

Saints on a Mission

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Friday, October 2nd 2020

WUNYA! *

We meet on the lands of the Turrbal & Jagera peoples of the Yugara nation

We acknowledge their traditional custodianship of Meanjin (*Brisbane*)

We pay our deepest respect to their elders – past, present, and future

We acknowledge that this land, the waters around and of this land were never ceded by fair dealing, treaty or just and honest means

This remains their traditional land

*Yugara (*Brisbane area dialect*) for “Welcome!”

Ss. Clare & Francis of Assisi

(*S. Clare – Translation: October 2/S. Francis – Feast Day: October 4*)



“Where there is peace and meditation, there is neither anxiety nor doubt.”

(*S. Francis of Assisi 1182-1226 CE*)

“Blessed be You, O God, for having created me.”
(*Final words attributed to S. Clare of Assisi 1194 – 1253 CE*)

L: Detail depicting Saint Clare from a fresco (c. 1320) Simone Martini, Lower basilica of San Francesco, Assisi

R: “S. Francis in Ecstasy” (detail) 1658-60, Francisco de Zurbaran
Alte Pinakothek, Munich

For the reading

The two grand basilicas at each end of Assisi, during the lifetimes of Francis and Clare, lay outside the city walls: the Basilica of Saint Francis and the Basilica of Saint Clare. It is fitting that these two great saints of Assisi were buried outside the original city gates. They walked out of the city, a passage through a gate that symbolized their rejection of the commercial values that dominated their city. They “left the world,” meaning the values of the city of their birth, to begin the new life that God had shown them among the poor and the rejected who lived beyond the protection of the city walls, those who lived on the margins of the society that Assisi represented. Francis’ giving up of material things was only a sign of that deeper self-emptying. But it is even more than self-emptying. Having an abundance of things gives one the illusion of independence—illusion, because we are all interdependent and dependent on God, who made us, saved us, and sanctifies us. The security that material possessions give us makes even the thought of God something we have to be reminded of, whereas, if we are poor, it is easier to turn to God in praise and thanksgiving for even the smallest gift. What is God showing you that you are to do with your life? However small or great that is, it must be yours and not someone else’s. What a stripping, for example, is sickness or aging, or the loss of loved ones, or ultimately the stripping that is the embrace of Sister Death. The important thing is to give humbly and honestly of what God asks you to give. In the end you are the gift God wants; in the meantime each person struggles to know what God wants and whether or not one is really giving the gift of one’s self to God.

(From “Enter Assisi: An Invitation to Franciscan Spirituality” by Murray Bodo, OFM)

For the Psalm

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord!

All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing.

To You, alone, Most High, do they belong.

No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures,

especially through my lord Brother Sun,

who brings the day; and You give light through him.

And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendour!

Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars;

in the heavens You have made them bright, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,

and clouds and storms, and all the weather,

through which You give Your creatures sustenance.

All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing.

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.

All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing.

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

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of You;
through those who endure sickness and trial.

Happy those who endure in peace,
for by You, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing.

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

(From: The Canticle for the Sun - S. Francis of Assisi)

Before the Gospel “Prayer of St. Francis” - Sarah McLachlan (1997)

(“The Prayer of S. Francis” c. 1927 from the Quaker periodical “Friends’ Intelligencer”)



“S. Francis Preaching to the Birds” (detail) 1297-99, Giotto

GOSPEL (Matthew 6: 25-33 NRSV)

Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed, your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

REFLECTION

“We should not look back on Francis through the rose coloured lenses of romanticism. To engage deeply with his life is to see a man who was consumed totally in the desire to live a radical life following Jesus—a life shining forth the radical poverty of the Incarnation and the conviction that everything from creation to our redemption comes as sheer gift. The other lesson that Francis teaches us is that the Bible is not a book to be read but a text to be performed. Just as we never discover the authentic Mozart by reading his scores but by performing or hearing them performed, so we never plumb fully the Word of God until it becomes the “score” by which we lead our lives. There was also a prophetic element in the life of Francis. To the luxurious pretensions of medieval churchmen, he exemplified the simple way of Jesus. To the poor, he identified with the dignity of everyone made “in the image and likeness of God.” To the emerging mercantile class, with their proto-capitalist desire for profit, he lived in such a way as to show the snares of wealth. To the medieval Cathars, who despised the material life, he hymned the goodness of God’s creation; to the smug pretensions of the medieval church, he pointed to the cross; to the class system of his day, he insisted that all should be called brothers and sisters.... He demonstrated by his life that the gospel is ever open to a new reading while always remaining the same and ever challenging to those who confront it with serious openness.... To be a “Franciscan” is to learn how to embrace a profound gospel paradox, namely, that the exquisite joy of the gospel is to be found in its utterly serious demands.”

(Lawrence J Cunningham ©2009 <https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/the-spirituality-of-saint-francis-of-assisil>).

“In the truest sense of the word, leading and guiding people means accompanying people and the community on their way to God, creating and securing the framework conditions so that individual and the community succeed in leading a life pleasing to God. Central to the understanding of the leadership of St. Clare is the knowledge of the source from which she lives and through which she can lead. It is her trust in a reliable foundation: Clare of Assisi wrote about her intention to live her life exclusively out of Lord’s vocation: “Observing the holy gospel” became a life’s work for her, but also for St. Francis and future generations. Clare only wanted to be dependent on Christ and to live every day to serve and share the gospel. “Gaze upon him, consider him, contemplate him, as you desire to imitate him”, she wrote to her confidante Agnes of Prague. To embrace the poor Christ, that was St. Clare’s program. She aligned herself with Jesus Christ and let herself be guided by him. Her life plan was about God, about God-seeking, about meeting God. “Her whole life is founded in God” (Proc XI: 2). She was held and supported by God. Clare gained strength through daily prayer. She drew from this source. As a dying woman Clare cheered God, even in a time when her life’s work was not yet finished. She has a source that gave her support and orientation and at the same time gave her enough security to evolve herself further, to develop her own personality and to dare something new.”

(Mareike Gerundt & Markus Warode “How Saint Clare of Assisi Guided Her Sisters. Impulses for the Today’s Leadership Context” ©2018 <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/9/11/347/htm>)

PRAYER (From <http://www.excitingholiness.org/first-edition/index.cgi?m09/d15.html>)

God of peace, who in the poverty of the blessed Clare gave us a clear light to shine in the darkness of this world: give us grace so to follow in her footsteps that we may, at the last, rejoice with her in your eternal glory; and also; that you ever delight to reveal yourself to the child-like and lowly of heart: grant that, following the example of the blessed Francis, we may count the wisdom of this world as foolishness and know only Jesus Christ and him crucified, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN**

Let us hold ourselves, each other and all of Creation together in our minds, hearts and souls

Prayer Response: *Divine Creator hear us, **for it is in giving that we receive***
Our Divine Creator, we lift our hearts, our wills and our voices to you, as both Clare & Francis of Assisi demonstrated that by giving away, we receive. Always guide us in our path of selfless love and bring into our prayers the thoughts for others, seeking to understand and pray for them. In our Anglican cycle of prayer:

The Dioceses of Peru (South America): †Jorge Luis Aguilar; Chichester (England): †Martin Warner; Clergy & People

The Diocese of Adelaide: †Geoff Smith; Assistant Bishops – †Timothy Harris, †Chris McLeod, †Denise Ferguson; Clergy & People

The Parish of Buderim: Moira Evers, Pam Hill, Ken Beer, Douglas Lloyd, Lynette Neil, John Cornish, Montague Morris, Theo Woods

Finance and Diocesan Services Commission: Sandra Long and staff

Anglican Church Grammar School, East Brisbane: Headmaster – Alan Campbell; Chaplain – Bryan Gadd; Chair of School Council – Daniel O'Connor, members of School Council; staff & students

Parishes seeking new incumbents: Algester, Brisbane (All Saints), Bulimba, Caloundra with Glasshouse Country, Gayndah, Goonaneman, Kingaroy, Lutwyche, Mt Gravatt, Nundah, Tamborine Mountain, and The Gap.

Today's "Cathedral Compassion": Bush Church Aid Society/Bible translators in our indigenous communities

Outreach Through Offerings: CARE Australia – *Empowering women and girls through gender equality. When one woman overcomes poverty, she brings four others with her.*

Baptism: Sophia

*Divine Creator hear us, **for it is in giving that we receive***

Give us wisdom and strength to bring help and relief to those parts of the world where there is conflict, war, violence or disparagement. Especially we hold our First Nations & Sea Peoples to You, Divine Creator, the Palestinian, Rohingya, Syrian, Iraqi, Uighur, Kurdish, Yemeni peoples, those in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh and those unjustly imprisoned on Christmas, Nauru & Manus Islands and here at Kangaroo Point.

Where there is despair, let us bring hope.

*Divine Creator hear us, **for it is in giving that we receive***

Many are battered by the daily torments of life in this world, especially those affected by wild fires in California. Let us bring light to where there is darkness and by the strength you impart to us, may we stand against falsehood, unjust outcomes and those who would use their power to cower and bully the marginalised. Where there is hatred, let us sow love.

*Divine Creator hear us, **for it is in giving that we receive***

Give us the knowledge to justly use the resources of the Earth, to be fair and equitable, and to show respect for the air, water and land all around us, and the creatures which inhabit these precious elements with us. You gave this world to care for and delight in, granting us such wealth and abundance which we have poorly stewarded. Forgive us, Divine Creator, and allow us to understand just as much as we wish to be understood.

*Divine Creator hear us, **for it is in giving that we receive***

The spark of creativity, the gathering of wisdom, the fire of imagination, the learning and application of skill to our labours in this world – these all come from You, Divine Creator. Wherever there is sadness, let us be the bringers of joy.

*Divine Creator hear us, **for it is in giving that we receive***

Both Clare & Francis of Assisi leads us to the knowledge that it is better to console rather than seek to be consoled. For those whose names lie before us, crying out for consolation, allow us to be that instrument. We take time to hold to you in silent prayer and contemplation those in our community who have asked for prayer, and also remembering those for whom no-one prays and known only to you

Yvonne Kelly, Jennifer Godwin, Sherri Laurie, Barry, Lyn & Samantha Rees, Lynne Mortimer, Dorothy Martin, Claire Gourlay, Alex McConnell, Dugald Hutchings, Angus Hutchings, John Miesen, Melissa, Benjamin, Mavis & John Ralph, Bob & Elise Thomas, David & Wendy Clark, the Martin Family, Alwyn Hayes, Benjamin, Pamela Frost, Margaret McNickle, Julie Rogan, Pete, Gwen Trow, Patricia Elkins, Tony Howe, Steve, Lorna, Bill, Mygyn, Steph, Jeff, Eve & Nathan Oslo-Stevenson-Edwards, Graham Dorman, Michele Underwood, Douglas, Jamie Evans, Sr Gloria CHN, Heather & Tom Wood, David Roser, Jose Hernandez, Gary Harch, Sharon Mitchell, Sarah Weston, Caroline, George Markotsis, Phoebe Killy, Edward Kernke, Franklin Murphy, Lorraine, Lorna Strehlau, Stephen Harrison, Ada Macey, Ann Ashton.

*Divine Creator hear us, **for it is in giving that we receive***

All life must die, and we praise you, Divine Creator, that through the sending of our Redeemer, we now know that in dying that we are born to eternal life. We hold the Year's Mind for:

Oct 03 Don Postle

Rest eternal grant to them, Merciful God,
and may light shine perpetual upon them.

Divine Creator, Blessed Redeemer, Sustaining Spirit –
all praise, glory and honour are yours now and forever



AMEN

LEAVE-TAKING

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!
Place your soul in the brilliance of glory!
Place your heart in the figure of the divine
substance!

And transform your whole being into the
image of the Godhead Itself
through contemplation!

So that you too may feel what *His* friends feel
as they taste the hidden sweetness
which God *Himself* has reserved
from the beginning
for those who love *Him*.

(S. Clare of Assisi - from "Francis and Clare: The Complete Works: The Classics of Western Spirituality", Translated by Regis J. Armstrong, OFM CAP / Translated by Ignatius C. Brady, OFM)



http://franciscanhermits.weebly.com/uploads/5/3/5/0/53504819/2698741_orig.gif

A BLESSING AND A GRACE FOR EACH OTHER

**And now may GOD bless you and keep you;
May the face of GOD shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
And may GOD's peace be manifest in your going out and in your
coming in, in your lying down and in your rising up, in your labour
and in your leisure, in your laughter and in your tears;
And until you come before our + Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier
on that day in which there is no sunset and no dawning. AMEN.**



(This guided meditation & reflection was collated by Blair Martin, October 2020)