



A Simple Service for a Man who Simply Loved God

*A Celebration of the Transitus
of Our Seraphic Father Saint Francis of Assisi*

OPENING SONG: CANTICLE OF THE SUN

Refrain:

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

Verse One:

Praise for the sun, the bringer of day,
he carries the light of the Lord in his rays;
The moon and the stars who light up the way unto Your throne!

Verse Two

Praise for the wind that blows through the trees,
the seas mighty storms, the gentlest breeze;
they blow where they will they blow where they please
to please the Lord!

Verse Three

Praise for the rain that waters our fields, and blesses our
crops so all the earth yields; from death unto life her
mystery revealed springs forth in joy!

Verse Four

Praise for the fire who gives us his light,
the warmth of the sun to brighten our night.
He dances with joy, his spirit so bright, he sings of You!

Verse Five

Sing to the earth, who makes life to grow, the creatures You made
to let Your life show,
the flowers and trees that help us to know the Heart of Love!

Verse Five

Praise for our death that makes our life real,
the knowledge of loss that helps us to fell, the gift of Yourself,
Your presence revealed to bring us home!

PROLOGUE:

At sunset on October 3rd when Francis of Assisi lay dying, he no doubt reflected on the beauty, the joy and the suffering he experienced throughout his life. The early Franciscan writings tell us that his conversion to gospel living was spurred on by the call of the crucifix of San Damiano to rebuild God's house, much in need of repair and the breath of new life.

Francis himself would describe his pivotal moment of conversion as the embrace of the sore-covered leper. The kiss that Francis gave this suffering member of the body of Christ would forever turn what was once repulsive for Francis into sweetness and joy.

When Francis of Assisi entered into eternal life, Brother Elias, his successor as leader of the friars, would proclaim to the friars that the very light had gone from their eyes, even as he recounted the awesome mystery of the wounds of Jesus imprinted in Francis' flesh.

The beauty, the joy, and even the suffering of the call to gospel conversion continue in the vocations of all those who have been inspired by Francis of Assisi's radical love of Jesus Christ and the Good News. Franciscans throughout the world commemorate the death, the Transitus, the passing of Francis into eternity. But we do not do so because the light has gone from our eyes; we do so because the light continues to shine. It continues to shine in the hearts of all those who hear the call to serve those who call out for the embrace of the compassion, the mercy and the love of Jesus Christ. Please rise as our prayers rise to the Heavens!



INTRODUCTORY RITES BY THE PRESIDER:

Let us pray: Loving God and Lord of all life, we assemble in faith and thanksgiving. We believe in the power of your call to Gospel conversion and the summons to rebuild your house. As we remember the birth into eternal life of our Seraphic Father Francis, help us die to ourselves and so live for you. Let the mystery of the cross and resurrection, with its promise of life eternal, so inflame us with love as to free us to pour out our lives in loving service to all. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

READING FROM THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS

***The Second Life of St. Francis* by Thomas of Celano Ch. CLXII**

Reader 1: At a human's end, says the wise man, comes the disclosing of his works, and we see this gloriously fulfilled in this saint. Running eagerly on the road of God's commandments, he scaled the steps of all the virtues until he reached the very summit. Like a malleable metal, he was brought to perfection under the hammering blows of many tribulations, and saw the end of all perfection. Then his wonderful work shone all the brighter, and it flared out in the judgment of truth that everything he lived was divine. He trampled on the allure of mortal life and escaped free into the heights; for he considered it dishonor to live for the world. He loved his own to the very end, and welcomed Death singing. When he approached his final days—when light eternal was replacing the limited light that had been removed—he showed by his example of virtue that he had nothing in common with the world.

Reader 2: As he was wasted by that grave illness which ended all his sufferings, he has himself placed naked on the naked ground, so that in that final hour, when the Enemy could still rage, he might wrestle naked with the naked. The fearless man awaited triumph and, with hands joined, held the crown

of justice. Placed on the ground and stripped of his sackcloth garment, he lifted up his face to heaven as usual, and, totally intent upon that glory, he covered the wound on his right side with his left hand, so that no one would see it. Then he said to his brothers: "I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you what is yours!"

Reader 3: Seeing this, his sons wept streams of tears, drawing sighs from deep within, overwhelmed by sorrow and compassion.

Meanwhile, as their sobs somewhat subsided, his guardian, who by divine inspiration better understood the saint's wish, quickly got up, took the tunic, underwear and sackcloth hood, and said to the Francis: "I command you under holy obedience to acknowledge that I am lending you this tunic, underwear and hood. And so that you know that they in no way belong to you, I take away all your authority to give them to anyone." The saint rejoiced, and his heart leaped for joy seeing that he had kept faith until the end with Lady Poverty. For he had done all this out of zeal for poverty, not wanting to have at the end even a habit of his own, but one borrowed from another. He had been wearing a sackcloth cap on his head to cover the scars he had received in the treatment of his eyes; what he really needed for this was a smooth cap of the softest and most expensive wool.

Reader 4: After this the saint raised his hands to heaven and glorified his Christ; free now from all things, he was going to him free. But in order to show himself in all things a true imitator of Christ, his God, he loved to the very end the brothers and sons he had loved from the beginning. He had them call to him all the brothers present there, and, comforting them about his death with words of consolation, he exhorted them to the love of God with fatherly affection. He spoke at length about patience, about preserving poverty, and about placing the Holy Gospel ahead of all other observances.

Reader 1: As all the brothers sat around him he stretched out his right hand over them and, beginning with his vicar, he

placed it on each of their heads saying: "Good bye, my sons, live in the fear of the Lord and remain in it always! A great trial and tribulation is at hand! Happy are they who will persevere in the things they have begun! I am hurrying to God, to whose grace I commend all of you!

He then blessed in those who were there, all the other brothers who were living anywhere in the world, and those who were to come after them unto the end of all ages. Let no one claim this blessing as his own for he pronounced it for those absent through those present.

Reader 2: As the brothers shed bitter tears and wept inconsolably, the holy father had bread brought to him. He blessed and broke it, and gave each of them a piece to eat.

He also ordered a Book of the Gospels to be brought and asked that the Gospel according to Saint John be read to him starting from the place which begins....

THE GOSPEL according to John 13:1-17

Reader 3: He was remembering that most sacred Supper, the last one the Lord celebrated with his disciples. In reverent memory of this, to show his brothers how much he loved them, he did all of this.

The few days that remained to him before his passing he spent in praise of God, teaching his beloved companions how to praise Christ with him. As best he could, he broke out in psalm.

Alternating sides as all join in praying the Psalm

PSALM 142:

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.

Reader 4: He also invited all creatures to the praise of God, and exhorted them to love by some words which he had composed earlier. Even death itself, terrible and hateful to everyone, he exhorted to praise, and going to meet her joyfully, invited her to be his guest, saying: "Welcome, my Sister Death!" And to the doctor he said: "Be bold, Brother Doctor, foretell death is near; for to me she will be the gate of Life!"

Alternating sides as all join in the Canticle

CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all
blessing,
To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.
Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,

Who is the day and through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;
and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven You formed them clear and precious and
beautiful.

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

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

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

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us, and who produces various
fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for
Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin.

Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.

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

Reader 1: But to the brothers he said: "When you see I have come to my end put me out naked on the ground as you saw me naked the day before yesterday, and once I am dead, allow me to lie there for as long as it takes to walk a leisurely mile."

The hour came. All the mysteries of Christ were fulfilled in him, and Francis flew off to God.

HOMILY: by the Presider

THE BLESSING: As the blessing continues, people come forward one by one with lit candles to place around St. Francis.

To the prayers of the saints I commend you.

May the most pure Virgin, Mother of God, Patroness of all Franciscans, pray for you.

May Saint Francis, our father, who bore the marks of the Lord Jesus, pray for you.

May Saint Anthony, illustrious preacher, pray for you.

May Saint Bonaventure, seraphic doctor, pray for you.

May Saint Bernardine, lover of the Holy Name of Jesus, pray for you.

May Saint Clare, first-born of the Second Order, pray for you.

May Saint Louis, Saint Elizabeth and the illustrious saints of the Third Order, pray for you.

May all the saints of God pray for you.

May the holy angels befriend you and watch around you to protect you.

And I will pronounce upon you the blessing which Francis gave to Brother Leo, his companion:

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.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL:

Presider: The call to rebuild God's house and embrace the leper continues in our service to God's people, in ministries both new and old. We pray now that the light of Christ will continue to inspire compassionate service to God's people.

LECTOR:

For Pope Francis, all our Bishops and Priests, Brother Friars and Nuns, Sisters and Seculars, may we always follow the calling of the Lord to rebuild His house, the Church. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, may she corrects and untangles the errors of this age and always seek God's truth. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who come to us seeking reconciliation, may we always be instruments of Your peace. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who come to us seeking relief from their sufferings, either bodily or spiritually, let us always ease their pain and feed their souls. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who exist on the margins of life, let us help them to gain dignity through prayer; food and shelter by help with resources; and love by personal contact and relationships. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the young who seek a life filled with the love of God, let us share the gifts of our Franciscan charism and journey with them to knowing Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those whose physical pain leads them to despair and for those who suffer from illness, may we always be there to bring them hope. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died, like Francis and Clare before us, may we all joyfully meet Sister Death, knowing that the Lord awaits us. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

OUR FATHER..... (sing)

EXCHANGE OF PEACE

CLOSING REMARKS

CLOSING 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.



CLOSING HYMN: THE PEACE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred let me bring your love.

Where there is injury your pardon Lord, and where there is doubt true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace; where there is despair in life let me bring hope;

Where there is darkness, only light and where there's sadness every joy.

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand ; to be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.

It is in giving to all men that we receive and in dying that we are born to eternal life.

