3:46 ff; Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 17:11-19; Psalms: 8, 65, 66, 100, 111.

### **:50-:55-Petition God**

Ask God for what you and others need. He is the King of the universe. He's in control, even when it isn't obvious. Pray for: The Church, the Pope's

intentions, for those who are suffering, for priests and bishops, for religious, for vocations, for your country, your family, for what you need most in the spiritual life. Pray for peace and the protection of the institution of the family. Pray for those who have asked for prayers.

**:50-1:00**

Make a resolution to act on a grace of the Holy Spirit you received during this hour with Jesus. Make sure your resolution is doable and checkable.

## **PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE** **Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading)**

### **Read (Lectio)**

We begin this method of prayer with the slow, attentive, and prayerful reading of a selected Scripture passage. The passage is typically read three or four times to give a sense of the flow and content of the passage. Pay attention to what word, words, or phrase seems to “jump out” at you. Reading a commentary or the footnotes concerning the passage beforehand can help us understand the selected passage, but this should not be confused with Bible Study. Some writers like to refer to Lectio Divina as “feasting on the Word” and compare this first step to taking a bite.

### **Meditate (Meditatio)**

The second step of this feast is to “chew” the selected Scripture passage. We reflect upon each word or phrase of this love letter. We ponder its meaning and consider its implications for our own spiritual and moral lives. We brood over the words and mull over how they might be challenging us to change our behavior or attitudes, to become more like Christ or how to respond lovingly to our neighbor. Like any other word spoken in love, Scripture can sometimes be more unsettling than comforting.

### **Pray (Oratio)**

Feasting on Scripture continues with savoring its essence. We engage God in conversation about our thoughts, feelings, and reactions to what we have read. As the word comes forth from the heart of God, so our prayer arises from the heart. Since prayer is essentially a dialogue, we allow time for God to respond to our prayer of thanksgiving, praise, pardon, petition, or intercession.

### **Contemplation (Contemplatio)**

The final step of the divine reading is to digest what we have heart and let it become a part of our body and our lives. “Let the word of Christ swell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16). As we allow God to respond to our prayer, we sit in silent, grateful love and bask in God’s fiery passion that is revealed in Scripture. Here we willingly submit to the Spirit’s transformative process of molding us into the Word made flesh.

Having encountered and been nourished by God’s Word, we now continue in the banquet hall of life with new attitudes and behaviors befitting our vocations as disciples

of Christ. We have not authentically encountered and submitted to Scripture without a renewed godly enthusiasm or changed behavior.

### **An Alternative Method of Lectio Divina**

#### **What is the passage saying to my head?**

What does this word say about God's yearning to be in a relationship with me? Scripture gives me knowledge about God and how God looks upon me as a beloved child. I pause and ponder the diving revelation in the sacred text.

#### **What is the passage saying to my heart?**

What emotions does this word incite and draw out of me? Though I might feel convicted (and need to change) or even elated by Scripture, nevertheless, I am moved to love and adore this God of unconditional love.

#### **What is the passage saying to my hands?**

In what ways is this passage calling me to serve God? More than simply a method of prayer, Lectio Divina also calls me in numerous and varied ways to respond lovingly to the situation in which I find myself.

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### **Praying with Scripture** **Lectio Divina/WRAP**

"Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful" and "all the Christian faithful" should "learn the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil. 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. (As St. Ambrose wrote) "Prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so a dialogue takes place between God and man. For, we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine oracles (Scriptures)." (Dei Verbum, Sec. 22 and 25)

"I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of lectio divina: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart. If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church—I am convinced of it—a new spiritual springtime." (Pope Benedict XVI, Congress of Biblical Scholars, Rome, September 2005)

During Lent, please consider practicing Lectio Divina with the Gospel Readings for each day in order to live more fully Art. 8 of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

## **LECTIO DIVINA**

### **1. Reading (Lectio)**

In Lectio, read the passage once to become familiar with the text. Slowly read the passage a second time. Very, very slowly read the passage a third time. Pay attention to which word, words, or phrases captures your attention or tugs at your heart.

### **2. Meditate or Reflect (Meditatio)**

In Meditatio, you reflect upon the word, words, or phrases that caught your attention. In an effort to understand their meaning, you ponder and “chew” on them. What is God saying to you? What implications does the text have in your life?

### **3. Praying (Oratio)**

In Oratio, you pray from your heart and respond to what Jesus has spoken to you in the words of Scripture. You allow the grace of the words to move you toward prayer. Talk to God and talk with God about EVERYTHING! Nothing is off limits as it relates to what He has brought forth thus far. When we share everything with God, we make room for what He wants to give us, and we become more disposed to His answer.

### **4. Resting (Contemplatio)**

In Contemplatio, you commune with God further and rest in His love and presence so that the very core of your being is stilled. Your attention is entirely centered on God. You allow the transformation process that the Word has stirred up to encourage and strengthen you. This is entirely God’s work and gift.

“Contemplative prayer is also the pre-eminently intense time of prayer. In it the Father strengthens our inner being with power through His Spirit ‘that Christ may dwell in (our) hearts through faith; and we may be ‘grounded in love.’” CCC 2714

\*WRAP: A Guide to Lectio Divina with Journaling (adapted from Wrap Yourself in Scripture by Karen Dwyer, PhD and Lawrence Dwyer, JD, Institute for Priestly Formation)

Journaling can be an important part of the prayerful reading of Scripture and the practice of Lectio Divina. Writing down your experience of meditating on the Word of God in Scripture honors what God is doing, and oftentimes deepens meditation and prayer. It aids in the articulation and development of your relationship with God, helps to uncover unknown and/or unrealized thoughts, feelings, and/or desires, and permits you to review after some time, what God has done thereby providing an opportunity to give thanks for blessings received.



**Write**-As you read the passage in Scripture (Lectio), write down the word, words, or phrases that arise out of the passage and capture your attention or tug at your heart.

**Reflect**-Reflect upon the truth that the Lord is communicating to you in this passage (Meditatio). Humbly ask for Jesus to give you His mind and His heart as you meditate. Communicate to God about everything and pay attention to the desires that arise in your heart. You may want to jot down your conversation with the Lord. What did you relate to Him? What you receive from Him and how you are responding to Him are also important to note.

**Apply**-Ask Jesus for guidance as to how you will apply this in your life. How can you respond in a practical and concrete way?

**Pray**-Write a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, (Oratio). You may want to pray the Scripture passage back to the Lord in your own words. For example, you may want to invite Jesus to heal you, or to help you walk in forgiveness, or you may ask for the grace of greater faithfulness to the Franciscan charism that God has given you.

At the end of your prayer, focus completely on the Lord. Stop speaking and writing and rest in Him, (Contemplatio).

### **Getting Started with Lectio Divina and WRAP**

1. Collect your materials. Journal, Bible, pen or pencil
2. Choose a quiet place.
3. Select a Scripture passage in advance. You may wish to simply pray with the Gospel passage for that day.
4. Focus on God's Presence and make a simple act of reverence and humility.
5. Record the date and Bible passage you are reading.
6. Print "W", "R", "A", "P" or spread out the four words represented by WRAP.
7. Read. Begin Lectio Divina with the passage you have selected.

### **Relational Prayer-A.R.R.R.**

"Where does prayer come from? Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole man who prays. But in naming the source of prayer, Scripture speaks sometimes of the soul or the spirit, but most often of the heart (more than a thousand times). According to Scripture, it is the heart that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain." (CCC 2562)

## **The Four Steps to Relational Prayer**

### **Step 1-Acknowledge**

“God calls man first. Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer...God’s initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response.” (CCC 2567)

When we approach our time in prayer, it is oftentimes helpful to realize that God has called us into relationship with Him; He desires to communicate with us and for us to communicate with Him. He is waiting for us!! We do not need the right formula or words to attract His attention. He is already gazing upon us with love. “God’s initiative of love always comes first.” (CCC 2561) Before prayer begins, take a moment, and consider how God is gazing upon you. Then, as you are praying Lectio Divina, or Visio Divina, or using Imaginative Prayer, pay attention and listen to what stirs in your heart.

### **Step 2-Relate**

“Where does prayer come from? Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole man who prays. But in naming the source of prayer, Scripture speaks sometimes of the soul or the spirit, but most often of the heart (more than a thousand times). According to Scripture, it is the heart that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain.” (CCC 2562)

“In learning how to speak to Him, we learn to be a human being, to be ourselves.”  
-Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, June 22, 2011

Some of our struggles in prayer stem from not sharing with God the REAL STUFF of life. To share our hearts with God is what it means to be human. Relating all that we feel and all that we experience opens us to receive what God desires to give us. Be aware. Be honest. Nothing, absolutely nothing is off limits! Pay attention to what you do not want to talk about! Keep in mind that a recurring distraction during prayer may be exactly the “thing” that God wants to discuss with you.

### **Step 3-Receive**

“Always expressed in every prayer...is the truth of the human creature who on the one hand experiences weakness and impoverishment, and therefore addresses his supplication to Heaven, and on the other is endowed with an extraordinary dignity, so that, in preparing to receive the divine Revelation, finds himself able to enter into communion with God.”

-Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, May 4, 2011

It is vitally important that we cultivate silence to be able to listen.

“When creation knows how to place itself in silence, God makes his voice heard”  
-Cardinal Robert Sarah

Listen with your spiritual senses. Don't be afraid of the silence. Images, a voice, a song, a memory, a scriptural passage, a sensation in your body, emotions such as joy, sadness, or tears, are all possibilities and ways in which God communicates. At times, nothing profound occurs during the time we spend relating to God. Please do not become disturbed by this as if you are not praying correctly or doing something wrong. Let God take charge. Ask Him to reveal where His light is shining within your heart. Your faithfulness to a regular time of prayer with Scripture will be recognized and honored by God. He will respond, in His own time and you will be overjoyed that you have been heard. Be patient.

#### **Step 4-Respond**

“The ‘yes’ of God is not halved, it is not somewhere between ‘yes’ and ‘no’ but is a sound and simple ‘yes’. And we respond to this ‘yes’ with our own ‘yes’, with our ‘amen’, and so we are sure of the ‘yes’ of God.”  
-Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, May 30, 2012

Simply respond to what you have received. This could mean more conversation, more laughter, more tears. Keep in mind that the order of these steps is not a systematic checklist, but like any human interaction and conversation, vibrant and dynamic. Therefore, the prayerful experience may flow back and forth and back again between the four steps.

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros Region, 2023

### **The Examen**

*“Be in all things a God-seeker and at all times a God-finder” (Meister Eckhart)*

The Daily Examen was designed five hundred years ago by St. Ignatius of Loyola. Unlike an examination of conscience which is focused on yourself and has the goal of conversion, the Examen is focused on God and has the goal of becoming more sensitive to God's presence in your life; that's why it is sometimes called the examination of consciousness.

It is prayer by time (only 20 minutes-once the 20 minutes have passed, you conclude the Examen even if you have not finished all five steps). St. Ignatius suggests it should be practiced twice a day: once before lunch and once before retiring. However, the vast majority of people pray once a day, either in the morning or in the evening. The five steps are as follows:

## **1. Gratitude**

Look over your present life and thank God for any gifts, graces, or blessings you have received. This step of gratitude might focus on life's big picture and the many manifestations of God's love: your spouse, children, job, home, or the inner strength that seemingly came out of nowhere to help you get through a crisis or an emotional upheaval. At other times, your gratitude might be focused like a laser beam on a specific person, event, or grace that was given to you as recently as a few hours ago. Don't be too quick to move on from this step, since growth in gratitude is growth in the conscious awareness of God's generosity.

Your twenty-minute practice of the Examen might consist solely of this first step at times. Gratitude and thanksgiving might sometimes race across your soul like a wildfire as you become conscious of God's encouragement and support spoken through the words of a friend or relative. Or you might become attuned in a conscious way to God's gift of a sunny day, a phone call from a close friend, or an insight that God allowed you to put into words. The flames of gratitude leap up and you bask in their warmth—and in their long afterglow.

If there is time left on your twenty minutes, you continue with step two.

## **2. Prayer**

Ask the Holy Spirit to open up your eyes, ears, and hearts as you review the events of the past few hours since your last practice of the Examen. This is also a prayer for enlightenment and insight as you seek to understand the many and varied ways the Spirit of God calls you to holiness. This petition helps to bring the Holy Spirit front and center to your consciousness. This prayer can be as simple as "O Holy Spirit, open my eyes and cure me of my blindness; open my ears and cure me of my deafness; and open my heart and cure me of my hard-heartedness as I review the past hours and discover how God was actively touching my life."

If there is time left on your twenty minutes, you continue with step three.

## **3. Review**

Survey and probe the immediate past hours since the last time you practiced the Examen. Event by event, hour by hour, minute by minute, pray through the day "rummaging for God," as one writer describes it. Questions that you can ask yourself include:

- \*Where was God speaking to me and challenging me?
- \*How was the Spirit inviting me to be more Christlike?
- \*When and in what circumstances was God bestowing graces, gifts, and blessings upon me?

\*How was the Spirit asking me to be lovingly present in the situation in which I found myself?

\*How was God asking me to humbly serve the people in front of me?

It's important to remember that this third step is God-centered, not me-centered. Look for God in the nitty gritty of your daily life and do not judge yourself.

If there is time left on your twenty minutes, you continue with step four.

#### **4. Dialogue of Forgiveness**

Express sorrow and ask forgiveness for still living on autopilot, unaware, and unconscious of God's surrounding presence in the daily routines of everyday life. This step is not supposed to be a monologue in which you scold and criticize yourself for your insensitivity or put yourself on a guilt trip. Rather, this step is intended to be a dialogue between God and you in which you encounter a merciful, loving God who is enthusiastic about being in a deeper relationship with you. If you walk away from this step feeling guilty or remorseful, you might not have allowed enough time to hear the consoling and forgiving words of God.

#### **5. Renewal**

In this final step, look over your upcoming daily schedule as you now know it and anticipate the approaching hours or events where you need to be particularly attentive to the pending manifestation of the divine presence or all. Anticipate God's presence in order to participate in it. Ask yourself the following questions:

\*Where might the God of disguise surprise me?

\*What situation might the Spirit use to mold me ever closer into the image of Christ?

\*How could God possibly use this particular person, or this planned meeting to spark my spiritual enthusiasm into flame?

In this fifth and final step, you are recommitting yourself to switching your life off autopilot and living with greater sensitivity to God's presence in the nitty-gritty of your daily life.

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### **Imaginative Prayer** **Or Praying with your Spiritual Senses**

1. Begin by choosing a Gospel scene in which Jesus is interacting with one person or several people. The story could focus on someone in need of a healing, a miracle of Jesus, or a question posed by the Apostles.

2. Say a prayer to the Holy Spirit asking for help and guidance as you enter into the scene. Pray also for the wisdom and courage to selflessly respond to the promptings of the Spirit during this prayer time.
3. Slowly and meditatively read the Gospel passage two or three times. You want to become familiar with the people involved, the sentiments expressed, and the plot and flow of the story.
4. Once you are familiar with the story, close your eyes, and, using your imagination, “compose the place.” Reconstruct the entire scene. Start with the weather and the physical location. What are they like? Consciously consider all five of your senses to fully experience the story. What are the smells and sounds? Picture Jesus. What does he look like, how is he dressed, and what emotions do his actions convey? Picture the disciples and those who follow Jesus. What are they like, and how are they responding? Imagine everyone involved in the plot of this Gospel story and note their actions and reactions.
5. Put yourself in the scene. Where do you find yourself in the story? Are you an idle bystander watching what is happening, or are you an active participant in the story? How are you dressed? How are you reacting and responding? What are your feelings?
6. After you reconstruct the entire scene and have found your place in it, allow the plot to play out. Is it as described in the Gospel passage, or are there twists and turns not found in the Gospel but which your imagination includes? As the plot plays out, note your emotional reactions and intellectual insights. This is the central part of imaginative prayer, so allow as much time as you need with it.
7. Gradually move from the biblical story to your own life. Freely associate the entire Gospel story with your own experience, and notice what the Spirit prompts you to remember, reconsider, or reflect upon. Do the story and plot remind you of anything in your life, past or present? For example, the raising of Lazarus might call you to consider a relationship that you thought was dead in your life but has recently reemerged in a surprising new way. The woman caught in adultery might speak to you of your own infidelities. The story of blind Bartimaeus might tap into your own deep desire to gain a new perspective or to see an event or circumstance in a whole new way.
8. Upon completion of the imaginative prayer, ask yourself how you plan on actively responding to this period of prayer. Will you walk away with gratitude, knowing that you need to seek forgiveness from someone or offer forgiveness to someone, with the challenge of living with greater faith and trust? This is where we need to listen to the promptings of the Spirit and how the Spirit wants to transform our thoughts, feelings, or actions.

9. Conclude this period of time with an appropriate prayer. It might incorporate praise, thanksgiving, petition, forgiveness, or intercession.

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### **Visio Divina-The Path of St. Clare** **Praying with Icons and Religious Works of Art**

“Although Francis’ way of prayer, with its underlying theology of the Word, offered a new path of divine-human relationship in the world, it is Clare of Assisi who described the spiritual journey as one that leads to transformation. Clare’s path complemented that of Francis’ but was more ordered in its direction. Prayer for Clare was not climbing a ladder to God but awakening to the love of God made visible in the Crucified Christ, the Spouse of the soul. Her notion of contemplation, like that of Francis, begins in the encounter with the other, that is, the God who comes to us in Jesus Christ.”

-Ilia Delio, *osf*, *Franciscan Prayer*

Unlike the four steps in *Lectio Divina*, (Read (*Lectio*), Meditate (*Meditatio*), Prayer (*Oratio*), and Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)), Clare recommends in her letters to Agnes of Prague a different path:

1. **Gaze (*intueri*)**-Look closely at the figures and their details depicted in the icon or work of art. Note the expressions on the faces, their gestures, the composition’s symmetry or lack of it, the interplay of light and shadows, and other artistic details.
2. **Consider (*considerare*)**-After you have studied the portrayal of the scene or person, try to discover the motivation and intention of the artist. What is the artist saying to you in this depiction? How does the artist convey this meaning? What is striking about this depiction? What is missing or added to the customary scriptural depiction of this scene or person? What character stands out to you? What feelings and emotions does this image evoke?
3. **Contemplate (*contemplari*)**-As you ponder the answers to these questions, simply stare in silence as the message of the artwork emerges. Do not try and “figure out” anything. Just look and admire. Bask in the artist’s visual representation of the scriptural passage or personage.
4. **Imitate (*imitation*)**-Conclude your prayer with the work of art by committing to a deeper desire to live the Christlike qualities or virtues associated with the artwork’s message.

-Albert Haase, OFM, *Catching Fire, Becoming Flame: A Guide for Spiritual Transformation*

## Practice Clare's Way of Praying as You Gaze Upon Christ



**Before beginning ask the Holy Spirit to lead you and guide you.**

**1) Gaze**—What do you see? How do you see? How deeply do you see? What feelings arise in your heart? Do you have difficulty gazing at Christ Crucified? Why or why not? Relate all these feelings to Christ.

**2) Consider**—Begin to feel what Christ suffered? Can you feel what it felt like to be rejected by others? Can you feel His desire to heal, to befriend, to save those around Him as His hands were nailed to the wood of the Cross? Can you open your heart to what Jesus did for you? How are we crucified? What keeps us nailed to the cross? Do we come freely to the cross or do we allow others to crucify us? Do we reject the cross? Do we crucify others? Do you feel that you



need to be perfect before you can approach Jesus? Can you let go of your past sins and live as you gaze upon Him and leave these things at the foot of His Cross? Talk and relate to Jesus about these things.

**3) Contemplation**—Simply rest in the mystery of the Crucified Christ and allow Him to love you.

**4) Imitation**—After your prayer, make a note of what Jesus showed you and make a resolution to put into practice one thing that was revealed to you. As you end your time in prayer, thank God for all that He has given you in this time with Him and ask Him to bless your resolution.

### **Preparing and Guiding Community Prayer**

*“Human life without prayer, which opens our existence to the mystery of God, lacks sense and direction” -Pope Benedict XVI*

*“God calls man first. Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer...God’s initiative of love comes first; our own first step is always a response.”  
-CCC 2567*

*“Many Christians are aware of the necessity and the beauty of contemplative prayer and have a sincere yearning for it, yet, apart from tentative efforts soon abandoned, few remain faithful to this mode of prayer, and even fewer are really convinced and satisfied by their own practice of it...We would like to pray, but we cannot manage it...Our time of prayer passes, leaving us distracted, and since it does not seem to yield any tangible fruit, we are not loathe to give up. From time to time, we take up a book of meditations, which presents us, ready-made with the contemplation we ought to produce for ourselves....Often...fearfulness...robs us of the confidence to take steps on our own.”  
-Hans Urs Balthazar “Prayer” (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1987), 7*

*“Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.”  
-Exodus 19:17*

*“Now when all the people perceived the thunder and the lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountains smoking, the people were afraid and trembled; and they stood afar off, and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.”  
-Exodus 20:18*

*“And he said, ‘Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord.’ And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces*

*the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind and earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.”*

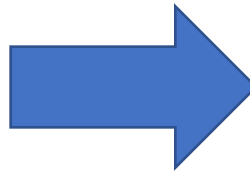
*-I Kings 19:11-13a*

## **Methods for guiding community prayer**

- \*Choose passage and pray with the passage yourself (1-2 weeks)
- \*Adopt a hands-off approach.
- \*Create an environment where the Holy Spirit can speak.
- \*Vary the methods used.
- \*Limit the use of other people's reflections in order that the community can deepen their own relationship with God.
- \*Use passages from Scripture, (not someone else's meditation on Scripture). This will help the members move from Gospel to Life-Life to Gospel.
- \*Tie into ongoing formation, issues within the community, or society, etc.
- \*Provide ample time for discussion but do not push sharing.
- \*Helps to provide the passage a few days before so that the community can become familiar with it.

## **Forms of Prayer that can be used.**

- \*Guided Lectio Divina
- \*Imaginative Prayer/Guided Meditation
- \*Visio Divina



\*Relational Prayer

## **Direct the members to focus on.**

- \*What does this passage say to your heart/head/hands??
- \*Strongest thought or feeling....
- \*My heart rested (was at peace) when....
- \*I sense the Lord was telling me...
- \*I ended the prayer wanting (desiring)...

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros Region, 2023



### **III. Franciscan Devotions/Prayers**

#### **Franciscan Crown Rosary-Seven Joys of Mary**

##### **History**

The Franciscan Crown dates back to the year 1422 when a young novice who had that year been received into the Franciscan Order had, previous to his reception, been accustomed to adorn a statue of the Blessed Virgin with a wreath of fresh and beautiful flowers as a mark of his piety and devotion. Not being able to continue this practice in the novitiate, he decided to return to the world. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him and prevented him from carrying out his purpose. She then instructed him how, by reciting daily a rosary of seven decades in honor of her seven joys, he might weave a crown that would be more pleasing to her than the material wreath of flowers he had desired to place on her statue. From that time the practice of reciting the crown of the seven joys became general in the order.

##### **Mysteries of the Franciscan Crown**

##### **The Seven Joys are:**

- 1) The Annunciation
- 2) The Visitation
- 3) The Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ
- 4) The Adoration of the Magi
- 5) The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple
- 6) The Appearance of Christ to Mary after the Resurrection
- 7) The Assumption and Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven

##### **How it is Recited**

**\*Apostles' Creed**

**\* Our Father**

**\*3 Hail Marys**

**\*First Joy is Announced followed by Our Father and 10 Hail Marys** (No Glory Be or Fatima Prayer)

**\*Follow the same Procedure until all seven joys are prayed.**

**\*2 Hail Marys** are added at the end of the seventh decade to complete the number of years (72) that the Blessed Virgin is said to have lived on earth.

**\*One Our Father and one Hail Mary for the Holy Father.**

There are other ways of reciting the Crown but the one given seems to be in more general use.

The plenary Indulgence attached to the recitation of the Franciscan Crown, and applicable to the dead, may be gained as often as the crown is recited. The Indulgence is not attached to the material rosary, but to the recitation of the prayers as such. In 1905 Pope Pius X, in response to the petition of the Procurator General of the Friars Minor, enriched the Franciscan Crown with several new Indulgences that may be gained by all the faithful. Those who assist at a public recitation of the Franciscan Crown participate in all the Indulgences attached to the Seraphic Rosary that are gained by the members of the Franciscan Order. It is required, however, that beads be used and that they be blessed by a priest having the proper faculties.

## **A Franciscan Litany of All Saints**

**Lord, have mercy!** R. Lord, have mercy!  
**Christ, have mercy!** R. Christ, have mercy!  
**Lord, have mercy!** R. Lord, have mercy!

**God, the Father,** R. have mercy on us!  
**God, the Son,** R. have mercy on us!  
**God, the Holy Spirit,** R. have mercy on us!  
**Holy Trinity, one God,** R. have mercy on us!

**Holy Mary, the Immaculate Conception, Queen of the Franciscan Order,** Pray for us!  
**Holy Father Francis,** Pray for us!

**All you holy martyrs of the Franciscan Order,** Pray for us!

**Saints Bernard, Accursius, Adjutus, Otto, and Peter, Protomartyrs,** Pray for us!

**Saints Daniel, Angelo, Domnus, Hugolinus, Leo, Nicholas, and Samuel, Martyrs of Africa,** Pray for us!

**Saints Nicholas Tavelic, Deodat of Aquitaine, Peter of Narbonne, and Stephen of Cuneo, Martyrs of the Holy Land,** Pray for us!

**Saint Thomas More, Martyr of England,** Pray for us!

**Saints Nicholas Pick, Anthony Hornaer, Anthony of Weert, Cornelius, Francis, Godfrey, Jerome, Nicasius, Peter, Theodoric, Willehad, Martyrs of Holland,** Pray for us!

**Saints Peter Baptist Blasquez, Martin de Aguirre, Francis Blanco, Philip of Jesus of Mexico, Gonzalo Garcia of India, and you holy seventeen Japanese members of the Third Order, Saints Anthony of Nagasaki, Bonaventure, Cosmas, Francis of Fahelante, Francis of Miyako, Gabriel, Joachim, John, Leo, Louis, Matthias, Michael, Paul Ibaraki, Paul Zuzuki, Peter, Thomas Danki, and Thomas Kosaki, Protomartyrs of Japan,** Pray for us!

**Saints John Jones and John Wall, Martyrs of England,** Pray for us!

**Saint Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Protomartyr of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith,** Pray for us!

**Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Martyr of Auschwitz,** Pray for us!

**All you holy priests of the First Franciscan Order, Pray for us!**

### **Litany of Humility**

**O Jesus! Meek and humble of heart, Hear me.**

From the desire of being esteemed, **deliver me, Jesus.**

From the desire of being loved....

From the desire of being extolled....

From the desire of being honored....

From the desire of being praised....

From the desire of being preferred to others....

From the desire of being consulted....

From the desire of being approved....

From the fear of being humiliated....

From the fear of being despised....

From the fear of suffering rebukes....

From the fear of being calumniated....

From the fear of being forgotten....

From the fear of being ridiculed....

From the fear of being wronged....

From the fear of being suspected....

That others may be loved more than I, **Jesus grant the grace to desire it.**

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase, and I may decrease....

That others may be chosen, and I set aside....

That others may be praised and I unnoticed....

That others may be preferred to me in everything....

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should....

-Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val

### **Prayer for Discerning God's Will**

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

Amen.

-St. Francis of Assisi

## **St. Clare's Prayer to the Five Wounds of Jesus**

### **Prayer and Praise to the Right Hand:**

O Lord, Jesus Christ, praise and glory to You for Your most sacred wound in Your right hand. Because of this sacred wound grant pardon of all the sins I have committed through thought, word and deed, and by omission. Give me the grace to venerate Your most precious death and these Your sacred wounds worthily; and grant that by Your help I may mortify my body and be able to thank You for this great gift. You who live and reign forever. Amen.

**Prayer:** Our Father, Hail Mary.

### **To the Left Hand:**

O most sweet Lord Jesus Christ, praise and glory to You for the most sacred wound in Your left hand. Because of this sacred wound, have mercy on me and deign to change in me whatever is not pleasing to You. Give me victory over Your cruelest enemies, so that I may overcome them with Your strength. I humbly beg, because of Your most holy death, that You would free me from all the present and future dangers to my life. And make me worthy of Your glory in Your kingdom. Amen.

**Prayer:** Our Father, Hail Mary.

### **To the Right Foot:**

O mellifluous Lord Jesus Christ, praise and glory to You for the most sacred wound in Your right foot. Because of this sacred wound, allow me to do a penance appropriate for my sins. I humbly beg, because of Your most holy death, that night and day You would keep me, Your servant, in Your will, deliver me from every difficulty of soul and body, and on the fearful day, welcome my soul into Your faith and mercy, and lead me to eternal joy. Amen.

**Prayer:** Our Father, Hail Mary.

### **To the Left Foot:**

O most holy Jesus Christ, praise and glory to You for the most sacred wound in Your left foot. Because of this sacred wound, allow me to surrender to Your full tenderness, so that, with Your help, I may deserve to escape Your judgment of revenge. Because of Your most holy death, I beg You, most holy Jesus Christ, that, for eternal salvation, I might deserve to receive before the day of my death the Sacrament of Your most sweet Body and Blood, with an intimate confession of my sins and perfect penance, and in the chastity of mind and body, and with the anointing of the sacred oil. Amen.

**Prayer:** Our Father, Hail Mary.

### **To the Wound in the Side:**

O most kind Lord Jesus Christ, praise and glory to You for the most sacred wound in Your side. Because of this sacred wound and the most sacred generosity of Your mercy,

which You revealed to the soldier, Longinus, in the opening of Your side and now to all of us. I beg You, most holy Jesus, You who cleansed me through Baptism from original sin, to free me from all evils, present and to come, by Your most precious Blood which is sacrificed and consumed each day throughout the whole world; and by Your bitter death, to give me correct faith, certain hope, and perfect charity. Strengthen me in good works that I might love You with all my heart, all my soul, and with all my strength, and give me a strong perseverance in Your holy service that I may be healthy to please You perfectly here forever. Amen.

**Prayer:** Our Father, Hail Mary.

V. Five Wounds of God.

R. Be my medicine.

V. By Your Five Wounds,

R. Free me, O Christ, from my falls.

V. Give me your peace, O Christ,

R. By Your Five Wounds.

**Let us pray:**

All powerful, eternal God, You Who redeemed the human race in the five wounds of Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, because of His precious blood, allow those who venerate those wounds each day to escape a sudden and eternal death. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

\*"Prayer to the Five Wounds of the Lord" found in Clare of Assisi: The Lady. Early Documents. transl. by Regis Armstrong, OFM, Cap. New York: New City Press. 2006. p.422-4

**The Surrender Novena**  
**Given by Jesus to Fr. Dolindo Ruotolo**

**Day 1**

Why do you confuse yourselves by worrying? Leave the care of your affairs to Me and everything will be peaceful. I say to you in truth that every act of true, blind, complete surrender to Me produces the effect that you desire and resolves all difficult situations.

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything! (10 times)*

**Day 2**

Surrender to me does not mean to fret, to be upset, or to lose hope, nor does it mean offering to Me a worried prayer asking Me to follow you and change your worry into prayer. It is against this surrender, deeply against it, to worry, to be nervous and to desire to think about the consequences of anything. It is like the confusion that children feel when they ask their mother to see to their needs, and then try to take care of those needs for themselves so that their childlike efforts get in their mother's way. Surrender means to placidly close the eyes of the soul, to turn away from thoughts of tribulation and to put yourself in My care, so that only I act; saying, "You take care of it."

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything! (10 times)*

### **Day 3**

How many things I do when the soul, in so much spiritual and material need turns to Me, looks at Me and says to Me; "You take care of it, then close its eyes and rests." In pain you pray for Me to act, but that I act in the way you want. You do not turn to Me; instead, you want Me to adapt to your ideas. You are not sick people who ask the doctor to cure you, but rather sick people who tell the doctor how to. So do not act this way but pray as I taught you in the Our Father, Hallowed by thy name, that is, be glorified in my need. Thy kingdom come, that is, let all that is in us and in the world be in accord with Your kingdom. Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven, that is, in our need, decide as You see fit for our temporal and eternal life. If you say to Me truly: Thy will be done, which is the same as saying: You take care of it. I will intervene with all My

omnipotence, and I will resolve the most difficult situations.

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything! (10 times)*

### **Day 4**

Do you see evil growing instead of weakening? Do not worry; close your eyes and say to Me with faith: "Thy will be done, You take care of it." I say to you that I will take care of it, and that I will intervene as does a doctor; and I will accomplish miracles when they are needed. Do you see that the sick person is getting worse? Do not be upset but close your eyes and say, "You take care of it." I say to you that I will take care of it, and that there is no medicine more powerful than My loving intervention. By my love, I

promise this to you.

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything! (10 times)*

### **Day 5**

And when I must lead you on a path different from the one you see, I will prepare you: I will carry you in My arms; I will let you find yourself, like children who have fallen asleep in their mothers' arms, on the other bank of the river. What troubles you and hurts you immensely are your reason, your thoughts and worry, and your desire at all costs to deal with what afflicts you.

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything! (10 times)*

### **Day 6**

You are sleepless; you want to judge everything, direct everything and see to everything and you surrender to human strength, or worse—to men themselves, trusting in their intervention; this is what hinders My words and My views. Oh how much I wish from you this surrender, to help you; and how I suffer when I see you so agitated! Satan tries to do exactly this; to agitate you and to remove you from My protection and to throw you into the jaws of human initiative. So, trust only in Me, rest in Me, surrender to Me in everything.

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything! (10 times)*

### **Day 7**

I perform miracles in proportion to your full surrender to Me and to your not thinking of yourselves. I sow treasure troves of graces when you are in the deepest poverty. No person of reason, no thinker, has ever performed miracles, not even among the saints.



He does divine works whosever surrenders to God. So don't think about it anymore, because your mind is acute and for you it is very hard to see evil and to trust in Me and to not think of yourself. Do this for all your needs; do this all of you and you will see great continual silent miracles. I will take care of things, I promise this to you.

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything! (10 times)*

### **Day 8**

Close your eyes and let yourself be carried away on the flowing current of My grace; close your eyes and do not think of the present, turning your thoughts away from the future just as you would from temptation. Repose in Me, believing in My goodness, and I promise you by My love that if you say, "You take care of it." I will take care of it all; I will console you, liberate you, and guide you.

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything! (10 times)*

### **Day 9**

Pray always in readiness to surrender, and you will receive from it great peace and great rewards, even when I confer on you the grace of immolation, of repentance and of love. Then what does suffering matter? It seems impossible to you. Close your eyes and say with all your soul, "Jesus, you take care of it." Do not be afraid, I will take care of things and you will bless My name by humbling yourself. A thousand prayers cannot equal one single act of surrender, remember this well. There is no novena more effective than this:

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to You, take care of everything! (10 times)*

## **Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Mother, I am yours now and forever.  
Through you and with you I always want to  
belong completely to Jesus.  
Amen.

## **A Salutation to 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!

And hail all You holy virtues  
Which are poured into the hearts of the faithful  
through the grace and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit,  
that from being unbelievers,  
You may make them faithful to God.  
-St. Francis of Assisi

### **Prayer of Self Giving**

I beg you, Lord,  
let the fiery, gentle power  
of your love  
take possession of my soul,  
and snatch it away  
from everything under heaven,  
that I may die for love of your love  
as you saw fit to die for love of mine.

### **Praises of God**

You are the 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 our 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!  
Amen.

## **The Blessing of St. Francis of Assisi to Brother Leo**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
May He show His face to you and have mercy.  
May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace.  
The Lord bless you!

## **Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi before the Blessed Sacrament**

We adore You, O Lord Jesus Christ, in this Church and all the Churches of the world,  
and we bless You, because, by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

## **Praises to be said at all the Hours**

God, all powerful, most holy  
sublime ruler of all, you alone are good -  
supremely, fully, completely good,  
may we render to you all praise,  
all honor and all blessing:  
may we always ascribe to you alone  
everything that is good!  
Amen

## **Blessing of St. Francis**

Whoever shall observe these things may he be filled in heaven  
with the blessing of the most high Father, and may he be filled on earth  
with the blessing of his beloved son, together with the Holy Spirit, the Consoler,  
and all the powers of heaven and all the saints.  
And I, brother Francis, your worthless servant as far as I am able, approve this most  
holy blessing both internally and externally,  
Amen.

## **Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon**

Most High, all-powerful, all-good Lord,  
All praise is Yours, all glory, all honor and all blessings.  
To you alone, Most High, do they belong,  
and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your Name.

Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures,  
especially Sir Brother Sun,  
Who is the day through whom You give us light.  
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor,  
Of You Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,  
In the heavens you have made them bright, precious, and fair.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,  
And fair and stormy, all weather's moods,  
by which You cherish all that You have made.

Praised be You my Lord through Sister Water,  
So useful, humble, precious, and pure.

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 our Sister,  
Mother Earth  
who sustains and governs us,  
producing varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.  
Praise be You my Lord through those who grant pardon  
for love of You and bear sickness and trial.  
Blessed are those who endure in peace,  
By You Most High, they will be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord through Sister Death,  
from whom no-one living can escape.  
Woe to those who die in mortal sin!  
Blessed are they She finds doing Your Will.  
No second death can do them harm.  
Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks,  
And serve Him with great humility.

### **A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father**

O *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 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 whole 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.

### **Praying with Members Who Are Ill**

St. Francis, from the beginning of his conversion until he lay dying, considered illness a special time of grace. Our Rule places poverty, fraternity and the care of the sick within the same context. It intimates that the care for our sick is the tenderest expression of our poverty and fraternity. Poverty urges us to give of ourselves. Fraternity spurs us on to affirm the value of each of our brothers/sisters whether he/she is working in the apostolate, (whatever form that may take), or sick and unable to work.

It is a stimulating and spiritually rewarding experience to care for a sick brother/sister within our fraternity. It is a unique opportunity to support and strengthen one another as we try to be "patient in persecution or illness" (Rule of 1223). So that isolation will not overcome our sick brothers/sisters, it is of utmost importance that our fraternities pray with our sick brothers/sisters and tenderly care for them.

We can bring our rich prayer heritage to the sick; spend time with them; pray with them. A list of scriptural passages and readings from Franciscan sources are provided here. Whatever form our prayer with the sick and suffering may take, it is a visible sign of our participation in the healing ministry of Christ and our love for our brothers and sisters. These selections can also be used individually on a daily basis for those who are struggling with various struggles in order to unite with Christ in our sufferings and strengthen our Franciscan charism.

#### **Biblical and Franciscan Resources for Praying during times of illness.**

##### **Old Testament**

- |    |                           |   |
|----|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | 1 Kings 19:1-8            | Elijah was comforted and protected on his journey.          |
| 2. | Job 3:1-3,11-17,<br>20-23 | Why should the sufferer be born to see the light?           |
| 3. | Job 7:1-4,6-11            | Remember that my life is a breath.                          |
| 4. | Job 7:12-21               | What is man, that you make much of him?                     |
| 5. | Job 19:23-27a             | I know that my redeemer lives.                              |
| 6. | Wis 9:9-11,13-18          | Send me your wisdom, Lord.                                  |
| 7. | Is 35:1-10                | Strengthen the feeble hands.                                |
| 8. | Is 52:13-53:12            | He bore our sufferings himself.                             |
| 9. | Is 61:1-3a                | The spirit of the Lord is upon me to comfort the afflicted. |

##### **Psalms**

6, 22, 25, 34, 42, 63, 71, 86, 90, 102, 103, 123, 143

##### **New Testament**

- |    |             |                                      |
|----|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Acts 3:1-10 | In the name of Jesus arise and walk. |
|----|-------------|--------------------------------------|

- |     |                           |  |
|-----|---------------------------|--|
| 2.  | Acts 3:11-16              | Faith in God has given this man perfect health.                        |
| 3.  | Acts 4:8-12               | There is no other name by which we are saved.                          |
| 4.  | Acts 13:32-39             | He whom God raised up saw no corruption.                               |
| 5.  | Rom 8:14-17               | If we suffer with him, we will be glorified with him.                  |
| 6.  | Rom 8:18-27               | We groan while we await the redemption of our bodies.                  |
| 7.  | Rom 8:31b-35,<br>37-39    | If God is for us, who is against us?                                   |
| 8.  | 1 Cor 1:18-25             | God's weakness is stronger than our strength.                          |
| 9.  | 1 Cor 12:12-22,<br>24b-27 | If one member suffers, all suffer together.                            |
| 10. | 1 Cor 15:12-20            | If there is no resurrection, Christ himself is not risen.              |
| 11. | 2 Cor 4:16-18             | Though our body is being destroyed, each day it is also being renewed. |
| 12. | 2 Cor 5:1, 6-10           | We have an everlasting home in heaven.                                 |
| 13. | Gal 4:12-19               | My sickness enabled me to bring the Gospel to you.                     |
| 14. | Phil 2:25-30              | He was sick, but God pitied him.                                       |
| 15. | Col 1:22-29               | In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.        |
| 16. | Heb 4:14-16,5:7-9         | We have a high priest who understands our afflictions.                 |
| 17. | Jas 5:5:13-16             | Prayer made in faith will save the sick.                               |
| 18. | 1 Pt 1:3-9                | You will rejoice even though for a time you will suffer.               |
| 19. | 1 Jn 3:1-2                | What we shall be, has not yet been disclosed.                          |
| 20. | Rv 21:1-7                 | There will be no more death, crying or pain.                           |
| 21. | Rv 22:17,20-21            | Come, Lord Jesus.  |

## Gospels

- |     |               |  |
|-----|---------------|--|
| 1.  | Mt 5:1-12a    | The beatitudes.  |
| 2.  | Mt 8:1-4      | If you wish to do so, you can cure me.                               |
| 3.  | Mt 8:5-17     | He bore our infirmities  |
| 4.  | Mt 11:25-30   | Come to me, all you who labor.                                       |
| 5.  | Mt 15:29-31   | Jesus heals large crowds.  |
| 6.  | Mt 25:31-40   | As often as you did it to the least of my brothers you did it to me. |
| 7.  | Mk 2:1-12     | Seeing their faith, Jesus said: "Your sins are forgiven."            |
| 8.  | Mk 4:35-41    | Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?                               |
| 9.  | Mk 10:46-52   | Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.                               |
| 10. | Mk 16:15-20   | He laid hands on the sick and they were cured.                       |
| 11. | Lk 7:19-23    | Go tell John what you have seen.                                     |
| 12. | Lk 10:5-6,8-9 | Heal the sick.   |
| 13. | Lk 10:25-37   | Who is my neighbor?  |
| 14. | Lk 11:5-13    | Ask, and it will be given you.                                       |
| 15. | Lk 12:35-44   | Happy are they whom the master finds watching.                       |
| 16. | Lk 18:9-14    | O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.                                  |
| 17. | Jn 6:35-40    | What my Father has given me will not perish.                         |
| 18. | Jn 6:53-58    | He who eats this bread has eternal life.                             |
| 19. | Jn 9:1-7      | He has not sinned; it was to let God's work show forth in him        |

20. Jn 10:11-18                      The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

### **Franciscan Sources**

1. Rule of 1221                      The care of the sick.  
Omnibus of Sources, 10; pp 40-41.  
Francis The Saint, 10; pp71-72
2. Rule of 1223                      How the friars are to love one another.  
Omnibus of Sources, 6; pp 61-62  
Francis The Saint, 6; p 103
3. Admonitions XXV                True love.  
Omnibus of Sources, p 86  
Francis The Saint, p 136
4. Blessing for Leo                Blessing of St. Francis.  
Omnibus of Sources, p 126  
Francis The Saint, p 112
5. Cant. of Creatures              God is praised in sickness and trial  
Omnibus of Sources, pp 130-31  
Francis The Saint, pp 113-114
6. Celano, Life I,                    God touches the heart of Francis by sickness.  
Omnibus of Sources, 3; pp 231-232  
Francis The Saint, 3; pp 113-114
7. Celano, Life I,                    Francis heals the crippled and paralyzed.  
Omnibus of Sources, 65-66; pp 283-284  
Francis The Saint, 65-66; pp239-240
8. Celano, Life I,                    God reveals his will to Francis.  
Omnibus of Sources, 93; pp 307-308  
Francis The Saint, 93; pp 262-263
9. Celano, Life I,                    Francis is pleased to do God's will.  
Omnibus of Sources, 107, pp 320-321  
Francis The Saint, 107, pp 275-276
10. Celano, Life II,                  Francis praises spiritual joy.  
Omnibus of Sources, 125; pp 465-466  
Francis The Founder, 125; pp 329-330
11. Celano, Life II,                  Francis' compassion for the sick.  
Omnibus of Sources, 175-177, pp 502-503  
Francis The Founder, 175-177, pp 359-360
12. Mirror of Perfection, The sick Francis' concern for those who minister to him.  
Omnibus of Sources, 89; pp 1222-1223  
Francis The Prophet, 89; p 337



**AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE**  
**Based Upon The Rule of**  
**The Secular Franciscan Order**

- \*Do I make of each day an opportunity to live in a penitential way? (Prologue)
- \*Do I remain grateful to God even when life is difficult? (Prologue)
- \*Do I use difficult times to unite to Christ Crucified? (Prologue)
- \*Do I spend time growing in my knowledge of St. Francis and the Franciscan spirituality? Do I pray for vocations? (Article 1)
- \*Do I assume that I know all there is to know? (Article 1)
- \*Am I doing all I can to live the Rule that I have professed? (Art. 2)
- \*Where am I falling short in my responsibilities? (Art. 2)
- \*If professed, am I wearing the sign of my Profession? (Art. 2)
- \*Have I placed this commitment before all other devotions? (Art 2)  
Before my activities? Before my personal apostolates? (Art 2)
- \*Have I read, meditated, studied, and examined my life against the OFS Rule which I have publicly professed? (Art. 3)
- \*Have I developed a familiarity with the General Constitutions, Statutes, and Ritual which support the OFS Rule? (Art. 3)
- \*Have I continued to strive for holiness? (Art. 4)
- \*Am I living life going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel? (Art. 4)
- \*Do I frequently meditate on the Gospel? (Art. 4)
- \*Where have I not given Christ all of my life? (Art. 4)
- \*Have I made the Eucharist the center of my life? (Art. 5)
- \*Have I seen Christ in my fraternal brothers and sisters? In my family? In others? (Art. 5)
- \*Do I live in full Communion with the Catholic Church? With the Pope Bishops, and priests united to her? (Art 6)
- \*Do I foster an open and trusting dialogue or am I hostile? (Art. 6)
- \*Am I forgiving or do I harbor grudges against the Shepherds of Christ's Church? If I am a woman, do I harbor resentment? (Art. 6)
- \*Have I embraced the call to "rebuild the Church" by beginning with myself? (Art. 6)
- \*Do I frequently make use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (Art. 7)
- \*Do I see my own faults or the faults of others first? (Art. 7)
- \*Do I undertake to examine my thoughts and behaviors and then seek the help of Christ to embrace conversion? (Art. 7)
- \*Am I obedient to the requirements of daily liturgical prayer that the OFS has recommended? (Art. 8)
- \*Do I disregard this requirement in order to indulge myself? (Art. 8)
- \*Do I attend Mass during the week other than Sundays, as much as I am able? (Art. 8)
- \*Do I pray for my brothers and sisters in fraternity and Order? (Art. 8)
- \*Am I growing to develop an understanding of Mary as mother? (Art. 9)
- \*Like Mary, am I open to every word and call of Jesus? (Art. 9)
- \*Am I fully obedient to God the Father in my vocation? (Art. 10)

- \*Am I willing to follow Christ Crucified in the painful areas of life such as ingratitude, treachery, betrayal, failure, ridicule, mockery, physical agony, and desolation? (Art. 10)
- \*If married, am I a witness of Christ to my spouse, children? (Art. 10)
- \*If single, am I a witness of Christ to my family, friends? (Art. 10)
- \*Have I cultivated healthy detachments in my life? (Art. 11)
  - With material goods, my opinions, my finances? (Art. 11)
- \*Do I possess areas of control in my life that should be given to God?
  - Where? (Art. 11)
- \*Have I grown pure of heart, or do I still crave power/prestige? (Art. 12)
- \*Do I give credit to God for the good that I do? (Art. 12)
- \*Do I believe I can do some things without the help of God? (Art. 12)
- \*Do I seek out the lowly in the situations I am placed? (Art. 13)
- \*Have I cultivated a biased attitude toward certain people? (Art. 13)
- \*Have I tried to be gentle and courteous to those I meet?
  - In my family? In my fraternity? (Art. 13)
- \*Do I neglect my responsibilities? In my family? In society? (Art. 14)
- \*Do I neglect my responsibilities in fraternity? (Art. 14)
- \*Does my Catholic faith influence my civic responsibilities? (Art. 14)
- \*Does my Catholic faith influence how I vote? (Art. 14)
- \*Have I become an ideologue by becoming more attached to a political party than to my witness as a follower of Christ? (Art. 14)
- \*Have I practiced justice in all areas of my life? (Art. 15)
- \*Am I generous to those who are less fortunate than I? (Art. 15)
- \*Do I see work as a gift? (Art. 16)
- \*Do I pitch in to help at fraternity meetings? (Art. 16)
- \*In my family, am I a model of peace and fidelity? (Art. 17)
- \*Do I put myself at the service of my family? (Art. 17)
- \*Are my attitudes towards creation balanced or Pantheistic? (Art. 18)
- \*Do I value nature more than human beings? (Art. 18)
- Have I cultivated a respect for human life from conception to natural death or have I adopted the values of society? (Art. 18)
- \*Have I made efforts to be a good steward of God's creation? (Art. 18)
- \*Am I a bearer of peace in my home, my family, society? (Art. 19)
- \*Have I judged others in my fraternity as "un-Franciscan" while not recognizing and accepting differing opinions? (Art. 19)
- \*Do I judge as "un-Franciscan" brothers/sisters whose expression of living the Franciscan charism is different from my own? (Art. 19)
- \*Have I been able to cultivate a peaceful attitude toward death? (Art. 19)
- \*Have I taken steps to plan a will? Advanced directives and medical power of attorney? (Art. 19)
- \*Have I disregarded and criticized the importance of the OFS structure and organization and then justified it? (Art. 20)
- \*Am I open to serving the fraternity in an elected office? (Art. 21)
- \*Do I see the faithful following of my profession to the OFS as a call from God that will lead to my holiness? (Art. 22)

- \*Do I recognize attendance at meetings as a gift to grow in my maturity as a Secular Franciscan? (Art. 22)
- \*Do I pray for my brothers and sisters in fraternity? (Art. 22)
- \*Do I pray for discernment and wisdom when considering those in initial formation? (Art. 23)
- \*Do I view the OFS as a club that anyone can become a member of, or do I see the OFS as a calling from God? (Art. 23)
- \*Do I see the vocation to the OFS as a serious responsibility and one that should not be taken lightly? (Art. 23)
- \*Do I make excuses for not attending fraternity Gatherings? (Art. 24)
- \*Do I pray for the deceased members of my fraternity? (Art. 24)
- \*Have I contributed financially to the needs of my fraternity? (Art. 25)
- \*Are the financial needs of the fraternity important to me? (Art. 25)
- \*What about the needs of the fraternities at higher levels? (Art. 25)
- \*Do I have the faith of a child in regard to fraternity finances? (Art. 25)
- \*Do I take part in activities of the OFS Regionally? Nationally? (Art. 26)
- \*Do I pray for vocations to the OFS? Do I promote the OFS and invite those who may be called? (Art. 26)
- \*If I serve as an elected member, am I fulfilling the requirements asked of me or am I complacent? rebellious? (Art. 26)

Judy Puetz ofs, St. Padre Pio Frat., Los Tres Companeros Region, 2016

## **EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE**

### **Based on the Admonitions of St. Francis of Assisi**

- \*Have I presumed to receive the Eucharist while aware of sin present in my soul? (Adm. 1)
- \*Have I received the Eucharist unworthily? (Adm. 1)
- \*Do I doubt that the Eucharist is Jesus, the Son of God? (Adm. 1)
- \*Have I appropriated my will to myself? (Adm. 2)
- \*Do I pride myself on the good the Lord carries out in me? (Adm. 2)
- \*Do I have trouble with perfect obedience? (Adm. 3)
- \*Have I given myself in total obedience to the teachings and precepts of Christ's Church? (Adm. 3)
- \*Do I know the faith enough to avoid blind obedience? (Adm. 3)
- \*How easily do I walk away from community or others when circumstances proceed in ways I do not like? (Adm. 3)
- \*Have I rooted my identity in power or prestige? (Adm. 4)
- \*Do I cling to power out of fear of losing it? (Adm. 4)
- \*Have I used my office on Council or in any other role to dominate or control? (Adm. 4)
- \*Have I yearned for positions of authority? (Adm. 4)
- \*Do I pride myself in the gifts God has given me? (Adm. 5)
- \*Do I look down upon others or feel superior to them? (Adm. 5)
- \*Am I more apt to speak of Christ and the saints rather than imitating them? (Adm. 6)

- \*Have I become lukewarm in my faith? (Adm. 6)
- \*Do I avoid trials and tribulations instead of facing them? (Adm. 6)
- \*Do I study Scripture to grow closer to God and to put on the mind of Christ, or for some other purpose? (Adm. 7)
- \*Does knowledge of Scripture inflate my ego? (Adm. 7)
- \*Does my knowledge of the Word of God or the teachings of the Church lead me to look down on others? (Adm. 7)
- \*Do I envy others for what they say or do? (Adm. 8)
- \*Do I experience sadness when others are responding to the call or prompting of God? (Adm. 8)
- \*Do I see the gifts that God has given me? Am I thankful for those? (Adm. 8)
- \*Am I hypersensitive? (Adm. 9)
- \*Do I become easily offended? (Adm. 9)
- \*Am I able to overlook and forgive injuries inflicted on me? (Adm. 9)
- \*Do I harbor grudges? (Adm. 9)
- \*Do I often blame others for what happens to me? (Adm. 10)
- \*Do I avoid taking responsibility for my failures and sins? (Adm. 10)
- \*Have I become angry or disturbed by another's evil? (Adm. 11)
- \*Have I become angry or disturbed by another's opinion or political view? (Adm. 11)
- \*Have I been disturbed by the news media? (Adm. 11)
- \*Do I recognize the real source of the good I say and do? (Adm. 12)
- \*Do I become a slave to my ego? (Adm. 12)
- \*Have I lost my patience or felt threatened when others have opposed my will? (Adm. 13)
- \*Do I become angry or disturbed when insulted? (Adm. 14)
- \*Do I return insult for insult? (Adm. 14)
- \*Do I become bitter and resentful when humiliated? (Adm. 14)
- \*How easily do I lose my inner peace? (Adm. 15)
- \*Can I speak the truth clearly and with charity? (Adm. 15)
- \*Do I condone evil? (Adm. 15)
- \*Am I greedy or lustful? (Adm. 16)
- \*Do I desire other things or pleasures instead of God? (Adm. 16)
- \*Am I guilty of bragging? (Adm. 17)
- \*Do I expect more from others than I am willing to give? (Adm. 17)
- \*Do I accept others' weakness and brokenness? (Adm. 18)
- \*Do I see the sins of others more easily than I see my own? (Adm. 18)
- \*Do I always feel the need to be affirmed? (Adm. 19)
- \*Am I ambitious? (Adm. 19)
- \*Am I able to remain silent or do I always need to talk and dominate conversations? (Adm. 20)
- \*When I joke, does this come at someone else's expense? (Adm. 20)
- \*Am I too eager to share what the Lord has done for me instead of asking about others? (Adm. 21)
- \*Am I spiritually arrogant? (Adm. 21)
- \*Am I upset, excuse myself, or blame others when corrected? (Adm. 22)

- \*Do I accept blame willingly even if I am misunderstood or accused? (Adm. 22)
- \*Can I honestly accept my weaknesses and failings? (Adm. 23)
- \*How serious am I to correct my faults? (Adm. 23)
- \*Do I remember my sick brothers /sisters in fraternity and reach out to them? (Adm. 24)
- \*Do I speak about others behind their back? (Adm. 25)
- \*Do I detract from another's good name? (Adm. 25)
- \*Am I respectful toward all members of the clergy? (Adm. 26)
- \*Do I encourage members of the clergy to show reverence for the Body/Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist or am I indifferent? (Adm. 26)
- \*Do I value virtues and strive to practice them? (Adm. 27)
- \*Am I modest about the good the Lord does through me? (Adm. 28)

Judy Puetz, St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros Region, 2018

## **EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE** **Based on the Ten Commandments**

### **I. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.**

Have I treated people, events, or things as more important than God?

### **II. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**

Have my word, actively or passively, put down God, the Church, or people?

### **III. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.**

Do I go to Mass every Sunday (or Saturday vigil) and on Holy Days of Obligation (Jan 1; the Ascension; Aug 15; Nov 1; Dec 8; Dec 25)?

Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper relaxation of mind and body?

Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday?

### **IV. Honor your father and mother.**

Do I show my parents due respect?

Do I seek to maintain good communication with my parents where possible?

Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have?

### **V. You shall not kill.**

Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind?

### **VI. You shall not commit adultery?**

Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?

### **VII. You shall not steal.**

Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?

### **VIII. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?

### **IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.**

Have I honored my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love?

### **X. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.**

Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily?

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## **EXAMINATION ON CONSCIENCE**

### **Based on Catholic Social Teaching**

#### **Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

Do I respect the life and dignity of every human person from conception through natural death?  
Do I recognize the face of Christ reflected in all others around me whatever their race, class, age, or abilities?  
Do I work to protect the dignity of others when it is being threatened?  
Am I committed to both protecting human life and to ensuring that every human being is able to live in dignity?

#### **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**

Do I try to make positive contributions to my family and in my community?  
Are my beliefs, attitudes, and choices such that they strengthen or undermine the institution of the family?  
Am I aware of problems facing my local community and involved in efforts to find solutions?  
Do I stay informed and make my voice heard when needed?  
Do I support the efforts of poor people to work for change in their neighborhoods and communities?  
Do my attitudes and interactions empower or disempower others?

#### **Rights and Responsibilities**

Do I recognize and respect the economic, medical, social, political, and cultural rights of others?  
Do I live in material comfort and excess while remaining insensitive to the needs of others whose rights are unfulfilled?  
Do I take seriously my responsibility to ensure that the rights of persons in need are realized?  
Do I urge those in power to implement programs and policies that give priority to the human dignity and rights of all, especially the vulnerable?

#### **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

Do I give special attention to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in my community and in the world?  
Am I disproportionately concerned for my own good at the expense of others?  
Do I engage in service and advocacy work that protects the dignity of poor and vulnerable persons?

#### **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**

As a worker, do I give my employer a fair day's work for my wages?  
As an owner, do I treat workers fairly?  
Do I treat all workers with whom I interact with respect, no matter their position or class?  
Do I support the rights of all workers to adequate wages, health insurance, vacation and sick leave?  
Do my purchasing choices take into account the hands involved in the production of what I buy?  
When possible, do I buy products produced by workers whose rights and dignity were respected?

#### **Solidarity**

Does the way I spend my time reflect a genuine concern for others?  
Is solidarity incorporated into my prayer and spirituality?

Do I lift up vulnerable people throughout the world in my prayer, or is it reserved for only my personal concerns?

Am I attentive only to my local neighbors or also those across the globe?

Do I see all members of the human family as my brothers and sisters?

### **Care for God's Creation**

Do I live out my responsibilities to care for God's creation?

Do I see my care for creation as connected to my concern for poor people, who are most at risk from environmental problems?

Do I litter? Live wastefully? Use energy too freely?

Are there ways I could reduce consumption in my life?

Are there ways I could change my daily practices and those of my family, school, workplace, or community to better conserve the earth's resources for future generations?

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## **EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE** **Based on The Nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit**

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul encourages us to "live by the Spirit" (5:16) and later adds, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit" (5:25). He explicitly notes the nine fruits of the Spirit that are practical indications that we are living and guided by the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (5:22).

If our enthusiasm is fueled by the Spirit of God, then it's wise to ask ourselves how we obstruct, impede, and thwart the Spirit from bringing forth the divine fruit in our lives.

### **Love**

How have the wounds and grudges that I hold on to hindered me from becoming a person of love and acceptance of others, especially those who have wronged or betrayed me?

In what ways have I made people pay for my attention and affection?

How have I deliberately subverted the practice of the Golden Rule?

### **Joy**

How have I disrespected the gift of life and the wonders of creation that God has graciously bestowed upon me and allowed me to experience?

How have my actions and attitudes sabotaged an exuberance for life and a firmly grounded hope that are rooted in the ultimate victory of Christ's resurrection?

In what areas of my life have I insulted God with my worries and anxieties?

### **Peace**

How have I passively supported or actively promoted the violence that arises from apathy, prejudice, sexism, and discrimination?

When and why have I refused to stand up and speak out for peace and justice?

What has caused me distress and restlessness, and why have I continued to yield to it?

### **Patience**

In what areas of life have I continued to support the knee-jerk reaction to anger?

When have I continued to fight against the things I cannot change or refused to accept the inconvenience that is part of daily life?

Where have I given up on the desire and willingness to persevere, persist, and promote my relationships with God, others, and self?

### **Kindness**

How have I continued to focus upon myself, my wants, and my desires to the exclusion of others?

What has hindered me from being compassionate, helpful, generous, and caring?

Who and why have I continued to react cruelly, heartlessly, and mercilessly?

### **Generosity**

How have I continued to be a stingy and selfish person?

When and why have I chosen to ignore the poor, the marginalized, and the needy?

In what areas of my life have I continued to be self-absorbed, self-obsessed, and self-seeking?

### **Faithfulness**

How have I continued to betray a spouse, a relative, a friend, or co-worker?

Where have I found myself slacking off in loyalty and dedication to public commitments?

How have I allowed fear and anxiety to paralyze me and threaten me from living life "full of faith"?

### **Gentleness**

What fear techniques have I used to ensure that I get my way?

How have I pulled strings behind the scenes and manipulated situations to make sure I remain in control?

To whom and why have I been blunt, discourteous, brash, and brusque?

### **Self-control**

When have I freely given rein to hedonistic desires and fleeting desires?

What tempting and sinful situations have I given myself permission to enter?

Where in my life have self-mastery and interior freedom been overcome by bondage and slavery?

Copyright 2013 Albert Haase, OFM, *Catching Fire, Becoming Flame: A Guide for Spiritual Transformation*

## **EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE** **Based on the The Seven Deadly Sins**

### **Pride**

When have I taken credit for my God-given gifts and talents?

How have I refused to acknowledge my absolute dependence upon God? Why?

When have I reminded someone just how important I think I am?

How often have I used my accomplishments and feelings of superiority to belittle other people?

Why do I need to feel more important than others?

When did I show an unhealthy self-respect?

How do I allow my lack or abundance of self-esteem to affect my attitudes and actions?

Why are self-respect and self-esteem so important to me?



## **Anger**

When have I refused to express my disappointment or despair to God?  
How have I hidden uncomfortable emotions from God?  
Why do I think some feelings are inappropriate to bring before God?  
When has my harsh response to others moved them to tears?  
How often have I felt the need to punish someone with a tongue lashing?  
Why do I often use anger as my response to situations?  
When did I allow anger and frustration to seethe within me?  
How often did I inappropriately express anger?  
Why do I feel it is always important to conceal or express anger?

## **Envy**

When have I given more importance to what others have—be it power, prestige, or possessions—and not acknowledged in gratitude what God has given me?  
Why do I want more and why am I dissatisfied with what God has given me?  
How often have I felt envious of another's accomplishments or possessions?  
When have I felt jealous of another's relationships?  
Why do I need to compare myself to others?  
How often did I feel that I didn't have enough and wanted more?  
Why are material possessions so important to me?

## **Lust**

How have I misused or been unaccepting of God's gift of my sexuality? Why?  
When have I looked at or used others as an object of my own personal satisfaction?  
How have my actions supported the pornography industry?  
Why is the inappropriate expression of my sexual desires and issue for me?  
When did I disrespect my body?  
How often did I allow my sexual impulses to control my attitudes and actions?  
Why do I give free reign to my sexual desires?

## **Gluttony**

How have I expected material things—food, drink, drugs, clothes, gaming—to satisfy what only God can satisfy? Why do I choose such things?  
When have I allowed myself to be seduced by the advertising industry, television commercials, and social media advertisements?  
Why is it important for me to have more and more?  
How often did I binge with food, drink, shopping, or gaming?  
When did I say to myself, "I went too far"?  
When am I driven to overindulge?

## **Acedia**

How and when have I allowed disappointment and discouragement in my spiritual life to affect my time in prayer?  
How often have I not taken time for God or refuse to acknowledge God's invitation to a deeper relationship? Why?  
When did I refuse to strengthen the relationships with my closest family and friends?  
How often have my actions and attitudes toward others been dismissive of those I love most dearly?  
Why do I hesitate to show my love and affection?  
How often did I allow discouragement and disillusionment to affect my attitudes and actions?

When did I give up on a commitment or promise?  
Why do I let despair and melancholy influence my attitudes and actions?



## **IV. Franciscan Liturgical Prayer**

### **Format for the Liturgy of the Hours** **St. Padre Pio Fraternity**

#### **Introduction** (*Community Stands*)

Leader: "Lord, open my lips. And my mouth will proclaim your praise."  
(*Make the sign of the cross over your mouth.*)

#### **Invitatory Antiphon**-Leader

#### **Invitatory Antiphon between strophes**-Community

#### **Invitatory Psalm**-Leader

#### **Doxology**-Community

"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"

#### **Invitatory Antiphon**-All

#### **Hymn**

#### **Psalmody** (*Community Sits.*)

#### **Antiphon 1**-Leader (*No response or echo from the community*)

**First Psalm**- Leader begins, followed by half of community, (men or women depending upon the gender of the Leader). Strophes are alternated accordingly.

#### **Doxology**-All

#### **Psalm Prayer**-Recited by Leader (*Pause....*)

#### **Antiphon 1**-All (*Pause....*)

#### **Antiphon 2**-Leader (*No response or echo from the community*)

**OT Canticle**-Leader begins, followed by half of community, (men or women depending upon the gender of the Leader). Strophes are alternated accordingly.

#### **Doxology**-All

**Antiphon 2-All** (*Pause....*)

**Antiphon 3-Leader** (*No response or echo from the community*)

**Second Psalm**-Leader begins, followed by half of community, (men or women, depending upon the gender of the Leader). Strophes are alternated accordingly.

**Doxology-All**

**Psalm Prayer**-Recited by Leader

**Antiphon 3-All** (*Pause....*)

**Reading**-Led by Appointed Reader (*Reading is not announced or concluded as at Mass*)

(*Period of Silence*)

**Responsory**-Led by Appointed Reader and recited antiphonally.

**Benedictus** (Community Stands)

**Antiphon**-Leader (*no response or echo from the community*)

**Gospel Canticle**-All (*make sign of the cross and chant*)

**Doxology-All**

**Antiphon-All** (*Pause....*)

**Intercessions**-Leader will recite both parts. Community responds with italicized response after each intercession.

**Franciscan Vocation Petition for Saturday morning is added:**

“O God, the Virgin Mary accepted the call to be the Mother of Jesus, may love of our own Franciscan vocation bring forth a new birth of justice and holiness in the world.”

**Our Father**-All (*Chant*)

**Concluding Prayer**-Leader recites the concluding prayer

**Dismissal**

If Ordained Minister is present.....a blessing is given

If no Ordained Minister is present.... Leader dismisses as follows

"May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life." (*Community makes Sign of the Cross*)

**Community responds:** "Amen"

**Hymn to Blessed Virgin Mary-Salve Regina** (*Chant*)

## **FRANCISCAN VOCATION PETITIONS** **FOR THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS**

### **Sunday Morning Prayer**

O God, you revealed the mystery of your being Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier,  
--help the Franciscan family witness to the diversity of community life.

### **Sunday Evening Prayer**

O God, you have called Franciscans to be a people united in your love,  
--may our witness help bring about justice and peace for all.

### **Monday Morning Prayer**

O God, you have given us the mission of sharing the Good News of your Kingdom with all people,  
--continue to raise up in the Franciscan family more of our brothers and sisters to spread the Gospel.

### **Monday Evening Prayer**

O God, you sent your disciples to all the world to announce the Kingdom,  
--may all Secular Franciscans be faithful witnesses of your love and peace.

### **Tuesday Morning Prayer**

O God, you have called us to conform our lives to the Gospel,  
--teach all Franciscans to embrace a life of joyful penance and keep us single minded in your service.

### **Tuesday Evening Prayer**

O God, you have called us to be people of prayer after the example of Francis and Clare,  
--may our lives of prayer be our source of strength in serving the People of God.

### **Wednesday Morning Prayer**

O God, the Apostles answered Jesus' call to come and see,  
--Grant us the favor to invite others to our Franciscan way of life.

**Wednesday Evening Prayer**

O God, Francis and Clare were poor and humble,  
--may our living of these virtues encourage others to follow the Franciscan way of following Christ.

**Thursday Morning Prayer**

O God, Francis and Clare had great awe and reverence for the Eucharist,  
--may our devotion to Jesus' Body and Blood be an example to those who aspire to the Franciscan life.

**Thursday Evening Prayer**

O God, Francis saw your love for us in Brother Sun, Sister Moon, and all creation,  
--may his joyful contemplation of our handiwork lead us to a deeper knowledge of you.

**Friday Morning Prayer**

O God, Francis' imitation of Christ led him to the gift of the Stigmata,  
--may our daily crosses lift us up to a greater love of you and your people.

**Friday Evening Prayer**

O God, Jesus taught us by his life to place our lives in your hands,  
--give all Franciscans the courage and love to accept a share in the Paschal Mystery.

**Saturday Morning Prayer**

O God, the Virgin Mary accepted the call to be the Mother of Jesus,  
--may the love of our own Franciscan vocation bring forth a new birth of justice and holiness in the world.

**Saturday Evening Prayer**

O God, help us to listen to your will by walking in the footsteps of your Son,  
--so that guided by the Spirit, our Franciscan lives may call others to holiness and service.

**October 4th**  
**St. Francis of Assisi**  
**Solemnity**

**Evening Prayer I****Hymn**

When rays of setting sun appeared,  
their shadows lengthening on the earth,  
And final moments ebbed away,

Saint Francis knew his hour had come.

Intrepid guide, so firm in faith,  
your soul aglow with fervent love!  
Why, Shepherd, your poor flock forsake:  
Their sadness, grief and tears reject?

With gentle glance and hand upraised,  
And loving smile and farewell sign:  
“May heaven show God’s face,” he prays,  
“it’s lavish grace on you bestow,”

“Far from your minds all error flee,  
no sin’s defilement your bodies stain!  
May virtue in your lives shine bright,  
God’s love for e’er your hearts inflame.”

Scarce uttered these words, this blessing spoken,  
than Francis’ soul escaped his body,  
To speed its way, to soar aloft,  
a star to shine in heaven’s galaxy.

To Father, Son all glory be,  
And Holy Spirit eternally.  
May we with them forever dwell;  
With virtue blest, with glory crowned.

## **Psalmody**

**Ant. 1** Francis a thoroughly Catholic and apostolic man was sent to prepare the way  
for the Gospel of peace.

### Psalm 111

I will thank the Lord with all my heart  
in the meeting of the just and their assembly.  
Great are the works of the Lord;  
to be pondered by all who love them.

Majestic and glorious his work,  
His justice stands firm forever.  
He makes us remember his wonders.  
The Lord is compassion and love.

He gives food to those who fear him;  
keeps his covenant ever in mind.

He has shown his might to his people  
by giving them the lands of the nations.

His works are justice and truth:  
his precepts are all of them sure,  
Standing firm for ever and ever:  
they are made in uprightness and truth.

He has sent deliverance to his people  
and established his covenant forever.  
Holy his name, to be feared.

To fear the Lord is the first stage of wisdom;  
all who do so prove themselves wise.  
His praise shall last forever!

**Ant.** Francis a thoroughly Catholic and apostolic man was sent to prepare the way for  
the Gospel of peace.

**Ant. 2** During his lifetime he supported the house of God and in his days he  
strengthened the temple.

Psalms 147:12-20

O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!  
Zion, praise your God!

He has strengthened the bars of your gates,  
He has blessed the children within you.  
He established peace on your borders,  
He feeds you with finest wheat.

He sends out his word to the earth  
and swiftly runs his command.  
He showers down snow white as wool,  
he scatters hoar frost like ashes.

He hurls down hailstones like crumbs.  
The waters are frozen at his touch;  
he sends forth his word and it melts them:  
at the breath of his mouth the waters flow.

He makes his word known to Jacob,  
to Israel his laws and decrees.  
He has not dealt thus with other nations;  
he has not taught them his decrees.



**Ant. 2** During his lifetime he supported the house of God and in his days he strengthened the temple.

**Ant. 3** Lead forth my soul from prison; the just wait for me until you reward me.

#### Psalm 142

With all my voice I cry to the Lord,  
with all my voice I entreat the Lord.  
I pour out my trouble before him;  
I tell him all my distress  
while my spirit faints within me.  
But you, O Lord, know my path.

On the way where I shall walk  
they have hidden a snare to entrap me.  
Look on my right and see:  
there is not one who takes my part.  
I have no means of escape,  
not one who cares for my soul.

I cry to you, O Lord.  
I have said: "You are my refuge,  
all I have left of the living."  
Listen then to my cry  
for I am in the depths of distress.

Rescue me from those who pursue me  
for they are stronger than I.  
Bring my soul out of this prison  
and then I shall praise your name.  
Around me the just will assemble  
because of your goodness to me.

**Ant. 3** Lead forth my soul from prison; the just wait for me until you reward me.

#### Reading

#### Romans 8:10-11

If Christ is in you the body is dead because of sin, while the spirit lives because of justice. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will bring your mortal bodies to life also, through his Spirit dwelling in you.

## **Responsory**

Francis poor and humble  
--enters heaven rich in merit.

He is honored with hymns in heaven.  
--He enters heaven rich in merit.

Glory to the Father...  
--Francis poor and humble enters heaven rich in merit.

## **Canticle of Mary**

**Ant.** By his complete submission to his Creator Francis gained command over creatures and made use of them to praise the Creator.

## **Intercessions**

Let us implore God the Father, the source of all holiness, to bring us to a holy life through the example and intercession of our Holy Father Saint Francis and say:

*We beg you, hear us.*

Holy Father, you made your servant Francis a perfect follower of your Son,  
--grant that we too may faithfully observe the Gospel and follow his example.  
Holy Father, guide our feet in the way of peace which our Holy Father Francis showed us

--that we may live sincerely in obedience, without property and in chastity.

Holy Father, you depose the proud and exalt the humble,  
--grant that we may follow our seraphic Father in humility.

Holy Father, you adorned your servant Francis with the sacred stigmata of your Son,  
--teach us readily to glory always in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Holy Father, you granted pardon to sinners through the prayers of our blessed Father Francis,

--in your mercy show our deceased brothers the light of your countenance.

## **Our Father**

## **Prayer**

Father, you helped our seraphic father Francis reflect the image of Christ through a life of poverty and humility. May we follow you Son by walking in the footsteps of Francis of Assisi and by imitating his joyful love. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Morning Prayer**

### **Invitatory**

**Ant.** Come, let us adore Christ the King who exalts the humble.

### **Psalmody**

#### **Hymn**

Fair virtue's pride and Minor's guide,  
Saint Francis, heaven's prize does find  
In you, the Vine of life divine,  
O Christ, redeemer of mankind.

Brethren, acclaim our Father's name  
Who with the blest now reigns on high;  
Let grief give way, joy be out lay,  
With songs of praise rejoice the sky.

Rapt from the earth to heaven's post  
His wondrous signs show him to be;  
So does he live, for Christ does give  
The gifts that last eternally.

For prayers while here to you most dear  
Has he attained to glory's height,  
Whom you now crown, whom you now own,  
O God of mercy infinite.

Close in his train let them remain  
Who forth from Egypt's land would speed;  
With him in sight, mid glowing light,  
The standards of the King proceed.

Our worthy guide, in hand and side,  
Is wounded with the King's own seal;  
The dawn is nigh, night's shadows fly,  
Now across the sky the sun does steal.

This leader sure, like star secure,  
Will guide our feet and show our eyes  
What things to shun, what must be done,  
To win the joys of paradise.

Unto the King your flock do bring,

You who have crushed the foe of all;  
May you recede, our way to straight lead  
Unto the Lamb's high banquet-hall.

**Ant. 1** He was found just and perfect and in the time of wrath was made a reconciliation.  
*Psalms and Canticle from Sunday, Week I*

**Ant. 2** God's praise was ever on his lips; he called upon the stars, spirits, birds and all  
creation to praise the Creator.

**Ant. 3** The Lord raised up the lowly one and exalted him to the ends of the earth.

## **Reading**

## **Galatians 1:15-16, 24**

It pleased God who set me apart and called me by his favor to reveal his Son to me,  
that I might spread among the Gentiles the good tidings concerning him. And they gave  
glory to the Lord on my account.

## **Responsory**

My heart and my flesh  
--cry out for the living God.

My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the Lord,  
--cry out for the living God.

Glory to the Father...  
--My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

## **Canticle of Zechariah**

**Ant.** I have joyfully shared Christ's sufferings and now I rejoice exultantly when his  
glory is revealed.

## **Intercessions**

Let us humbly pray to Christ the Lord who built up the Church with his blood and  
mercifully called us to follow Francis and say:

*Lord, keep us in your holy service.*

Lord, you came to preach the Gospel to the poor,  
--teach us to extend your kingdom far and wide by work and deed and to renew it  
effectively among our fellow men.

Lord, you are the light of the world and the teacher of holiness,  
--grant that we may remain firm in the true faith and proclaim your name to the ends of  
the earth.

Lord, you gave your disciples the precept of love to be observed in a special manner,  
--grant that we may strive to do good to all men.

Lord, you are the Wisdom of the eternal Father,

--enlighten our minds that we may profess the truth in love and ever think what is true and holy.

Christ, our Savior, you did not consider it beneath your dignity to do manual labor,

--direct the work of our hands so that all may see our good works and give glory to God the Father.

### **Our Father...**

### **Prayer**

Father, you helped our seraphic Father Francis reflect the image of Christ through a life of poverty and humility. May we follow your Son by walking in the footsteps of Francis of Assisi and by imitating his joyful love. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

### **Evening Prayer II**

### **Hymn**

In Francis no guile, no pride was known;  
He made all men in peace abide.  
Though frail of frame, his fervor shone,  
A flaming, shining light and guide,

In ragged raiment he was dressed,  
But all the more did love abound;  
With heaven's favors he was blessed,  
On him the wounds of Christ were found.

Though poor and penniless on earth,  
He entered heaven rich arrayed;  
Thence scatters gifts that have true worth,  
And heals all wounds, when asked for aid.

Illustrious father of the poor,  
From earthly goods our hearts detach;  
A place in heaven to us assure,  
And from eternal death us snatch.

To Father, Son, and Spirit's Name  
Be honor, glory, blessing, praise;  
And may Saint Francis' merits, fame,  
To heaven's joy and bliss us raise!

## **Psalmody**

**Ant. 1** I determined to know nothing else but Christ and him crucified.

### Psalm 113

Praise, O servants of the Lord,  
praise the name of the Lord!

May the name of the Lord be blessed  
both now and for evermore!  
From the rising of the sun to its setting  
praised be the name of the Lord!

High above all nations is the Lord,  
above the heavens his glory.  
Who is like the Lord, our God,  
who has risen on high to his throne  
yet stoops from the heights to look down,  
to look down upon heaven and earth?

From the dust he lifts up the lowly,  
from his misery he raises the poor  
to set him in the company of princes,  
yes, with the princes of his people.  
To the childless wife he gives a home  
and gladdens her heart with children.

**Ant. 1** I determined to know nothing else but Christ and him crucified.

**Ant. 2** I was formed in the pattern of his death to know Christ and the power flowing from  
his resurrection.

### Psalm 146

My soul, give praise to the Lord;  
I will praise the Lord all my days,  
Make music to my God while I live.  
Put no trust in princes,  
in mortal men in whom there is no help.  
Take their breath, they return to clay  
and their plans that day come to nothing.

He is happy who is helped by Jacob's God,  
whose hope is in the Lord his God,  
who alone made heaven and earth,

the seas and all they contain.

It is he who keeps faith for ever,  
who is just to those who are oppressed.  
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,  
the Lord, who sets prisoners free,

the Lord who gives sight to the blind,  
who raises up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger  
and upholds the widow and orphan.

It is the Lord who loves the just  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.  
The Lord will reign for ever,  
Zion's God, from age to age.

**Ant. 2** I was formed in the pattern of his death to know Christ and the power flowing  
from his resurrection.

**Ant. 3** The Lord shall be your light forever, your God shall be your glory.

Canticle                                      Ephesians 1:3-10

Praised be God and Father  
of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has bestowed on us in Christ  
every spiritual blessing in the heavens.

God chose us in him  
before the world began  
to be holy  
and blameless in his sight.

He predestined us  
to be his adopted sons through Jesus Christ,  
such was his will and pleasure,  
that all might praise the glorious favor  
he has bestowed on us in his beloved.

In him and through his blood, we have been redeemed,  
and our sins forgiven,  
so immeasurably generous  
is God's favor to us.

God has given us the wisdom

to understand fully the mystery,  
the plan he was pleased  
to decree in Christ.

A plan to be carried out  
in Christ, in the fullness of time,  
to bring all things into one in him,  
in the heavens and on earth.

**Ant. 3** The Lord shall be your light forever, your God shall be your glory.

### **Canticle of Mary**

**Ant.** The eye of the Lord looked favorably upon him and the Lord lifted him up from his lowly estate and exalted his head; many have wondered at him and have glorified God.

### **Intercessions**

Let us pray to God the Father the source of all holiness that he may lead us to a holy life through the example and intercession of our blessed Father Francis and say:

*We beg you, hear us.*

Holy Father, you made your servant Francis a perfect follower of your Son,  
--grant that we too may follow his example and faithfully observe the Gospel of Christ.

Holy Father, guide us along the path of peace which our Father Francis showed us,  
--that we may sincerely live in obedience, without property and in chastity.

Holy Father, you cast down the proud and exalt the humble,  
--grant that we may follow our seraphic Father in humility.

Holy Father, you have adorned your servant Francis with the marks of the sacred wounds of your Son,

--teach us always to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Holy Father, through the prayers of our blessed Father Francis you granted pardon to sinners,

--in your mercy show the light of your countenance to our deceased brothers.

### **Our Father...**

### **Prayer**

Father, you helped our seraphic father Francis reflect the image of Christ through a life of poverty and humility. May we follow your Son by walking in the footsteps of Francis of Assisi and by imitating his joyful love. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.



**August 11th**  
**Clare of Assisi, Virgin**  
**Feast**

**Invitatory**

**Ant.** Come, let us adore Christ the king whom Clare loved with all her heart.

**Morning Prayer**

**Hymn**

O virgin Clare, enrapt in splendor,  
You daughter of eternal light,  
Today we mark your solemn passing  
From earth to heaven's starry height.

By spurning earthly joys so fleeting  
You follow Christ, the Lamb of God;  
You feed with him among the lilies  
That stud the cloister's fertile sod.

You guard with care the holy virgins'  
To every virtue show the way;  
You lead your group of saintly maidens  
To Christ their Spouse in bridal array.

Beneath the humble Francis' banner  
In three-fold strife for Christ unfurled,  
You bravely march, a constant victor  
O'er devil, flesh, and wicked world.

And now amid the starry heavens  
Enthroned in bliss with God on high,  
Do grant that we who strive to follow  
May on your guidance e'er rely.

To Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
Be honor, glory, endless praise;  
And may Saint Clare's incessant pleading  
Obtain for us God's saving grace.

**Psalmody**

**Ant. 1** The hand of the Lord strengthened her, she will therefore be blessed forever.  
*Psalms and canticle from Sunday, Week I*

**Ant. 2** The Lord blessed her, and through her brought the enemy to nought.

**Ant. 3** She cast all her care upon God. She hoped in him and he came to her assistance.

## **Reading**

## **Isaiah 58:10-11**

Your light shall rise for you in the darkness and the Lord will give you rest continually and fill your soul with brightness, and you shall be like a watered garden and like a fountain whose waters shall not fail.

## **Responsory**

My soul

--shall exult in the Lord,

And rejoice in his salvation.

--Shall exult in the Lord.

Glory be to the Father...

--My soul shall exult in the Lord.

## **Canticle of Zechariah**

**Ant.** The holy virgin, Clare, denying her very self and taking up her cross, followed the Lord Jesus, the bridegroom of virgins.

## **Intercessions**

Let us implore the Father of mercy from whom every perfect gift comes and humbly say:

*Hear us, Lord.*

You alone are holy and the sovereign good,

--grant an increase in the number of holy persons in the Church who will love you and bring others to love you.

You gave us Saint Clare as our mother and our model,

--grant that we may follow her example and serve you in poverty and humility.

You are our way, our hope and our life,

--endow the Franciscan Order with the vigor of gospel living so that by the example of Saint Clare we may be true children of the Church.

You are the source of true wisdom,

--inflame our hearts with your love that we may be mindful of your words and ever strive to choose the better portion.

You patiently look for virtue from your chosen ones,

--grant us the gifts of the Holy Spirit that with them we may bring peace and joy to our brothers and sisters.

## **Our Father...**

## **Prayer**

God of mercy, you inspired Saint Clare with the love of poverty. By the help of her prayers may we follow Christ in poverty of spirit and come to the joyful vision of your glory in the kingdom of heaven. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Evening Prayer**

### **Hymn**

In joyful chorus let the faithful  
Resound this virgin's song of praise,  
Who gladly followed Christ's own Mother,  
Renewed in virtue, zeal, and grace.

The first-born of the poorest Ladies,  
But rich in heaven's kind regard,  
She gains for self in fullest measure  
A faithful life's assured reward.

A sparkling star amid the heavens,  
She now reflects a brilliant light,  
For Christ, the Light, the Sun eternal,  
Bathes blessed Clare in splendor bright.

By poverty and strict observance  
Of blessed Francis' rule of life,  
Portraying Christ, the gentle master,  
She calmed this world of greed and strife.

She spurns the flesh and worldly pleasures,  
She puts herself in Mary's care;  
In abject poverty she follows  
Her Christ, so poor beyond compare.

To God the Father endless glory,  
And praise to his Incarnate Son,  
And homage to the Holy Spirit,  
Through whom this virgin heaven won.

### **Psalmody**

**Ant. 1** The glory of Clare filled the world; her sanctity has been the inspiration of many devoted followers.

## Psalm 112

Happy the man who fears the Lord,  
who takes delight in all his commands.  
His sons will be powerful on earth;  
the children of the upright are blessed.

Riches and wealth are in his house;  
his justice stands firm for ever.  
He is a light in the darkness for the upright:  
he is generous, merciful and just.

The good man takes pity and lends,  
he conducts his affairs with honor.  
The just man will never waver:  
he will be remembered for ever.

He has no fear of evil news;  
with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord.  
With a steadfast heart he will not fear;  
he will see the downfall of his foes.

Open-handed, he gives to the poor;  
his justice stands firm for ever.  
His head will be raised in glory.

The wicked man sees and is angry,  
grinds his teeth and fades away;  
the desire of the wicked leads to doom.

**Ant. 1** The glory of Clare filled the world; her sanctity has been the inspiration of many devoted followers.

**Ant. 2** Clare trusted in the Lord her God. She spurned the world's perishable glory to gain Christ.

## Psalm 145

I will give you glory, O God my King,  
I will bless your name for ever.

I will bless you day after day  
and praise your name for ever.  
The Lord is great, highly to be praised,  
his greatness cannot be measured.

Age to age shall proclaim your works,  
shall declare your mighty deeds,  
shall speak of your splendor and glory,  
tell the tale of your wonderful works.

They will speak of your terrible deeds,  
recount your greatness and might.  
They will recall your abundant goodness;  
age to age shall ring out your justice.

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,  
slow to anger, abounding in love.  
How good is the Lord to all,  
compassionate to all his creatures.

**Ant. 2** Clare trusted in the Lord her God. She spurned the world's perishable glory to gain Christ.

**Ant. 3** The virgin Clare in her exultation recognized the manifold wisdom of Christ.

Canticle Ephesians 1:3-10

Praised be the God and Father  
of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has bestowed on us in Christ  
every spiritual blessing in the heavens.

God chose us in him  
before the world began  
to be holy  
and blameless in his sight.

He predestined us  
to be his adopted sons through Jesus Christ,  
such was his will and pleasure,  
that all might praise the glorious favor  
he has bestowed on us in his beloved.

In him and through his blood, we have been redeemed,  
and our sins forgiven,  
so immeasurably generous  
is God's favor to us.

God has given us the wisdom  
to understand fully the mystery,  
the plan he was pleased

to decree in Christ.

A plan to be carried out  
in Christ, in the fulness of time,  
to bring all things into one in him,  
in the heavens and on earth.

**Ant. 3** The virgin Clare in her exultation recognized the manifold wisdom of Christ.

### **Reading**

### **Song of Songs 6:2; 8:6-7**

I belong to my lover, and my lover who browses among the lilies belongs to me. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal on your arm; for stern as death is love; its flames are a blazing fire. Deep waters cannot quench love.

### **Responsory**

She has been led to the king's abode  
--and he placed a crown upon her head.  
A crown of holiness, glory and honor.  
--He placed a crown upon her head.

### **Canticle of Mary**

**Ant.** Hail, bride of Christ, holy virgin, model for Sisters, Saint Clare, lead us to the kingdom of heaven.

### **Intercessions**

Let us joyfully praise Christ the Lord and pray to the bridegroom of virgins, the spotless Lamb that virgins accompany wherever he goes, and say:

*Jesus, King of virgins, hear our prayer.*

O Christ, you praised those who live in chastity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven,  
-grant that we may truly understand your words and cling to you, chaste in body and pure in soul.

O Christ, for our salvation you offered your body to the Father as a sacrifice on the Cross,

-grant that we may crucify our bodies with their vices and desires and fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ.

O Christ, you espoused the Church as a chaste virgin,

-make her spotless and holy and grant that we may keep our faith sound and pure.

O Christ, you permit us to rejoice on the feast of the holy virgin Clare,

-grant that we may always be worthy of her intercession.

O Christ, you admitted holy virgins to your wedding banquet,

-in your kindness receive our departed in the banquet hall of heaven.

**Our Father...**

**Prayer**

God of mercy, you inspired Saint Clare with the love of poverty. By the help of her Prayers may we follow Christ in poverty of spirit and come to the joyful vision of your Glory in the kingdom of heaven. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

**November 17**  
**Elizabeth of Hungary Patroness of the Third Order**  
**Feast**

**Invitatory**

**Ant.** Let us praise our God in the holy deeds of Saint Elizabeth.

**Morning Prayer**

**Hymn**

O blest Elizabeth, in glory  
Enthroned amid the heavenly throng,  
Be gracious to accept the praises  
We offer you in cheerful song.

As you from home and hearth were driven  
And forced in direst want to roam,  
So now direct us lonely exiles  
And help us reach our heavenly home.

You practiced poverty; enrich us  
With heaven's choicest gifts secure;  
You daily mortified your body:  
Help us to keep our bodies pure.

The luring world and wily Satan  
You overcame by watchful prayers;  
Teach us with steadfast heart to conquer  
Our enemies' deceitful snares.

To God the Father highest glory,  
And to his only Son, our Lord.  
Together with the Holy Spirit,  
As years and ages endless run.

## **Psalmody**

**Ant. 1** On earth she kept watch for God; she reigns with him in heaven forever.

*Psalms and canticle from Sunday, Week 1*

**Ant. 2** Let all creation bless the Lord because God has shown himself wonderful in his saints.

**Ant. 3** Praise the Lord, for he has fulfilled his mercy in his handmaid.

## **Reading**

### **Proverbs 31:10-12**

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.

## **Responsory**

She preferred to be lowly

--in the house of the Lord.

Rather than dwell in the tents of sinners.

--In the house of the Lord.

Glory to the Father....

--She preferred to be lowly in the house of the Lord.

## **Canticle of Zechariah**

**Ant.** She received blessing from the Lord and mercy from God her Savior.

## **Intercessions**

Let us pray to God the Father who sent Christ to heal the contrite of heart and say to him:

*Lord, enkindle in us the fire of your love.*

Lord, through your life-giving words increase our knowledge of you,

--that we may more readily find and love you in all men.

God of compassionate love, make us abound in works of love,

--so that all may recognize us as true disciples of your Son.

Father of all mankind, make us solicitous for the poor today,

--that the love of Christ may be recognized in us.

Father of mercy, teach us to keep your commandment of love,

--so that we may recognize and love you in our brothers.

Lord, teach us all to refrain from an inordinate desire for things of earth

--and to come to the aid of those in need.

## **Our Father....**



## Prayer

Father, you helped Elizabeth of Hungary to recognize and honor Christ in the poor of this world. Let her prayers help us to serve our brothers and sisters in time of trouble and need. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Evening Prayer

### Hymn

The day now dawns, when rich in merits  
Your heavenly throne you occupy;  
You walk among the saints and angels,  
Adorned with crown of victory.

You lay aside the worldly scepter,  
The royal splendor of a queen;  
Despoiled of goods and home and country,  
To bow to fate with mind serene.

Unruffled by a fickle fortune,  
For heavenly gifts alone you yearn;  
Enable us, with hearts of courage,  
All vain and fleeting goods to spurn.

The needy crowds you kindly nourish,  
The naked clothe, the sick console,  
And prisoners you haste to rescue  
From dungeon's dark and dismal hole.

To God the Father endless glory,  
And to the Son let honor be  
Together with the Holy Spirit,  
Now and for all eternity.

### Psalmody

**Ant. 1** She renounced a perishable kingdom in the world to gain an everlasting one if heaven.

*Psalm and canticle from the common of holy women, Evening Prayer II*

**Ant. 2** She did manfully and her heart was strengthened because she loved chastity.

**Ant. 3** The Lord delighted in you and your God rejoiced over you.

## Reading

## Revelation 19:7-9

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For this is the wedding day of the Lamb; his bride has prepared herself for the wedding. She has been given a dress to wear made of the finest linen, brilliant white. (The linen dress is the virtuous deeds of God's saints.) The angel then said to me: "Write this down: Happy are they who have been invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb."

## Responsory

The hand of the Lord  
--strengthened her.  
Therefore, she will be blessed forever.  
--Strengthened her.  
Glory to the Father...  
--The hand of the Lord strengthened her.

## Canticle of Mary

**Ant.** I assure you, as often you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.  
Come, you have my Father's blessing! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.

## Intercessions

Lord, through all the women martyrs who conquered bodily death by their courage,  
-strengthen your Church in the hour of trial.

*Be mindful of your Church, Lord*

Through married women who have advanced in grace through holy matrimony,  
-make the apostolic mission of your Church fruitful.

Through widows who eased their loneliness and sanctified it by prayer and hospitality,  
-help your Church reveal the mystery of your love to the world.

Through mothers who have borne children for the kingdom of God and the human community,  
-help your Church bring all men to a rebirth in life and salvation.

Through all your holy women who have been worthy to contemplate the light of your countenance,  
-let the deceased members of your Church exult in that same vision forever.

## Our Father

## Prayer

Father, you helped Elizabeth of Hungary to recognize and honor Christ in the poor of this world. Let her prayers help us to serve our brothers and sisters in time of trouble and need. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, you Son, who lives and reigns with

you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**August 25th**  
**Louis IX, King Patron of the Third Order**  
**Memorial**

*From the Common of Holy Men*

**Invitatory**

**Ant.** Come, let us adore the Lord the King of kings.

**Morning Prayer**

**Canticle of Zechariah**

**Ant.** The thought of him is with the Most High; therefore he received the splendid crown, the beautiful diadem, from the hand of the Lord.

**Prayer**

Father, you raised Saint Louis from the cares of earthly rule to the glory of your heavenly kingdom. By the help of his prayers may we come to your eternal kingdom by our work here on earth. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Evening Prayer**

**Canticle of Mary**

**Ant.** He walked before the Lord in truth and with an upright heart and did always what was pleasing in God's sight.

**September 17**  
**Stigmata of Our Holy Father Francis**  
**Feast**

**Invitatory**

**Ant.** Come, let us adore Christ our crucified King, who imprinted the stigmata, on the body of Saint Francis.

## **Morning Prayer**

### **Hymn**

Refulgent armor of the cross  
To Francis in a dream is shown;  
He hears the Lord assuring him:  
This panoply shall be your own.

On him these weapons of the cross  
The power of the Lord bestow;  
Arrayed in them as knight of Christ,  
He need not fear the dreaded foe.

The summons to embrace the cross,  
Show him the way to win the fray;  
The Holy Book he opens thrice—  
Its words his rule of life portray.

He learns the lessons of the cross,  
Reflects on them with heart and mind;  
To converse with the Crucified  
His soul's desires fulfillment find.

This ardent lover of the cross  
Is through its fruits, to Christ conformed;  
And by the wounds which pierce his flesh,  
Into another Christ transformed.

The merits, blessings of the cross,  
As, with this sign, ourselves we bless,  
Be our protection in this life,  
And lead to heaven's happiness!  
Psalmody

**Ant. 1** With Christ I am nailed to the cross. The life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me.

*Psalms and canticle from Sunday, Week 1*

**Ant. 2** I have been grasped by Christ Jesus. I wish to know him and to know also how to share in his sufferings by being formed into the pattern of his death.

**Ant. 3** Christ will be exalted through me, for to me life means Christ.

## Reading

## Galatians 6:14, 17-18

May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! Through it the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. I bear the brand marks of Jesus in my body. Brothers, may the favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

## Responsory

Your arrows have sunk deep in me,  
--and your hand has come down upon me.  
My heart trembled, my strength left me.  
--And your hand has come down upon me.  
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.  
--Your arrows have sunk deep in me and your hand has come down upon me.

## Canticle of Zechariah

**Ant.** Francis, because of your yearning for martyrdom the Dayspring has visited you and wondrously imprinted the marks of our redemption on your body.

## Intercessions

Let us humbly pray to Christ who built up the Church with his own blood and called us to follow Francis, and say:

*Lord, keep us in your holy service.*

Lord, you came to preach the gospel to the poor, teach us to spread your kingdom by word and deed

--and to build it up effectively among men.

Lord, you are the light of the world and teacher of holiness, grant that we may firmly cling to the true faith

--and proclaim your name to the ends of the earth.

Lord, you gave your disciples the commandment of love to be observed above all,

--grant that we may strive to do good to all men.

Wisdom of the eternal Father enlighten our minds

--to profess the truth in love and ever keep our thoughts on what is true and holy.

Christ our Savior, you did not consider it beneath your dignity to do manual labor, direct the work of our hands

--so that all may see our good deeds and give glory to God the Father.

## Our Father.....

## Prayer

Almighty God, you renewed the marks of the sufferings of your Son in the body of our holy Father Francis in order to inflame our hearts with the fire of your love. Through his prayers may we be made conformable to the death of your Son and thus share also in

his resurrection. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

## **Evening Prayer**

### **Hymn**

The mysteries of Jesus' passion  
Shone forth on Mount Alverna's height,  
Where rays of merciful redemption  
Diffused their gentle saving light,  
As Francis, rapt in contemplation,  
The Cross embraced throughout the night.

His fervent prayer in lone seclusion,  
His spirit soared to God on high;  
The thought of Christ's most bitter passion  
Evoked from him a painful sigh;  
His urge to share Christ's crucifixion  
Engulfed his soul in ecstasy.

Then lo, there came the King from heaven  
In garb of Seraphim arrayed.  
His form, in angel wings enfolded,  
A kindly countenance displayed;  
But then the Cross that bore his members  
His bitter sufferings portrayed.

The servant gazed upon his Savior,  
Once suffering, now glorified;  
The light and splendor of the Father,  
But now so lowly, gentle, tried.  
He understood the mystic message  
To no mere human words allied.

The mountain peak burst forth in splendor,  
As neighbors wondered down below;  
The heart of Francis throbbed intensely  
With flames of love for Christ aglow;  
And presently upon his body  
Christ's passion wounds began to show.

Unto the Crucified by glory,  
Who takes away our guilt and sin.  
Him Francis greatly loved and honored,  
In cross and suffering made akin,

And through his grace the world despising  
The crown of glory strove to win.

### **Psalmody**

**Ant. 1** God in many ways has revealed the mysteries of the cross in Saint Francis.

#### Psalm 15

Lord, who shall be admitted to your tent  
and dwell on your holy mountain?  
he who walks without fault;  
he who acts with justice  
and speaks the truth from his heart;  
he who does not slander with his tongue;

he who does no wrong to his brother,  
who casts no slur on his neighbor,  
who holds the godless in disdain,  
but honors those who fear the Lord;

he who keeps his pledge come what may;  
who takes no interest on a loan  
and accepts no bribes against the innocent.  
Such a man will stand firm for ever.

**Ant. 1** God in many ways has revealed the mysteries of the cross in Saint Francis.

**Ant. 2** I judged myself not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and him  
crucified.

#### Psalm 112

Happy the man who fears the Lord,  
who takes delight in all his commands.  
His sons will be powerful on earth;  
the children of the upright are blessed.

Riches and wealth are in his house;  
his justice stands firm for ever.  
He is a light in the darkness for the upright:  
he is generous, merciful and just.

The good man takes pity and lends,  
he conducts his affairs with honor.  
The just man will never waver:

he will be remembered for ever.

He has no fear of evil news;  
with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord.  
With a steadfast heart he will not fear;  
He will see the downfall of his foes.

Open-handed, he gives to the poor;  
his justice stands firm for ever.  
His head will be raised in glory.

The wicked man sees and is angry,  
grinds his teeth and fades away;  
the desire of the wicked leads to doom.

**Ant. 2** I judged myself not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

**Ant. 3** He was put to death in so far as fleshly existence goes but was given life in the realm of the spirit.

Canticle                      Revelation 15:3-4

Mighty and wonderful are your works,  
Lord God Almighty!  
Righteous and true are your ways,  
O King of the Nations!

Who would dare refuse you honor,  
or the glory due your name, O Lord?

Since you alone are holy,  
all nations shall come  
and worship in your presence.  
Your mighty deeds are clearly seen.

**Ant. 3** He was put to death in so far as fleshly existence goes but was given life in the realm of the spirit.

**Reading**

**Galatians 6:14, 17-18**

May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! Through it, the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. I bear the brand marks of Jesus in my body. Brothers, may the favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.



## **Responsory**

Lord, Jesus Christ,  
--you signed your servant Francis  
With the marks of our redemption.  
--You signed your servant Francis.  
Glory to the Father...  
--Lord, Jesus Christ, you signed your servant Francis with the marks of our redemption.

## **Canticle of Mary**

**Ant.** I have died to the world and now my life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ our life appears, then we shall appear with him in glory.

## **Intercessions**

Let us pray to God the Father, the source of all holiness, that by the example and through the intercession of our blessed Father Francis he may lead us to a holy life and say:

*Hear us, we pray.*

Holy Father, you made your servant Francis a perfect follower of your Son,  
--grant that we too may follow his example and faithfully observe the Gospel of Christ.  
Holy Father, guide our feet in the way of peace which our Father Francis pointed out to us

--that we may sincerely live in obedience without property and in chastity.

Holy Father, you bring down the proud and exalt the humble,

--grant that we may follow our Seraphic Father in humility.

Holy Father, you marked your servant Francis with the stigmata of the sufferings of your Son,

--teach us always to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Holy Father, through the prayers of our blessed Father Francis you granted pardon to sinners,

--in your kindness, show our departed brethren the light of your countenance.

## **Our Father...**

## **Prayer**

Almighty God, you renewed the marks of the sufferings of your Son In the body of our holy Father Francis In order to inflame our hearts with the fire of your love. Through his prayers may we be made conformable to the death of your Son and thus share also in his resurrection. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary**  
**SATURDAY**

**Morning Prayer**

God, come to my assistance.

*- Lord, make haste to help me*

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.*

**Hymn**

**Psalmody**

**Ant.1** Blessed are you, O Mary, for the world's salvation came forth through you; now in glory, you rejoice forever with the Lord.

Psalm 92 (*community alternates strophes*)

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,  
to make music to your name, O Most High,  
to proclaim your love in the morning  
and your truth in the watches of the night,  
on the ten-stringed lyre and the lute,  
with the murmuring sound of the harp.

Your deeds, O Lord, have made me glad;  
for the work of your hands, I shout with joy.  
O Lord, how great are your works!  
How deep are your designs!  
The foolish man cannot know this  
and the fool cannot understand.

Though the wicked spring up like grass  
and all who do evil thrive,  
they are doomed to be eternally destroyed.  
But you, Lord, are eternally on high.  
See how your enemies perish;  
all doers of evil are scattered.

To me you give the wild ox's strength;  
you anoint me with the purest oil.  
My eyes looked in triumph on my foes;  
my ears heard gladly of their fall.  
The just will flourish like the palm tree  
and grow like a Lebanon cedar.

Planted in the house of the Lord  
they will flourish in the courts of our God,  
still bearing fruit when they are old,  
still full of sap, still green,  
to proclaim that the Lord is just.  
In him, my rock, there is no wrong.

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

**Ant.1** Blessed are you, O Mary, for the world's salvation came forth through you; now in glory, you rejoice forever with the Lord.

**Ant. 2** The Virgin Mary is exalted above the choirs of angels; let all believers rejoice and bless the Lord.

Canticle                      Ezekiel 36:24-28 (community alternates strophes)

I will take you away from among the nations,  
gather you from all the foreign lands,  
and bring you back to your own land.

I will sprinkle clean water upon you  
to cleanse you from all your impurities,  
and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

I will give you a new heart  
and place a new spirit within you,  
taking from your bodies your stony hearts  
and giving you natural hearts.

I will put my spirit within you  
and make you live by my statutes,  
careful to observe my decrees.

You shall live in the land I gave your fathers;  
you shall be my people,  
and I will be your God.

Glory be 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.

**Ant. 2** The Virgin Mary is exalted above the choirs of angels; let all believers rejoice and bless the Lord.

**Ant. 3** The Lord has made you so glorious that your praise will never cease to resound among men.

Psalm 8 (*community alternates strophes*)

How great is your name, O Lord our God,  
through all the earth!

Your majesty is praised above the heavens;  
on the lips of children and of babes  
you have found praise to foil your enemy,  
to silence the foe and the rebel.

When I see the heavens, the work of your hands,  
the moon and the stars which you arranged,  
what is man that you should keep him in mind,  
mortal man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him little less than a god;  
with glory and honor, you crowned him,  
gave him power over the works of your hands,  
put all things under his feet.

All of them, sheep and cattle,  
yes, even the savage beasts,  
birds of the air, and fish  
that make their way through the waters.

How great is your name, O Lord our God,  
through all the earth!

Glory be 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.*

**Ant. 3** The Lord has made you so glorious that your praise will never cease to resound among men.

## FIRST READING

## Judith 13:17-20

All the people were greatly astonished. They bowed down and worshiped God, saying with one accord, "Blessed are you, our God, who today have brought to naught the enemies of your people."

Then Uzziah said to her: "Blessed are you, daughter, by the Most High God, above all the women on earth; and blessed be the Lord God, the creator of heaven and earth,

who guided your blow at the head of the chief of our enemies. Your deed of hope will never be forgotten by those who tell of the might of God.

"May God make this redound to your everlasting honor, rewarding you with blessings, because you risked your life when your people were being oppressed, and you averted our disaster, walking uprightly before our God." And all the people answered, "Amen! Amen!"

## **SECOND READING**

**(From a letter by Paschasius Radbert, abbot  
(Letter Cogito me 20-23,26,28: PL 30,  
122,42))**

Today the glorious, ever-virgin Mary ascends to heaven. I urge you to rejoice, for, if I may so put it, she has been raised up in an ineffable way to be with Christ who reigns forever. The Queen of the world is today taken from the earth and from this present evil time. I say again: rejoice, because she who is sure of her imperishable glory has reached the palace of heaven.

Exalt, I say, and rejoice, and let the whole world rejoice, because this day Salvation has drawn nearer for us all...

"Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women." It was fitting that the Virgin should be given such gifts and be full of grace, since she has bestowed glory on heaven and has brought God and peace to the earth, faith to pagans, an end to vice, order to life, and discipline to morals. And it was right that an angel be sent to the Virgin, because virginity always means kinship with the angels...

"Rejoice," the angel says, "for you are full of grace." Yes, full! for while a share of grace was given to others, the undiminished fullness of grace was poured into Mary.

## **Responsory**

After the birth of your son, you remained a virgin.

- *After the birth of your son, you remained a virgin.*

Mother of God intercede for us;

- *you remained a virgin.*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

- *After the birth of your son, you remained a virgin.*

## **Canticle of Zechariah**

**Ant.** This daughter of Jerusalem is lovely and beautiful as she ascends to heaven like the rising sun at daybreak.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;  
he has come to his people and set them free.  
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,  
born of the house of his servant David.  
Through his holy prophets he promised of old,  
that he would save us from our enemies,  
from the hands of all who hate us.  
He promised to show mercy to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant.  
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham,  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
free to worship him without fear,  
holy and righteous in his sight  
all the days of our life.  
You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,  
To give his people knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of their sins  
In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

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.*

**Ant.** This daughter of Jerusalem is lovely and beautiful as she ascends to heaven like  
the rising sun at daybreak.

### **Intercessions**

Let us glorify our Savior, who chose the Virgin Mary for his mother. Let us ask him:

*-May your mother intercede for us, Lord.*

Eternal Word, you chose Mary as the uncorrupted ark of your dwelling place,  
free us from the corruption of sin.

*-May your mother intercede for us, Lord.*

You are our redeemer, who made the immaculate Virgin Mary your purest home and the  
sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, make us temples of your Spirit forever.

*-May your mother intercede for us, Lord.*

King of kings, you lifted your mother, body and soul, into heaven, help us to fix our  
thoughts on the things above.

*-May your mother intercede for us, Lord.*

Lord of heaven and earth, you crowned Mary and set her at your right hand as queen,  
make us worthy to share this glory.

*-May your mother intercede for us, Lord.*

O God, the Virgin Mary Accepted the call to be the Mother of Jesus, may the love of our own Franciscan vocation bring forth a new birth of Justice and holiness in the world.  
*-May your mother intercede for us, Lord.*

**Our Father...**

**Prayer**

All-powerful and ever-living God,  
you raised the sinless Virgin Mary,  
mother of your Son,  
body and soul to the glory of heaven.  
May we see heaven as our final goal  
and come to share her glory.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen

*May the Lord bless us, protect us from evil  
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**The Office of the Passion of Saint Francis of Assisi**  
**(The Geste of the Great King)**  
**By Laurent Gallant, OFM and Andre Cirino, OFM**

**Leader:** In the name of the Father.....  
Our Father..... Glory be.....

*Praises to be said at All the Hours*

**Leader:** Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God Almighty, You who are, who were and who are to come:

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

**Leader:** You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive praise and glory, honor and blessing:

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

**Leader:** Worthy is the slain Lamb to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength, honor, glory and blessing:

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

**Leader:** Let us bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit:

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

**Leader:** All you works of the Lord, bless the Lord:

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

**Leader:** Give praise to our God, all you God's servants and you who fear God, the small and the great:

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

**Leader:** Let heaven and earth praise the glorious One:

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

**Leader:** And every creature in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and the sea and everything in it:

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

**Leader:** Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

**Leader:** As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**All:** Let us praise and exalt God above all forever!

## **Prayer**

**Leader:** Almighty, most holy, most high and supreme God, all good, supreme good, totally good, You who alone are good, may we give back to You all praise, all glory, all grace, all honor, all blessing, and all good. So be it. So be it. Amen.

## **Antiphon**

**Leader:** Holy Virgin Mary, there is no one like you born in the world among women: Daughter and Handmaid of the Most High, sovereign King, the heavenly Father; Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ; Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Pray for us with St. Michael the archangel and with all the powers of the heavens and with all the saints together with your most holy beloved Son, Lord and Teacher. Glory Be.....

## **Psalm (Christ, the Hero, addresses Francis)**

*\*alternate strophes between men and women*

(1) With my voice I cried out to the Lord,  
with my voice I pleaded with the Lord.

(2) In God's sight I poured out my prayer,  
before God the story of my troubles.

(1) My spirit was failing within me,  
but you, you knew my paths.



- (2) On this road I was walking,  
the arrogant have hidden a trap for me.
- (1) I looked to my right and saw  
that no one recognized me.
- (2) There is no escape;  
no one cares for my life.
- (1) Because of you I have endured disgrace,  
confusion has covered my face.
- (2) I became a stranger to my kin,  
and a pilgrim to my mother's children.

*(Christ, the Hero, addresses the Father)*

- (1) Holy Father, zeal for your house has consumed me,  
and the abuses of your attackers have fallen on me.
- (2) They rejoiced and united against me;  
they scourged me and I knew not why.
- (1) They outnumber the hairs of my head,  
those who hate me without cause.
- (2) My enemies have been strengthened,  
those who persecute me unjustly;  
they made me repay what I did not steal.
- (1) Evil witnesses rose up, questioned me  
on things I knew nothing about.
- (2) They were repaying me evil for good;  
They were slandering me for pursuing goodness.
- (1) You are my most holy Father,  
my king and my God.
- (2) Make haste to help me,  
Lord, God of my salvation!

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,.....

## **Antiphon**

**Leader:** Holy Virgin Mary, there is no one like you born in the world among women: Daughter and Handmaid of the most high, sovereign King, the heavenly Father; Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ; Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Pray for us with St. Michael the archangel and with all the powers of the heavens and with all the saints together with your most holy beloved Son, Lord and Teacher. Glory....

## **Blessing-Dismissal**

**Leader:** Let us bless the Lord, the living and true God.

**All:** Let us always give back to God praise, glory, honor, blessing, and every Good.

**Leader:** Amen. Amen.

**All:** So be it. So be it.

## **Model Wake Service for Members Of the Secular Franciscan Order**

### **Introduction**

“Welcome, my Sister Death!” (II Cel., 217) With these words our Seraphic Father indicated his disposition toward that which causes fear and sorrow among much of the human family. The reality and tragedy of death cannot be ignored on the human level; and yet, as Christians we believe that death “has lost its sting” through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. As Franciscans, we believe even more strongly that “it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.” In view of this faith stance, death takes on an entirely new meaning. Thus, we celebrate the passing of (name of sister or brother) to a new and fruitful life in the company of the saints. While we express our feelings of loss, we continue to hope and trust in the promises of Christ. Death teaches us to cling to the cross of the Lord with the knowledge that having “been conformed with him in his death, we will be conformed with him in his resurrection from death.” (cf Phil 3:10-11) For our Father Francis, life was to search and strive for union with Christ through faith. Death for him was not a harsh reality, but the door through which he passed toward his ultimate goal—total union with the Father. What Francis sought through faith on earth, he achieved totally through death. The celebration of the death of a Franciscan shows forth the same faith as that which Francis possessed: our belief that death is the gateway to total union with God.

**Minister:** In the Name of the Lord. Amen. Grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**All:** May God be praised for his mercy to us, and may we experience his consolation now in our sorrow and be strengthened and enabled to share

his love with all people.

*(Minister places a copy of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order in the casket with the body of the deceased saying:)*

**Minister:** Our brother/sister N.N., was washed clean in baptism and nourished with the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Eucharist. As a Secular Franciscan, he/she was united more closely with the Lord and with us through the observance of our way of life. As he/she strove to follow this Rule of Life, may the Lord now take him/her to Himself and grant him/her a place among His saints in glory.

*(The fraternity now sings a suitable hymn.)*

**Minister:** As we contemplate the mystery of death and how it has affected our Fraternity in the passing of our brother/sister N.N., let us listen to the account of our Father Francis' passing to the Lord.

**Reader:** From the Major Life of St. Francis by Brother Bonaventure  
As the moment of his death drew near, the saint had all the friars that were there called to his side; he spoke to them gently with fatherly affection, consoling them for his death and exhorting them to love God. He mentioned especially poverty and patient endurance and the necessity of holding to the faith of the holy Roman Church and gave the Gospel pre-eminence over any other rule of life. The friars were grouped about him, and he stretched out his arms over them in the form of a cross, because he loved that sign, and blessed all the friars, both present and absent, in the power and in the name of the Crucified. Then he added, "I bid you goodbye, all you my sons, in the fear of God. Remain in him always. There will be trials and temptations in the future, and it is well for those who persevere in the life they have undertaken. I am on the way to God, and I commend you all to his favor." When he had finished his inspiring admonition, he told them to bring a book of the Gospels and asked to have the passage of St. John read which begins, "Before the paschal feast began." Then as best he could, he intoned the psalm, "Loud is my cry to the Lord, the prayer I utter for the Lord's mercy," and recited it all down to the last verse, "Too long have honest hearts waited to see you grant me redress."

At last, when all God's mysteries had been accomplished in him, his holy soul was freed from his body and assumed into the abyss of God's glory, and Francis fell asleep in God. One of the friars, a disciple of his, saw his soul being borne on a white cloud over many waters to heaven, under the appearance of a radiant star. It shone with the brightness of sublime sanctity, full of the abundance of divine wisdom and grace which had earned for him the right to enter the home of light and peace, where he rests with Christ forever. (Major Life, XIV, 5-6)

*(A period of silent reflection follows)*

**Reader:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape.

**All:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape.

**Reader:** 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.

**All:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape.

**Reader:** All praise by yours, my Lord, through all that you have made, and first my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and light you give to us through him. How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

**All:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape

**Reader:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars; in heavens you have made them, bright and precious and fair. All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and fair and stormy, all the weather's moods, by which you cherish all that you have made.

**All:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape.

**Reader:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water, so useful, lowly, precious and pure. All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten up the night. How beautiful he is, how joyful! Full of power and strength.

**All:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape.

**Reader:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our Mother, who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

**All:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape.

**Reader:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon for love of you; through those who endure sickness and trial. Happy those who endure in peace, by You, Most High, they will be crowned.

**All:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape.

**Reader:** Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those She finds doing your will! The second death can do no harm to them. Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks, and serve him with great humility.

**All:** All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape.

**Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:1-12**

Seeing the crowds, he went up the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you."

*(Silent reflection)*

**Minister:** The Lord Jesus said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Those who believe in me, even if they die, will live and every living person who puts faith in me will never suffer eternal death." Let us pray to him for our brother/sister N.

Lord Jesus, you raise those who sleep in death to life. Give N., our brother/sister life eternal.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Minister:** You washed our brother/sister clean in the waters of baptism and sealed him/her with the seal of the Holy Spirit. Bring him/her to a place of light and refreshment in your kingdom.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Minister:** Our brother/sister was fed with your Body and Blood, may he/she find a place at table with you at the heavenly banquet.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Minister:** Our brother/sister was united with us in the Franciscan family. Grant him/her all that was promised by our Father Francis.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Minister:** Remember us Lord when you come into your Kingdom and teach us to pray:

**All:** Our Father....

**Minister:** Lord, Jesus Christ, we trust in you, and hope in your glorious resurrection. Hear our prayers for our brother/sister N., whom you have called to yourself, and grant him/her eternal life.  
We praise and glorify you who live in perfect Trinity and simple Unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

**Minister:** Before we take leave of our brother/sister for the last time, let us bless him/her with the Blessing of St. Francis.

**All:** 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/sister N.

**Minister:** Our prayer for our brother/sister has ended. Let us go now, and until that time when the Lord shall gather us all into his Kingdom, let us live in his peace.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

### **Transitus of Saint Francis of Assisi**

**Hymn** "Let all things now Living."

#### **Introductory Remarks**

Brothers and Sisters, we have come together to gratefully commemorate the death of St. Francis. He wanted to undergo death in an unforgettable manner, in imitation of Christ and united to Him. Christ's death is full of mystery. Nobody has suffered a more painful death than the Son of Man, for nobody has lived as completely and intensely.

And yet, He always spoke about His death and resurrection in the same breath.

The same is true of St. Francis. We celebrate his Transitus, his passing from earthly existence with its pain and penance to the everlasting life in heaven with the joyful fruits of resurrected life.

Today, as we commemorate the death of St. Francis in a kind of primitive mystery-play, we also remember Christ's going away to his Father.

Please take a moment and light your candle.

**Narrator:**

Dear friends, since the earliest days of the Franciscan Orders in the 13th Century, the followers of Saint Francis, and those who love him, have gathered on the night of October 3rd, the anniversary of his holy death, to celebrate his passage into eternal life.

Here in this place, we gather to follow our earlier, beloved Franciscan sisters and brothers in this celebration of the holy light that Saint Francis was in his world and continues to be in ours today. This Transitus is a memorial of a dear father and friend who has left this earth before us and a celebration of the love of this humble, joyful little saint in our midst even now. We pray that his holy light burns brightly in each of our hearts today, and that we joyfully carry that light into the world for the glory of God.

**Reader 1:**

Evening, October 3, 1226. Four kilometers down Mount Subasio from Assisi, through Umbrian farmland at its base to a small wood. An ancient chapel, the Porziuncola, sits surrounded by mud and stick huts in a clearing. Twenty short steps east from the Porziuncola, Francis lies in the open, blending with the hard-packed dirt, carried from a wattle hut earlier in the afternoon on a course litter made of two patched brown habits stretched between oak limbs. A pile of habits lies pungent beside the hut entrance, each tenderly laid down by a friar wanting only to do some small thing to help, to give, to love. Only two were needed, perhaps only one, really, for the tiny, withered body, pierced hand, foot, and side with the wounds of the cross. With the cooling air and the realization of the wave of faces washing back into the dim forest, the pile has slowly dwindled.

**Reader 2:**

There is no hawking here, no sudden gust of laughter or shrill children racing through the crowd. Pilgrims from Assisi, from Perugia, Florence, Rome, and everywhere have swarmed into the oak forest and surround the tiny church and huts, a silent flowing crowd sharing a single broken heart. Wave upon wave of downcast faces wash toward the center of their devotion, lying helplessly on the earth. Deeper in the wood, flocks of starlings collect silently in the branches.

Brown figures kneel near the broken figure on the ground, some weeping, others bowed low, and a tiny core of friars, stiff from age and self-denial, minister to their father, brother, and saint.

The wood holds its breath in the fading light.

**Saint Francis:**

A moth's dusty wings beat in my chest. I go as I came, with the love of God, and nothing of this world. Mother Earth rises and falls through me like a deep pulse. I see

only unfocused, dimly penetrating, flickering light and smell fatty, sputtering candles and the earthy mix of dirt, unclean bodies, and scrubbed souls. The buzzing of bees penetrate my thoughts, my prayers, my pain, suddenly breaking into single voices that I recognize, words that hover for a moment and then flit away. Whispers of air as bodies pass. Coarse hands gently touching my side, my hands, my feet. A brother's kiss on my left hand? A father's warm tear on my right?

The Passion still runs through my mind in waves, thundering, whispering, wrenching at my heart. My spirit shudders with my Lord's anguish, my mind reels with His fear, and the tears still flow from my eyes, unfelt, coursing down the scorched skin of my temples. Will they finally empty me? Will they cleanse me?

I have lived a leper, wandering the world in rags, crying, "unclean, unclean...", carrying sin like sores upon brother ass, filling God's nostrils with my stench, bloody kneed from stumbling under the weight of my own folly. My God and my all.... if you wish, you can make me clean.

### **Reader 3:**

The story of the death of St. Francis, from St. Bonaventure

The hour of his departure being at hand, he commanded all the brethren who were in that place to be called to him, and comforted them with consoling words, concerning his death, exhorting them to fatherly affection to the divine love. He spoke to them at length concerning patience, poverty, and faithful obedience to the Holy Roman Church, preferring the Holy Gospel to all other laws and institutions. And as all the brethren surrounded him, he extended his hands over them in the form of a cross, crossing his arms in the form of that sign which he had ever loved; and so, he blessed all the brethren, whether present or absent, in the name and in the power of the Crucified.

**Reader 4:** Then he added: "Farewell, my children, abide in the fear of the Lord, and ever persevere therein. And when any temptation or trouble approaches you say: "Blessed are they who persevere in those things which they have begun. And now I go to God, to Whose grace I commend you all."

When he had finished these loving admonitions, this man, most dear to God, commanded that the Book of the Gospels should be brought to him, and that the place of the Gospel of St. John should be read to him.

**Minister:** A reading from the Holy Gospel, according to John.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

Before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So,



during the supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist.

Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well."

Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so, you are clean, but not all". For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So, when he had washed their feet (and) put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master', and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Narrator:**

And then, as best he could, he broke forth into that verse of the psalm, "With full voice I cry to the Lord....

**Cantor:** With full voice, I cry to the Lord; with full voice, I beseech the Lord.  
Before God I pour out my complaint, lay bare my distress.  
My spirit is faint within me, but you know my path.  
Along the way I walk they have hidden a trap for me.  
I look to my right hand, but no friend is there.  
There is no escape for me; no one cares for me.  
I cry out to you, Lord, I say, you are my refuge,  
My portion in the land of the living.  
Listen to my cry for help, for I am brought very low.  
Rescue me from my pursuers, for they are too strong for me.  
Lead me out of my prison, that I may give thanks to your name  
Then the just shall gather around me because you have been good to me.

**Narrator:** All these mysteries being then accomplished in him, his most holy soul being set free and absorbed in the abyss of the divine glory, the blessed man slept in the Lord. Please blow out your candle. Let us enter now into silent reflection.

*Period of Silent Reflection*

**Hymn:** "Open My Eyes, Lord"

**Narrator:** Before Saint Francis left us, he completed the last stanza of a canticle praising God for the beauty and goodness of the world, and for our Sister, Bodily Death, which brought him, and brings us, to everlasting joy.....

**St. Francis:** 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 to 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 precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all 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 and 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 the 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.

**Minister:** Dear sisters and brothers, in the spirit of the Beatitudes, and as pilgrims and strangers in this world on our way home to the Father, let us strive to purify our hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.

And as the Father sees in every person the features of His Beloved Son, and in the spirit of St. Francis, may we leave here and, with gentle and courteous spirit, accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

And may God bless us all, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Recessional Hymn:** “Prayer of St. Francis”

Peter Gruning ofs, member of St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Los Tres Companeros Region

### **Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi “passing over” from this life to the glory of heaven**

#### **Introductory Rite**

Each year on the evening of October 3rd the Franciscan family throughout the world pauses to celebrate the solemnity of our Holy Father Francis’s Transitus, passing over from this life to the next. In his famous Canticle of the Creatures, the saint from Assisi wrote “Praised be to You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape.” That line, written as our Seraphic Father Francis was nearing his own embrace of Sister Bodily Death, reflects the importance and natural character of death in the life of all creation. Francis was not afraid of what would come at the end of his earthly life, instead he chose to recognize in that experience, not an end, but a transition from one way of living to another. Let our prayerful celebration of this event be a reminder to renew our own commitment to follow Christ in the way of the poor man of Assisi.

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, in all your churches in the whole world, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** Let us bless our Lord and God, living and true;

**All:** To him we must attribute all praise, glory, honor, blessing and every good forever. Amen.

**Leader:** Brothers and sisters, a very ancient tradition draws us together on the eve of St. Francis’ Feast Day to celebrate his Transitus; the final stage of his journey home to God. While rejoicing in the saint’s holy death and glorious entry into heaven, we give thanks to God the Father, that in his Son, and by his Spirit’s power, we too can welcome

death as our “sister,” and trusting in his mercy, can live now in the sure hope of resurrection.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**All:** And with your spirit.

**Leader:** Let us pray: Lord God, on this night you gave to our Holy Father Francis, the Poverello of Assisi, the reward of perfect beatitude. In your love, lead us who celebrate his Transitus, to follow closely in his footsteps, and come, in our turn, to worship you face to face, in a joy that knows no ending.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**All:** Amen. Amen. Alleluia!

## **THE NARRATIVE OF THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS**

**Reader 1:** St. Francis was lying grievously ill and in pain in the Bishop’s house in Assisi, when a doctor was called for the last time. He said to Francis:

**Reader 2:** “I must tell you, that according to our science, your malady is incurable and in my opinion you will die at the end of September or the beginning of October.”

**Reader 1:** Raising his arms to heaven, the sick man joyfully cried out:

**Reader 3:** “You are welcome, welcome, my dear Sister Death.”

**Reader 1:** Then turning to a friar, he asked that Brothers Angelo and Leo be called to help him share this good news by singing beside his bed. In spite of their tears, the two brothers began to intone the Canticle of Brother Sun:

**All:** All creatures of our God and King,  
Lift up your voice and let us sing; Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Bright burning sun with golden beam,  
Pale silver moon with softer gleam,  
O praise him! O praise him!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Reader 1:** The friars sang the Canticle many times a day to comfort the saint’s failing spirit, and sometimes through the night as well. Not all were pleased. Finally, Brother Elias came to Francis and said:

**Reader 2:** “Well-beloved Father, for my part I rejoice that you should be joyful; but I fear this city, which regards you as a saint, may be scandalized to see that you do not prepare yourself for death in quite another manner.”

**Reader 1:** The saint smiled and replied:

**Reader 3:** “Leave me, good Brother, for in spite of what I endure, I feel myself so near to God, that I cannot hold myself from singing.”

**Reader 1:** Responding to Francis’ expressed desire, Brother Elias arranged for him to be carried to the Portiuncula. The magistrates of Assisi consented and sent an armed escort. When the cortège reached Santa Maria le Mura, Francis raised himself on the litter, and seemed for some time to be contemplating this lovely and familiar view of the city, which he could no longer see. Then painfully he lifted his arm and blessed it:

**Reader 3:** “Be blest of God, O holy city! On your account many souls shall be saved, many servants of God shall dwell in you, and from your midst many shall be chosen for the kingdom of life everlasting.”

**Reader 1:** At the Portiuncula, Francis was given a tiny hut in the forest near to the Chapel of St. Mary of the Angels. Again, he sensed the solitude of this beautiful place so often visited by the Spirit of God, and he rejoiced as he heard from within the chapel the friars sing:

**All:**     Swift flowing water, pure and clear,  
              Make music for your Lord to hear,  
              Alleluia! Alleluia!  
              Fierce fire so masterful and bright,  
              Providing us both warmth and light,  
              O praise him! O praise him!  
              Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Reader 1:** This forest solitude was the right setting for Francis’ “passing over” to God, for it was to be an event of radiant beauty. Francis took leave of this world with the same simplicity and courtesy that had marked all the events of his life. He forgot no one or nothing; his sons, his daughters, the places he loved, the Lady of his thoughts, all the creatures with whom he had been so united, shared in his farewells and benedictions. He recommended to his brothers the beloved Portiuncula:

**Reader 3:** “Brothers, this is a holy place. Hold it ever in veneration and never abandon it.”

**Reader 1:** In honor of his Lady Poverty, he asked that he be laid naked on the ground, and covering with one hand the wound in his side he said:

**Reader 3:** “I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you what is yours.

**Reader 1:** His friars begged him to forgive them for any offenses, and to bless them again. This he readily did, placing his hand successively on the head of each, and then he addressed himself to his first follower, Brother Bernard of Quintavalle:

**Reader 3:** “See, my son, I am being called by God. I forgive all my brothers, present and absent, all their faults and offenses, and I absolve them insofar as I am able. When you give them this message, bless them all for me.”

**All:** All you that are of tender heart,  
Forgiving others, take your part.  
Sing his praises! Alleluia!  
All you that pain and sorrow bear,  
Praise God, and on him cast your care!  
O praise him! O praise him!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Reader 1:** Nor did Francis forget Sister Clare, who he learned was weeping at the thought of losing her father and friend. He sent a message to his “little spiritual plant”:

**Reader 3:** “Tell Lady Clare to put aside all her grief and sorrow over not being able to see me now. Let her be assured that before her death, both she and her sisters will see me and, because of me, they will be greatly consoled.”

**Reader 1:** Francis also sent a message to his friend, the Lady Jacoba of Rome, that she should come in haste with what is needed for his burial. Before the courier left the room, a brother ran in to announce her arrival, and Francis cried weakly:

**Reader 3:** “God be praised, let the door be opened, for the rule forbidding women to enter here does not apply to Brother Jacoba!”

**Reader 1:** The Roman Lady had carried with her all that was needed for the saint's burial, and a box of almond biscuits, which Francis tried to, but could not eat because he was so weak. More and more often the Canticle of Brother Sun was heard from the hut, with the new verses Francis had composed in praise of “our Sister Death of the Body”:

**All:** And you, most kind and gentle death,  
Waiting to hush our final breath,  
O praise him! Alleluia!  
You lead back home the child of God,  
Where Christ our Lord the way has trod:  
O praise him! O praise him!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Reader 2:** *[The Gospel according to John is proclaimed.]*  
*(If no Deacon: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (JN 13:1 – 15))*

**Deacon:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** And with your spirit.

**Deacon:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well." Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so, you are clean, but not all." For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So, when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Reader 1:** At dusk on the next day, "she to whom no one willingly opens the door" presented herself, and Francis saw her enter. The little poor man received her courteously:

**Reader 3:** "Be welcome, my Sister Death."

**Reader 1:** And he begged a brother to announce, as a herald of arms does, the solemn arrival of his expected guest; for he added:

**Reader 3:** "It is she who is going to introduce me to eternal life."

**Reader 1:** They placed him on the ground in a coarse sackcloth to honor the somber guest, his head was covered with ashes and dust. Then Psalm 142 was prayed:

*[Alternate verses beginning with the right side]*

With all my voice I cry to the Lord,  
with all my voice I entreat the Lord.  
I pour out my trouble before him;  
I tell him all my distress  
while my spirit faints within me.  
But you, O Lord, know my path.  
On the way where I shall walk  
they have hidden a snare to entrap me.  
Look on my right and see:  
there is no one who takes my part.  
I have no means of escape,  
not one who cares for my soul.

I cry to you, O Lord.  
I have said: "You are my refuge  
all I have in the land of the living."  
Listen, then, to my cry  
for I am in the depths of distress.

Rescue me from those who pursue me  
for they are stronger than I.  
Bring my soul out of this prison  
and then I shall praise your name.  
Around me the just will assemble  
because of your goodness to me.  
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.

**Reader 1:** There was a great silence. Evening had already stolen into the hut. Francis lay motionless. The final stage of his Transitus had begun. One of his biographers wrote: "He died singing, in the forty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of his conversion." Immediately a multitude of crested larks flocked about the roof of the hut and with their sad chirping, bewailed the loss of their friend. At the same hour, a Brother, one of no small fame, saw a shining star, borne on a white cloud, mounting towards heaven. The soul of the Little Poor Man was flying to eternal happiness!

**All:** Let all things their creator bless,  
And worship him in humbleness!  
O praise him! Alleluia!  
Praise God the Father, praise the Son,  
And praise the Spirit, Three-in-One:  
O praise him! O praise him! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!



**Leader:** Let us pray. (*moment of silence*)

O God, you granted the reward of eternal life to our blessed father, Francis. Grant that we who celebrate with tender devotion and filial Affection the memory of his passing from death to new life, may ourselves one day have the joy of sharing with him the gifts of the heavenly Kingdom. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
May he turn his face to you and have mercy on you.  
May he turn his countenance to you and give you peace.  
May the Lord bless you: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Note:** *There are 4 parts: Leader; Reader 1; Reader 2 (once as the physician, Brother Elias and proclaims the Gospel); and Reader 3 (Francis)*

*[adapted from Pearl McGill, T.S.S.F., a Tertiary of the Western Australia Region; sources used: Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (Vol. 1: The Saint; Vol. II: The Founder; Vol. III: The Prophet), Editors: Regis Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap.; J.A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv.; and William J. Short, O.F.M., 1999 – 2001; The Words of St. Francis by James Meyer, O.F.M., 1982; Compiled by Deacon Dave & Thérèse Ream, O.F.S., Revised July 2017.]*

## **TRANSITUS SERVICE IN ONE'S OWN HOME**

The following observance may be done in the privacy of your own home or with a few others in your living room or parlor.

*(Light two candles and have a relic or image of St. Francis available.)*

**Begin with Evening Prayer 1 from the Liturgy of the Hours.**

*(If you do not have the Liturgy of the Hours or do not know how to pray it, pray instead the Fourth and Fifth Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, 'The Crucifixion of Jesus' and 'The Death of Jesus on the Cross'.)*

*Read the following excerpt from Francis's Testament given shortly before he died:*

### **The Testament of Saint Francis (1226)**

I worked with my own hands, and I am still determined to work, and with all my heart I wish to have all the rest of the brothers work at employment that can be carried out without scandal. Those who do not know how to work should learn, not because they

want to get something for their efforts, but to give good example and to avoid idleness. And should the wages of our work not be given to us; we can turn to God's table and beg alms from door to door. God revealed a form of greeting to me, telling me that we should say, "God give you peace."

*(Pause for a few moments of silent reflection)*

**Venerate (kiss or touch) the Relic or image of St. Francis.**

**An appropriate hymn or song may be sung.**

**The following antiphon is said:**

*Alleluia, Alleluia, Francis, poor and humble, enters heaven rich and is welcomed with celestial hymns. Alleluia.*

**Then follows Psalm 142:**

A maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A prayer.

With full voice I cry to the LORD; with full voice I beseech the LORD.  
Before God I pour out my complaint, lay bare my distress.  
My spirit is faint within me, but you know my path.  
Along the way I walk they have hidden a trap for me.  
I look to my right hand, but no friend is there.  
There is no escape for me; no one cares for me.  
I cry out to you, LORD, I say,  
You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.  
Listen to my cry for help, for I am brought very low.  
Rescue me from my pursuers, for they are too strong for me.  
Lead me out of my prison, that I may give thanks to your name.  
Then the just shall gather around me because you have been good to me.  
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.

**The Antiphon is repeated:**

*Alleluia, Alleluia, Francis, poor and humble, enters heaven rich and is welcomed with celestial hymns. Alleluia.*

*(Blow out the candles to signify the death of Saint Francis.)*

**Then, having in mind St. Francis' devotion to the wounds of our Lord, and looking at the figure of the Crucified, with arms outstretched, say five times the prayer of Our Lord:**

*Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.*

**End with the following prayer:**

*O God, you granted our blessed Father Francis the reward of everlasting joy: grant that we, who celebrate the memory of his death, may at last come to the same eternal joy; through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Mini Retreat for Good Friday and the Triduum**  
**40 Days, 40 Ways A New Look at Lent**  
**by: Marcellino D'Ambrosio**

Sundown on Holy Thursday marks the beginning of three sacred days (Triduum) that changed the destiny of the human race. Few of us have sufficient time to make use of all the following prayer suggestions during these holy days, but it would be a tragedy to let this season of grace go by without taking some time for extended prayer and reflection. So, steal away as much time as you can and let the Holy Spirit help you choose which devotions will best help you make the most of this special time.

**Holy Thursday**

John 13:1-18:27 deals with the words and deeds of Jesus on the evening of Holy Thursday, including washing the feet of the disciples, the Last Supper discourse and priestly prayer of our Lord, Jesus's arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, and Peter's denial. Prayerfully read as much of this as you can—these are some of the most powerful and moving chapters in the entire Bible.

**Good Friday Morning**

1. Repentance for Complicity in Christ's Betrayal (approx. 60 minutes)

Read Luke 22:39-23:26, but first ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer these questions during your reading:

\*In what way am I an accomplice in the betrayal and execution of the Lord?

\*Whom in the Gospel narrative do I most resemble: The disciples asleep in the garden? The cowardly Peter? The irresponsible Pilate? Someone else? Write down the answers in your journal, if you keep one.

In response to the Holy Spirit's prompting:

\*Pray a prayer repenting of the particular sins in your life that have made you an

accomplice in the Lord's betrayal and execution.

\*Confidently ask the Lord to help you uproot these sins from your life.

\*Finally, seal this process by a slow, prayerful reading of Psalm 51. You might even feel led to memorize a portion of it.

## 2. Putting on the Mind of Christ (approx. 30 minutes)

Now that we have cast off the "mind" of darkness, we can put on the "the mind of Christ."

\*Read Philippians 2:5-11 and consider how Jesus' humble self-offering on the cross was the perfect manifestation of his "mind".

\*Read Philippians 2:14-15 and see how St. Paul commands us to have the same mind as the Lord.

\*Ask the Lord what characteristics of his mind he wishes to impart to you in a new way during these special days: Humility? Obedience? A new degree of service or love? Some other characteristic? Ask him to show you how this is to be worked out concretely and practically in the present circumstances of your life. Write in your journal whatever the Lord tells you.

\*Say yes to what he wants to do in you and ask him to make it happen by the power of his Spirit.

\*Use Psalm 116, one of the "Hallel" psalms prayed by Jesus at the Last Supper, to express your gratitude to the Lord for freeing you from sin through his death and for bestowing upon you his mind.

### **Good Friday Afternoon**

The most solemn time of the whole Christian year is from noon to 3 pm on Good Friday since that was the time of the Lord's agony on the cross according to the Gospel of John. During this time, we should strive to honor the death of the Lord in the most personal and heartfelt way possible.

\*Meditate slowly and deeply upon Isaiah 52:13-53:13. This is the song of the Suffering Servant.

\*Read Zechariah 12:10 and respond with a silent prayer of mourning and adoration. You may wish to make use of the "Jesus Prayer" which consists of the following petition repeated over and over; "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

\*In Jesus' time, the way to refer to a psalm was not by its number but by its first line. Jesus' cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," is the first line of Psalm 22. Read this entire psalm slowly, as if the whole thing were Jesus' prayer from the cross.

\*Meditate on Hebrews 9:11-28. This Scripture relates how Christ the High Priest, by the shedding of his own blood, entered the sanctuary once and for all.

\*Read the selections from St. Ephrem and Melito of Sardis below. Use the thanksgiving prayer that follows to help you express gratitude for what the Lord did for us through his suffering and death.

“Our Lord subjected his might and they seized him, so that through his living death he might give life to Adam. He gave his hands to be pierced by nails to make up for the hand which plucked the fruit. He was struck on his cheek in the judgement room to make up for the mouth that ate in Eden. And while Adam’s foot was free, his feet were pierced. Our Lord was stripped that we might be clothed. With the gall and vinegar, he sweetened the poison of the serpent which had bitten men.” –St. Ephren (4<sup>th</sup> century)

“This is the one who patiently endured many things in many people: this is the one who was murdered in Abel, and bound as a sacrifice in Isaac, and exiled in Jacob, and sold in Joseph, and exposed in Moses, and sacrificed in the lamb, and hunted down in David, and dishonored in the prophets. This is the one who became human in a virgin, who was hanged on the tree, who was buried in the earth, who was resurrected from among the dead, and who raised mankind up out of the grave below to the heights of heaven. The one who hung the earth in space, is himself hanged; the one who fixed the heavens in place, is himself impaled; the one who firmly fixed all things, is himself firmly fixed to the tree. The Lord is insulted, God has been murdered, the King of Israel has been destroyed by the right hand of Israel. This is the lamb that was slain. This is the lamb that was silent. This is the one who was taken from the flock, was dragged to sacrifice, was killed in the evening, was buried at night; the one who was not broken while on the tree, who did not see dissolution while in the earth, who rose up from the dead, and who raised up mankind from the grave below.”

--St. Melito of Sardis (2<sup>nd</sup> century)

### **Thanksgiving Prayers for Use During Holy Week**

**Father of Mercy and Salvation**, as you planted the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, so you have planted the cross of your Son in the New Paradise, replacing the tree that brought us death with the gracious tree that brings us life.

**Response: Glory to you, O Lord.**

As you judged the earth by water and saved Noah by means of the ark, so you judged the world in the water of your Son’s pierced side and saved a remnant through the wood of his cross.

**Response: Glory to you, O Lord.**

As Abraham’s only son, the son he loved, bore to Moriah the wood of his sacrifice, so your only Son, the beloved Son, bore his cross to Golgotha, that the blessing of Abraham might be given to the world.

**Response: Glory to you, O Lord.**

As Joseph was sold by his brothers and reckoned as dead yet was raised in glory to the King’s right hand, so your Son was delivered to death by his brothers and raised in glory by your Spirit to rule at your side.

**Response: Glory to you, O Lord.**

As the blood of the lamb turned away the angel of death and delivered Israel from Pharaoh's reign so the blood of your Son has saved us from death and delivered us from bondage to Satan and the world.

**Response: Glory to you, O Lord.**

As the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies with blood to atone for the sins of the people, so your Son entered the true Holy Place and presented the blood that atones for the sins of the world.

**Response: Glory to you, O Lord.**

As Moses raised the serpent in the wilderness to heal those who suffered for their sin, so the Son of Man was lifted on the cross to bear our sin and make us whole.

**Response: Glory to you, O Lord.**

As Jonah lay three days in the belly of the whale and was raised from death to preach repentance to the Gentiles, so your Son was raised from the bowels of the earth to reconcile all nations to yourself.

**Response: Glory to you, O Lord.**

### **Holy Saturday**

Today is a day of waiting, a Day of Silence. Most Christian churches allow no celebrations on this day, including burials, weddings, the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper. In some churches, Communion is only offered to those in imminent danger of death. All this is a tremendous reminder of salvation by grace working through faith. Our Christian life is completely dependent upon the Lord's resurrection, but there is absolutely nothing we can do to make this happen. So, we wait and meditate on the statement of the Apostles' Creed: "He descended into hell."

\*Ponder Psalm 16 and Psalm 24. The "gates" mentioned in the latter psalm can refer to the gates of hell, which Jesus, the man with clean hands and pure heart, enters after his righteous death in order to liberate those who are held captive there.

\*Meditate on Romans 6:3-11

\*Read the amazing Holy Saturday homily preserved from the days of the early Church below:

"It is he who was made man of the Virgin, he who was hung on the tree; it is he who was buried in the earth, raised from the dead, and taken up to the heights of heaven. He is the mute lamb, the slain lamb, the lamb born of Mary, the fair ewe. He was seized from the flock, dragged off to be slaughtered, sacrificed in the evening, and buried at night. On the tree no bone of his was broken; in the earth his body knew no decay. He is the One who rose from the dead, and who raised man from the depths of the tomb. Something strange is happening—there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silent because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and hell trembles with fear.

He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, he who is both God and the son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the cross, the weapon that had won him the victory. At the sight of him Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror, and cried out to everyone: "My Lord be with you all." Christ answered him: "And with your spirit." He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying: "Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. Out of love for you and for your descendants I now by my own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise. I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I am in you; together we form only one person and we cannot be separated. For your sake I, your God, became your son; I, the Lord, took the form of a slave; I, whose home is above the heavens, descended to the earth and beneath the earth. For your sake, for the sake of man, I became like a man without help, free among the dead. For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed to the Jews in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden. See on my face the spittle I received in order to restore to you the life I once breathed into you. See there the marks of the blows I received in order to refashion your warped nature in my image. On my back see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See my hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree.

I slept on the cross and a sword pierced my side for you who slept in paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side has healed the pain in yours. My sleep will rouse you from your sleep-in hell. The sword that pierced me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you.

Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly paradise. I will not restore you to that paradise, but I will enthrone you in heaven. I forbade you the tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I who am life itself am now one with you. I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The throne formed by cherubim awaits you, its bearers swift and eager. The bridal chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The kingdom of heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.

--Office of Readings for Holy Saturday

## **Easter Week**

The resurrection of the Lord is too great of an event to celebrate for only one day! Following the Jewish practice of celebrating the Passover for eight days (an octave), the early Church celebrated Easter in high gear for an entire week. One great way for us to continue this tradition is to read a different resurrection Scripture each day of Easter week and attend Mass daily, or at least on as many days during the Easter octave as we can.

Monday—Matthew 28:8-15  
Tuesday—John 20:11-18  
Wednesday—Luke 24:13-35  
Thursday—Luke 24:35-48  
Friday—John 21:1-14

Saturday—Mark 16:9-15  
Sunday—John 20:19-31

## **Renewal of Commitment to Franciscan Life**

All praise be yours, O Lord, for all creation gives you glory.  
All praise be yours, O Lord, for all good comes from you.  
All praise be yours, O Lord, for you call me to the life of your Risen Son.  
Today, I re-dedicate myself to the call you have given me.  
I renew and profess my commitment to a Gospel vision of life handed on to me  
by my Seraphic Father, Francis, and my Mother Clare.  
I ask your help to continue to live the life of the Gospel, with obedience to your  
Spirit and your Church, with poverty that imitates the life of your Son and his  
most holy Mother, and with chastity that frees me to love you and all your people  
with unmeasured love.  
All praise be yours, O Lord. Amen.





## **V. Virtues**

### **The Virtue of Eucharistic Reverence**

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to His disciples said, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then He took a cup, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink, this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.” (Matthew 26:26-29)

“Behold daily He humbles Himself as when from His “royal throne” He came into the womb of the Virgin: daily He Himself comes to us with like humility; daily He descends from the bosom of His Father upon the altar in the hands of the priest. And as he appeared in true flesh to the Holy Apostles, so now He shows Himself to us in the sacred Bread; and as they by means of their fleshly eyes saw only His flesh, yet contemplating Him with their spiritual eyes, believed Him to be God, so we, seeing bread and wine with bodily eyes, see and firmly believe it to be His most holy Body and true and living Blood. And in this way our Lord is ever with His faithful, as He Himself says: “Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” (Admonitions 1)

“Let us all clergymen, consider the great sin and the ignorance some have toward the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and His most holy names and written words that consecrate His Body. We know It cannot be His Body without first being consecrated by word. For we have and see nothing bodily of the Most High in this world except His Body and Blood, His names and words through which we have been made and redeemed from death to life.

Let all those who administer such most holy mysteries, however, especially those who administer them illicitly, consider how very dirty are the chalices, corporals, and altar linens upon which His Body and Blood are sacrificed. It is placed and left in many dirty places, carried about unbecomingly, received unworthily, and administered to others without discernment. Even His written names and words are at times left to be trampled underfoot; for the carnal person does not perceive the things of God.

Are we not moved by piety at these things when the pious Lord puts Himself into our hands and we touch Him and receive Him daily with our mouth? Do we refuse to recognize that we must come into His hands? Let us, therefore, amend our ways quickly and firmly in these and all other matters.” (Letter to the Clergy, St. Francis of Assisi)

Spend some time reading again the words of Saint Francis on the Blessed Sacrament. While most people think of Saint Francis as the bird bath saint, they have widely missed the mark. Saint Francis should be pictured with a chalice. He was deeply devoted to the Eucharist. The passages above are a mere fraction of Francis’s writings on the Eucharist.

Why is the Eucharist so important? Obviously, because the Eucharist is the Lord Jesus Christ physically present among us. Albeit, He is present humbly, under the appearance of simple bread. Devotion to the Eucharist is a virtue because it recognizes that our great, eternal, uncreated God submits Himself to us in this humble and unassuming way. What does this teach us about how we should act?

We can begin by reflecting on how we prepare to receive the Eucharist. Are we well-disposed? Do we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly acknowledging our sins in repentance? Do we encourage others to receive the Eucharist in a worthy manner or are we apathetic? Worse than that, do we encourage others to receive the Eucharist in an unworthy manner? Do we walk reverently forward and show a sign of reverence and respect to the Lord whom we are going to take into our body? After receiving, do we communicate in prayer with God, Who is now physically within us? Do we understand what that means for us and for everyone else who has also received Him?

At the end of your meditation time ask yourself:

1. Do I believe in the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament? If not, how can I resolve my disbelief? Am I reverent to the Blessed Sacrament? How can I foster and deepen this reverence? How can my behavior and my words foster reverence in others? How can I help others to understand the Real Presence?
2. Find another section in Scripture which illustrates the Virtue of Eucharistic Reverence.
3. Find the Article in our Rule, Constitutions, and Statutes that speak about the Eucharist.
4. Practice the Virtue of Eucharistic Reverence this week. If you cannot receive the Blessed Sacrament, make a Spiritual Communion. You can also pray the Chaplet of Adoration in reparation for the many offenses against the Blessed Sacrament.
5. Each evening, review the times during which you showed reverence to the Eucharist. If you have not done well, resolve to improve. Pray each night, "Lord, help me to treat Your Body and Blood with the reverence deserving of You. I am weak and easily distracted. Help me to focus on Your Presence as You are focused on me. Amen."

Adapted from *Franciscan Virtues Through the Year: 52 Steps to Conversion from Saint Francis of Assisi*, written by the members of the Confraternity of Penitents, 2016

## **The Virtue of Silence**

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” (Luke 5:16)

“Those who want to remain in hermitages to lead a religious life should be three brothers, or four at most; of these, let two be “mothers” and have two “sons”, or one at least. The two that are “mothers” should maintain the life of Martha and the two “sons” the life of Mary, and have a single enclosure, in which each may have his cell to pray and sleep in. And they are always to say Compline of the day immediately after Sunset. And they should make sure to keep the silence. And they are to recite their Hours. And they are to get up for Matins. And let the first thing they seek be the kingdom of God and his justice. .... And as to the enclosure where they stay, they may not allow any person either to enter or to eat there. Those brothers who are the “mothers” are to make sure they keep their distance from people and, on account of the obedience due their minister, shield their “sons” from people, so that nobody can get to speak with them. And those “sons” are not to speak with any person other than their “mothers” and their minister and custodian, when he wishes to visit them with the blessing of the Lord God.” (Rule for Hermitages)

“I want to leave and bequeath to the brothers the place of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula as a testament, that it may always be held in the greatest reverence and devotion by the brothers. Our old brothers did this: for although the place itself is holy, they preserved its holiness with constant prayer day and night and by constant silence. And if, at times they spoke after the time established for silence, they discussed with the greatest devotion and decorum matters pertaining to the praise of God and the salvation of souls. If it happened, and it rarely did, that someone began to utter useless or idle words, immediately he was corrected by another.” (The Assisi Compilation, Chapter 56)

Silence is a virtue in many ways. When we keep silent instead of saying something critical or hurtful that would've benefited no one, we have practiced the Virtue of Silence. When we let others speak and we listen without interrupting, we have practiced the Virtue of Silence. When we allow our minds to be alone with God, without interruption or distraction or noise, unless charity for others impels us, we have practiced the Virtue of Silence.

Do you like silence? Would you rather have noise and activity? Silence can be threatening because, in the silence, we must confront our fears, our sins, our wounds, and our needs without anything to distract us. This is why Jesus went to lonely places to pray. He had no distractions there to keep him from his focus on God.

Those who wish to follow Jesus need to have silence in their lives. They need to find a place where they can be alone with God and where He can speak to their heart without interruption from outside activity. Silence is a virtue, not in itself, but by what is accomplished when one is silent. One speaks to God and then lets God speak. One allows other people to speak and refrains from speaking hurtful words. Often, we must

work at maintaining silence or finding silence in our lives. How much silence does your life have?

\*Spend some time meditating on the Virtue of Silence. Begin your time by praying, “Lord, help me to see the value of the Virtue of Silence. How can I find silence? How can I be silent? Enlarge my understanding of this virtue, Lord. Amen.”

\*At the end of the meditation, ask yourself: Do I see the value of silence? Am I naturally a quiet person? Do I know when to keep silent and when to speak? Do I ever pray before blurting out something? Do I like silence or does silence make me uneasy? If so, what frightens or unnerves me about silence? Have I ever sought silent time with God? Do I do all the talking during my prayer time, or do I stop and listen to God? Do I have a place to go where I can be silent? Do I have a time of day when I can savor the silence? If not, where can I find these?

\*Find another section in Scripture which illustrates the Virtue of Silence. Find a statement of Jesus or an incident in His life that deals with the Virtue of Silence.

\*Find a place in the Rule, Constitution, or Statutes that call for the Virtue of Silence.

\*Practice the Virtue of Silence this month. Try to increase your awareness of when to speak and when to remain silent. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you with this discernment. Then carve out a time each day for 5 to 15 minutes of silence. Can you take this time early in the morning if you wake up 15 minutes earlier? Is there a quiet place—a church, a park, a parking lot—where you can go after work for this silent time (please turn off your cell phone)? Work at finding a place and making time. Then just be quiet with God. Don’t worry about saying anything to God or fret if God says nothing to you. Simply savor the silence daily.

\*Reflect on how you did each day and the insights you gained about the Virtue of Silence. Was it easy or difficult to keep silent? Are you becoming more comfortable with silence? What is silence teaching you? Pray, “Lord, quiet my tongue and quiet my mind. Grant tranquility to my spirit. Let me feel Your Presence in the silence. Amen.”

Taken from *Franciscan Virtues Through the Year: 52 Steps to Conversion* from Saint Francis of Assisi, written by the members of the Confraternity of Penitents, 2016

## **The Virtue of Fasting**

“Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, ‘Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.’” (Mark 2:18-20)

“He ordered them to season with salt every sacrifice to God. With concern he reminded them that in offering sacrifice to God each one should consider his own strength. He insisted that it was just as much a sin to deprive the body without discernment of what it really needed as, prompted by gluttony, to offer it too much. And he added; “Dear Brothers, realize that what I just did by eating was not my own choice, but an exception, demanded by fraternal charity. Let the charity, not the food, be an example for you, for the latter feeds the belly while the former feeds the spirit.”  
(The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul, Thomas of Celano)

There was a time in the Church when fasting was prescribed more than it is today. Religious fasting has declined dramatically among Catholics and Christians. It has taken on a more secular meaning and is being promoted as a means of health and weight loss instead of being an act of humility before God in recognition of our need for conversion. Many feel that fasting needs to be reclaimed and “seasoned with salt” so as to rediscover again its proper purpose and perspective.

Long ago, the Desert Fathers/Mothers became convinced that the condition of the body reflected the condition of the soul. Body and soul have a reciprocal influence upon one another because they are both dimensions of a person’s identity. Throughout scripture we find that the work of achieving purity of heart and divine charity require self-mastery and self-control, because an undisciplined body reflected an undisciplined soul. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, there are three motives for fasting. First, fasting is the guardian of chastity as Paul teaches in 2 Cor 6:5. Second, fasting helps our minds rise more freely to the heights of contemplation as we see in Daniel 10:3. Lastly, fasting is a penitential sacrifice by which we can make satisfaction for sin as seen in Joel 2:12.

Within the Roman Catholic Church, there are two forms of fasting. Total fasting involves a complete renunciation of all food and drink and is of short duration. Its purpose is to produce a feeling of bodily hunger to help us uncover our deep spiritual hunger for God and is prescribed as a preparation for the reception of the Eucharist. The second type of fasting is partial fasting. It is penitential in nature and is practiced for an extended period since spiritual healing from the effects of our sinful lives require more time. It is also known as ascetical fasting and is a time where our hearts of stone are transformed into hearts of flesh. Typically, this form of fasting occurs during Lent when it is required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Contemporary canon law requires taking no more than one full meal a day supplemented by two smaller meals or snacks which taken together are not to equal the size of one meal.

Our disposition and intention remains critical here. As St. Francis has said, “every sacrifice is to be seasoned with salt.” If our intention is to make ourselves more acceptable to God, then our hearts would be in the wrong place. The truth is that we are already acceptable and loved by God completely and totally. In contrast, if our motive is to love God, to open ourselves to Him more, and to make restitution for our sins or for those of others, then our heart is directed completely to God and we can be certain that we are fasting for the right reason. Nevertheless, it is always advisable to work with a spiritual director to ensure our motives are pure and true. For those whose health would be further impaired by fasting, there are a million ways to adopt an ascetical lifestyle. Maintaining silence when we wish to speak, governing our senses by critically examining the programs we watch or the books we read, limiting our time on the computer, social media, or our phones/tablet can become wonderful forms of sacrifice and penance.

Finally, not only is God present in our ascetical practices, but he is also present in our celebration and feasting. Sharing food and fellowship with others can bring us closer to God if they are engaged in thoughtfully in keeping with our dignity as his children. St. John Henry Newmann provides us with a balanced perspective in this matter:

“Let us first seek the Kingdom of God and His “righteousness” and then all things of the world “will be added to us”. They alone are truly able to enjoy this world who begin with the world unseen. They alone enjoy it, who have first abstained from it. They alone can truly feast, who have first fasted; they alone are able to use the world who have learned not to abuse it; they alone inherit it, who take it as a shadow of the world to come, and who for that world to come relinquish it.” (John Henry Newmann, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, pp 1234-35)

\*As a member of the Secular Franciscan Order, penitential practices are a part of our charism. Read the Prologue to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. Are you living a penitential life or are there areas where conversion is needed?

1. \*If you have not considered introducing fasting into your week, consider beginning slowly. Either begin one day a week with a partial fast or fast for a portion of the day. When you go to Mass, fast prior to receiving the Eucharist so that you can uncover your hunger for God.

\*Try fasting the day before our Advent Day of Reflection so that you can fully appreciate the generosity of God and the members of your Franciscan community. Offer your fast for the Church and for its leaders that we may grow and remain faithful to the beautiful teachings left to us by Our Lord Jesus.

Taken from *Franciscan Virtues Through the Year: 52 Steps to Conversion* from Saint Francis of Assisi, written by the members of the Confraternity of Penitents, 2016

# Psalm 67

## \*Antiphon (cantor)

①

Oh God, be gracious and Bless us

And let your face shed its light up-on us

so will your ways be Known up-on earth

And all nations learn your sav-ing help

Let the peoples praise you, Oh God Let all the peoples Praise You

## \*Antiphon (cantor)

②

Let the nations be glad and ex-ult For you rule the world with

Jus-tice. With fairness you rule the peo-ples

You guide the nations on earth

Let the peoples praise you, Oh God Let all the peoples Praise You

## \*Antiphon (cantor)



# Psalm 67

③

The earth has yielded its fruit For God, our God, has Blessed us.

May God still give His blessing, til the ends of the earth re-vere - Him

Doxology

Glory to the Father, and to the Son. And to the Ho-ly Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, And will be for- ever.

A — Men \* Antiphon (cantor)



# Benedictus

The image displays a musical score for a nine-voice setting of the Benedictus. The score is written in 4/4 time, with each voice part on a separate staff. The lyrics are distributed across the staves, with some lines containing hyphens indicating that a word is split across two lines of music. The lyrics are as follows:

Voice 1: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel He has come to his people and set them free.

Voice 2: He has raised up for us a mighty Savior, Born of the house of his servant David.

Voice 3: Through his holy prophets he promised of old that he would save us from our enemies,

Voice 4: from the hands of all who hate us. He promised to show mercy to our Fathers

Voice 5: And to remember his holy covenant. This was the oath he swore to our Father Abraham.

Voice 6: to set us free from the hands of our enemies free to worship him with out fear

Voice 7: Holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

Voice 8: You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the most high You will go before the Lord to prepare his way

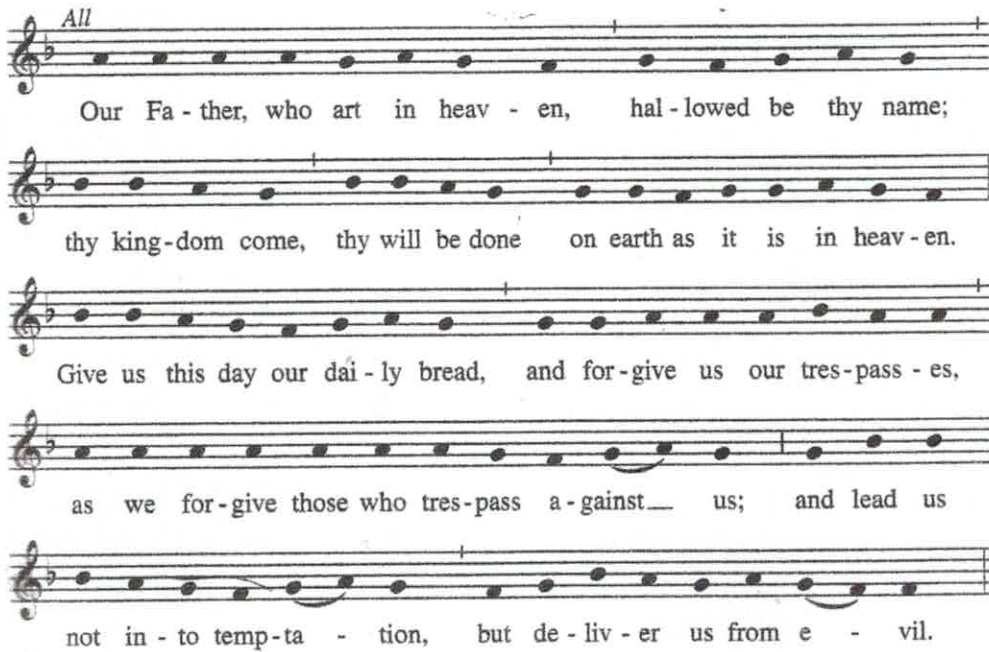
Voice 9: To give his knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.

Voice 10: In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break up - on us,

Voice 11: to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and guide our feet into the way of Peace. —

## All Chant: The Lord's Prayer

*All*



Our Fa - ther, who art in heav - en, hal - lowed be thy name;  
thy king-dom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heav - en.  
Give us this day our dai - ly bread, and for-give us our tres-pass - es,  
as we for-give those who tres-pass a - gainst\_\_ us; and lead us  
not in - to temp-ta - tion, but de - liv - er us from e - vil.

