

NIGHT ONE

Brother Sylvester

25 September · The stones of San Damiano

THE GREETING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

THE VOICE

I sold him the stones.

He was patching up San Damiano and he needed stone, and I had stone, so I named a price and he paid it. Then I went home, did the arithmetic again, decided I had been cheated, and walked back to tell him so. I was a canon of San Rufino, the cathedral. I was not a poor man. He did not argue with me. He put his hand into Bernard's money, which was being given away in the square that day, and poured two fistfuls into my hands, and asked whether that was enough now.

It was more than enough. I took it home and I could not look at it.

Then I dreamed. A cross of gold came out of that man's mouth and the arms of it went out to the ends of the earth. I was the first priest to follow him, and I was already old, and for years afterward people came to me for a word from God. The only word I ever really had was the one I had to say first. I was greedy, and he saw it, and he never once held it against me.

THE VIRTUE

Leader: Sylvester's virtue is honesty about himself. Francis did not name that one. It is our name for it, on the strength of the single story we have just shared.

ONE QUESTION

The one leading speaks for a few minutes out of their own life.

Leader: Let us now consider in our hearts and minds, when was the last time we were, individually or together as a community, completely right about something, and no better off for it?

THE CANTICLE OF FRANCIS

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

Pause.

Leader: That is where we stop. In the oldest copy of the Canticle the scribe left empty space around this line for music that was never written in, and the silence is as much a part of the song as the notes are. For the next six nights we are going to let the sun and the moon and the wind and the water and the fire and the earth do the praising, because the line says we, like Sylvester, are not fit to do it ourselves. On the eighth night, when Francis writes about pardon, we are let back in. Then we will sing, together with creation.

THE READING

Leader: Contemplate two men praying in the temple. Listen for which of them goes home right with God, and for the reason.

Luke 18:9–14

He also spoke this parable to certain people who were convinced of their own righteousness, and who despised all others: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed by himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men: extortionists, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.'

"But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

SILENCE

A full minute.

THE PRAYER

Leader: For everything we are owed, and keep counting.

All: Teach us to say what we are.

Leader: For the arithmetic we do at night.

All: Teach us to say what we are.

Leader: For what we would rather not hear ourselves say out loud.

All: Teach us to say what we are. Amen.

Leader: With the poor, and in their name, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE ONE THING

Leader: Before tomorrow night, say one true thing about yourself out loud to another person.

All: Before tomorrow night, I will say one true thing about myself, out loud to another person.

THE SENDING

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.



A Novena of Companions for the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of Saint Francis

This resource is available on the Resources page of FranciscanVoice.org

Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office · Conventual Franciscans

NIGHT TWO

Brother Bernard of Quintavalle

26 September · His own house in Assisi, which is still standing

THE GREETING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Cantic of the Creatures.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

THE VOICE

I had a great deal to protect. Property, standing, a legal training, and the sort of household that sleeps well at night.

I gave him a bed because I was curious, and then I lay upstairs in the dark pretending to be asleep so that I could watch him. He prayed the whole night. He said one thing over and over. My God and my all. He did not know I was awake. That is the only reason I believed him.

In the morning we went to San Nicolò and asked the priest to open the holy book three times, and three times it said the same thing in a different way. Sell it. Take nothing for the road. Take up the cross. So I sold it, all of it, and we gave it out in the square, and there was a priest in that square who came up complaining that he had been shortchanged, and years later that same man dreamed of a cross of gold.

At the end Francis put his hand on my head and called me his firstborn and told the others to honor me. I would rather he had said nothing. All I did was stay awake.

THE VIRTUE

Leader: Bernard's virtue is faith, and the love of poverty. Francis named that one himself.

ONE QUESTION

The one leading speaks for a few minutes out of their own life.

Leader: Let us now consider in our hearts and minds, who is poor among us. Not a group, but one person we could name, in the streets around this house.

THE CANTICLE OF FRANCIS

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

Pause.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
and 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.

THE READING

Leader: Contemplate a man with a great deal to lose, asking a sincere question. Listen for the fact that Jesus looks at him and loves him before he answers, and listen for what the man does next.

Mark 10:17–22

As he was going out into the way, one ran to him, knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except one—God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not give false testimony,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and mother.’”

He said to him, “Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth.”

Jesus looking at him loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me, taking up the cross.”

But his face fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one who had great possessions.

SILENCE

A full minute.

THE PRAYER

Leader: For what we hold that would take weapons to keep.

All: Loosen our grip.

Leader: For the sort of house that sleeps well at night.

All: Loosen our grip.

Leader: For everything we call security when we are speaking carefully.

All: Loosen our grip. Amen.

Leader: With the poor, and in their name, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE ONE THING

Leader: Before tomorrow night, give away one thing you would need to defend. Put it into somebody's hands yourself.

All: Before tomorrow night, I will give away one thing I would need to defend, and I will put it into somebody's hands myself.

THE SENDING

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.



A Novena of Companions for the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of Saint Francis

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Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office · Conventual Franciscans

NIGHT THREE

Lady Jacoba of Settesoli

27 September · The door of the Porziuncola

THE GREETING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Cantic of the Creatures.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

THE VOICE

He dictated a letter to me, and it never left Assisi, because I was already on the road.

He wanted three things brought. Cloth to wrap his body in, wax for the candles, and the almond sweets I used to make him when he was ill in my house in Rome. I brought all three, and a pillow, and a veil for his face, and my two sons, and rather more Roman escort than the occasion required, because I was of the family that owned the Colosseum and I never did learn how to arrive quietly.

Women were not allowed in. The brothers were surrounding Francis and working out what to do about me. He settled it from the ground on which he lay. Let Brother Jacoba come in, he said.

Understand what he had done to me years before that. I asked him what I ought to give up, and he told me to give up nothing. Go home. Keep the estate, keep the money, raise the boys, and live the Gospel in the middle of all of it. It is much harder than the other way. I did it for fifty years, and I was able to help build his church in Assisi, and I am buried on his stairs.

THE VIRTUE

Leader: Jacoba's virtue is fortitude. Francis called her Brother on account of it. The understanding is his; the description is ours.

ONE QUESTION

The one leading speaks for a few minutes out of their own life.

Leader: Let us now consider in our hearts and minds, who is not at this table who should be, and what it would cost us, individually or together as a community, to have them here next year.

THE CANTICLE OF FRANCIS

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

Pause.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
and 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.

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

THE READING

Leader: Contemplate a woman doing something extravagant, and being criticized for it in front of everybody. Listen for what Jesus says will happen to her story.

Mark 14:3–9

While he was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster jar of ointment of pure nard, very costly. She broke the jar and poured it over his head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, saying, "Why has this ointment been wasted? For this might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." So they grumbled against her.

But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want to, you can do them good; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for the burying. Most certainly I tell you, wherever this Good News may be preached throughout the whole world, that which this woman has done will also be spoken of for a memorial of her."

SILENCE

A full minute.

THE PRAYER

Leader: For the ones we keep outside, and the reasons we give for it.

All: **Open the door and set a place.**

Leader: For the rules that were sensible once and are now only old.

All: **Open the door and set a place.**

Leader: For everyone who arrives before the letter is sent, carrying exactly what we needed.

All: **Open the door and set a place. Amen.**

Leader: With the poor, and in their name, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

All: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.**

THE ONE THING

Leader: Before tomorrow night, cook something and take it to somebody, and set one more place at your table than you need.

All: **Before tomorrow night, I will cook something and take it to somebody, and I will set one more place at my table than I need.**

THE SENDING

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: **Peace and Goodness.**

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.



A Novena of Companions for the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of Saint Francis

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Night Three · Lady Jacoba of Settesoli

NIGHT FOUR

Brother Masseo

28 September · A fork in the road

THE GREETING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Cantic of the Creatures.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

THE VOICE

I was the tall one and the good-looking one and I could talk, and I knew all three.

I asked him once, on the road, why after you. Why does the whole world come running after you? You are not handsome. You are not learned. You are not well born. He was delighted with the question. He said God had looked everywhere for the most useless man alive and could not find one more useless than himself, so that nobody would ever mistake the harvest for his own work.

He made me porter and cook and almoner all at once, to grind the vanity out of me, and I let him do it, and then he gave me my place back.

Once we came to a fork in the road and did not know which way God wanted us to go. He told me to spin. I turned round and round like a child until I fell over, dizzy and undignified in front of everybody, and the way I was pointing when I stopped was the way we went. That is how we chose. I have been dead a long time and I still think it was the sanest thing we ever did.

THE VIRTUE

Leader: Masseo's virtue is a gracious manner, natural good sense, and devout speech. Francis named that one himself.

ONE QUESTION

The one leading speaks for a few minutes out of their own life.

Leader: Let us now consider in our hearts and minds, who among us does work that nobody ever thanks them for, and whether we have ever said so to them out loud.

THE CANTICLE OF FRANCIS

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

Pause.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
and 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.

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 which You give sustenance to Your creatures.

THE READING

Leader: Contemplate Jesus speaking with Nicodemus, who has come to see him at night. It is one sentence. Read it twice, slowly, and then say nothing at all.

John 3:8

"The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but don't know where it comes from and where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

SILENCE

A full minute.

THE PRAYER

Leader: For the roads we cannot choose between.

All: Turn us until we are pointing the right way.

Leader: For our own good sense, which has taken us the wrong way before now.

All: Turn us until we are pointing the right way.

Leader: For everyone whose work holds this place up and is never named.

All: Turn us until we are pointing the right way. Amen.

Leader: With the poor, and in their name, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE ONE THING

Leader: Before tomorrow night, sit down among people you would not normally sit with. Ask them two questions and then stop talking. What is it like to be you? What is it like to be here?

All: Before tomorrow night, I will sit down among people I would not normally sit with, and I will ask two questions and then stop talking.

THE SENDING

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.



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Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office · Conventual Franciscans

NIGHT FIVE

Brother William of England

29 September, the feast of Saint Michael · The sea, and the right transept

THE GREETING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Cantic of the Creatures.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

THE VOICE

I came the other way.

Everybody remembers when Francis received the stigmata in 1224. In that same month our brothers landed at Dover and walked up to Canterbury and on to London and Oxford. I had already gone in the opposite direction. I left England, I came to Assisi, I found him, and I stayed. The great medieval chronicler, Matthew Paris, was a friend of mine and put my name in his chronicle, which is more than most of us got.

I died in 1232, six years after Francis, and they buried me close to the altar under which Francis was laid to rest, in the right transept. Then things began to happen at my grave. People were cured. Crowds came. It went on long enough to become a problem.

Brother Elias came and stood over the slab and asked me to stop. Out of reverence for Francis, he said. The saint is a few feet away and the pilgrims are all gathering in this transept, round an Englishman.

So I stopped.

That is the whole of my story and I would not change it. There is a kind of holiness that consists of being asked to be less impressive, and saying yes.

THE VIRTUE

Leader: William's virtue is knowing when to stop. It is the virtue we name for him, on the strength of the single story we have just shared.

ONE QUESTION

The one leading speaks for a few minutes out of their own life.

Leader: Let us now consider in our hearts and minds, what we do for people, individually or together as a community, that they could do for themselves if we let them.

THE CANTICLE OF FRANCIS

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

Pause.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
and 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.

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 which You give sustenance to Your creatures.

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

THE READING

Leader: Contemplate John the Baptist, told that everybody is going to Jesus now instead of to him.
Listen for his answer.

John 3:27–30

John answered, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. You yourselves testify that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before him.’ He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore my joy is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease.”

SILENCE

A full minute.

THE PRAYER

Leader: For the good we do that is really about us.

All: Teach us when to stop.

Leader: For the jobs we will not hand on.

All: Teach us when to stop.

Leader: For everyone who has been helped into helplessness.

All: Teach us when to stop. Amen.

Leader: With the poor, and in their name, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE ONE THING

Leader: Before tomorrow night, withdraw from one argument you are winning, and let somebody less able than you do a thing you do well, without correcting them afterward.

All: Before tomorrow night, I will withdraw from one argument I am winning, and I will let somebody else do a thing I do well, without correcting them.

THE SENDING

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.



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This resource is available on the Resources page of FranciscanVoice.org

Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office · Conventual Franciscans

Brother Angelo Tancredi

30 September · Fonte Colombo, above Rieti

THE GREETING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

THE VOICE

I was a knight before I was a friar. The many stories my brothers told about me say so, which tells you what they thought was worth writing down about me.

Courtesy is not manners. Courtesy is deciding how you are going to treat a person before you find out whether they deserve it.

I was there at Rieti when the doctors came for his eyes. The iron goes into the fire and comes out white, and it goes from the ear to the eyebrow. The brothers left the room. I do not blame them for it. Francis looked at the iron as it came toward him and spoke to it. My brother Fire, he said, noble and useful among all creatures, be courteous to me in this hour, because I have always loved you.

Then he let them do it, and afterward he said he had felt nothing, and the doctor did not believe him, and neither did I.

He was courteous to the thing that was about to burn him. I had been a soldier. I had never seen anything like it, and I gave him the rest of my life.

THE VIRTUE

Leader: Angelo's virtue is courtesy. Francis named that one himself.

ONE QUESTION

The one leading speaks for a few minutes out of their own life.

Leader: Let us now consider in our hearts and minds, who among us or near to us cannot get to a doctor, and why, and who decided that.

THE CANTICLE OF FRANCIS

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

Pause.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, and 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.

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 which 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.

THE READING

Leader: Contemplate a blind beggar who shouts, is told to be quiet, and shouts louder. Listen for the question Jesus asks him, which is the question nobody had bothered to ask him.

Mark 10:46–52

They came to Jericho. As he went out from Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, you son of David, have mercy on me!" Many rebuked him, that he should be quiet, but he cried out much more, "You son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jesus stood still and said, "Call him."

They called the blind man, saying to him, "Cheer up! Get up. He is calling you!"

He, casting away his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus.

Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man said to him, "Rabboni, that I may see again."

Jesus said to him, "Go your way. Your faith has made you well." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the way.

SILENCE

A full minute.

THE PRAYER

Leader: For everyone waiting on a result this week.

All: Be courteous with us, Lord.

Leader: For the ones nursing somebody, whom nobody asks after.

All: Be courteous with us, Lord.

Leader: For the people we are short with because they cannot do anything for us.

All: Be courteous with us, Lord. Amen.

Leader: With the poor, and in their name, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE ONE THING

Leader: Before tomorrow night, go with somebody to an appointment they are dreading. If nobody will let you, telephone one person who is ill and stay on the line longer than is comfortable.

All: Before tomorrow night, I will go with somebody to an appointment they are dreading, or I will telephone one person who is ill and stay on longer than is comfortable.

THE SENDING

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.



A Novena of Companions for the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of Saint Francis

This resource is available on the Resources page of FranciscanVoice.org

Night Six · Brother Angelo Tancredi

Brother John of England

1 October · Foreign ground

THE GREETING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

THE VOICE

There are only a few words.

He was English. He died around the year 1247. He was buried under the altar of Saint Elizabeth in the Lower Basilica, and a figure standing at the left of a painting that no longer exists was probably him. That is the whole record.

He lived, prayed and ministered with the other early friars for twenty years, and nobody wrote down one word he said.

Thirty seconds of silence.

Leader: Most of us will be remembered the way he is. Some people will remember us properly for forty years, and then nobody will, and the same is true of nearly everybody we have ever loved. The Church has never answered that by promising us fame. She answers it by burying people properly, by keeping their names written down, by praying for them by name in November, and by insisting that the ground holding them is a sister and not a rubbish tip.

THE VIRTUE

Leader: Though Francis surely knew, we do not know what John's virtue was, and we are going to leave it unknown. That is tonight.

ONE QUESTION

The one leading speaks for a few minutes out of their own life.

Leader: Let us now consider in our hearts and minds the names of our own dead, and the ones nobody else here would think to mention. Say them out loud if you wish.

THE CANTICLE OF FRANCIS

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

Pause.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
and 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.

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 which 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 fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

THE READING

Leader: Contemplate a grain of wheat falling into the ground. Listen to it, and do not try to work it out.

John 12:24–26

“Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

“He who loves his life will lose it. He who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life. If anyone serves me, let him follow me. Where I am, there my servant will also be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”

SILENCE

A full minute.

THE PRAYER

Leader: For the ones with no stone and no date.

All: Remember the ones we cannot name.

Leader: For those who died far from where they were born.

All: Remember the ones we cannot name.

Leader: For the ground that is holding all of them, and will hold us.

All: Remember the ones we cannot name. Amen.

Leader: With the poor, and in their name, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE ONE THING

Leader: Before tomorrow night, do one good thing that nobody will know you did, and tell nobody at all, including us.

All: Before tomorrow night, I will do one good thing that nobody will know I did, and I will tell nobody at all.

THE SENDING

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.



A Novena of Companions for the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of Saint Francis

This resource is available on the Resources page of FranciscanVoice.org

Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office · Conventual Franciscans

Brother Rufino

2 October · The courtyard of the bishop's house in Assisi

THE GREETING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

THE VOICE

My family were nobility. When the townspeople rose and burned the great houses we ran to Perugia, and Clare, who is my cousin, was a small child in that flight. So when I tell you that a town can tear itself in half, I am not speaking generally.

I prayed. That is what I did and it is very nearly all I did. I was no use in conversation, I could not preach, and when Francis made me go and preach anyway I did it half undressed and made a fool of myself, and then he came and did the same beside me so that I would not be the only fool in the town square.

Then the bishop excommunicated the mayor, and the mayor forbade the town to do business with the bishop, and not one churchman and not one layman went near either of them. Francis was in bed and going blind, and what he said was this. It is a disgrace to you, servants of God, that these two hate each other and nobody is doing anything about it. To us. He said it to us, the praying ones.

Then he wrote one verse, and he sent us to sing it.

I have no voice. I never had one. But he did not ask me to make a speech, and he did not ask me to be persuasive, and he did not ask me to be right. He asked me to carry his words across a courtyard and let them out of my mouth. So we stood in front of the bishop and the mayor and half the city and we sang, and the mayor knelt down on the stones, and the bishop said he was quick-tempered and sorry for it, and it was over.

I could not preach. I could sing another man's poem. It turned out that was enough.

Prayer that will not get up and walk across a courtyard is not yet prayer.

THE VIRTUE

Leader: Rufino's virtue is prayer without ceasing. Francis named that one himself. Notice tonight who Francis shamed when he wanted a fight stopped, and what he sent them out with.

ONE QUESTION

The one leading speaks for a few minutes out of their own life.

Leader: Let us now consider in our hearts and minds the split in this room, or in this community, that we have all quietly agreed to call a difference of opinion.

THE CANTICLE OF FRANCIS

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

Pause.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
and 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.

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 which 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 fruits with colored flowers and herbs.
Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love,
and who bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High,
they shall be crowned.

THE READING

Leader: Contemplate someone standing at the altar with a gift in their hands, remembering something. Listen for the order of the two things, which is the opposite of the way we usually do it.

Matthew 5:23–24

"If therefore you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

SILENCE

A full minute.

THE PRAYER

Leader: For the two we could go to, and have not.

All: Send us to both of them.

Leader: For everyone bearing something long, quietly, with no end in sight.

All: Send us to both of them.

Leader: For the towns and the households that have taken sides.

All: Send us to both of them. Amen.

Leader: With the poor, and in their name, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE ONE THING

Leader: Before tomorrow night, go to one side of a quarrel you have stayed out of. Say nothing clever.

All: Before tomorrow night, I will go to one side of a quarrel I have stayed out of, and I will say nothing clever.

THE SENDING

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Cantic of the Creatures.



A Novena of Companions for the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of Saint Francis

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Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office · Conventual Franciscans

Brother Leo

3 October, the night of the Transitus · The Porziuncola

THE GREETING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.

THE VOICE

He called me his little sheep of God. He wrote it at the top of a letter and I kept it, and I kept the blessing he wrote on La Verna, and I kept very nearly everything, which is the only reason you have any of this.

At the end he asked to be put on the ground with nothing on. He borrowed the tunic back from the guardian so that he would not own the clothes he died in, and he said so out loud so that there would be a witness. He had bread brought and broke it with us. He asked for the Gospel of the washing of the feet.

Then he added the last verse, about our sister death, and told us to sing. Elias said the neighbors would hear and would think it unbecoming. He was not being small about it. He had a house full of brothers and a town full of opinion and his founder lying on the floor.

We sang anyway. For days. And at dusk on a Saturday he stopped, and the larks came down over the roof at an hour when larks do not fly, and none of us could tell then, and I cannot tell now, whether they were grieving or celebrating. I have decided that this is the correct answer.

THE VIRTUE

Leader: Leo's virtue is simplicity and purity. Francis named that one himself.

ONE QUESTION

The one leading speaks for a few minutes out of their own life.

Leader: The Church says that love walks on two feet. One foot is the works of mercy, which meet the person standing in front of us. The other is the work of justice, which goes after whatever put them there. Let us now consider in our hearts and minds which of the two we have not used this year, individually and together as a community.

THE CANTICLE OF FRANCIS

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

Pause.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
and 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.

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 which 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 fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

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

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

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

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

Tonight the whole Canticle may be sung, or recited from the page as on the other nights.

THE READING

Leader: Contemplate Francis lying on the bare ground as the light goes, singing this psalm. Listen for the line about prison.

Psalm 142

A contemplation by David, when he was in the cave. A prayer.

I cry with my voice to the LORD. With my voice, I ask the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him. I tell him my troubles.

When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, you knew my route. On the path in which I walk, they have hidden a snare for me. Look on my right, and see; for there is no one who is concerned for me. Refuge has fled from me. No one cares for my soul.

I cried to you, LORD. I said, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need. Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name. The righteous will surround me, for you will be good to me.

SILENCE

A full minute.

THE PRAYER

Leader: With the poor, and in their name, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE ONE THING

Leader: Tell somebody what happened this week. Not what you learned. What happened, and who said what. And give the story back to the people who are in it before you tell it to anybody else, because a story taken without permission is one more injustice.

All: I will tell somebody what happened this week, and I will give the story back to the people who are in it before I tell it to anybody else.

THE SENDING

Instrumental music: a local setting of the Canticle of the Creatures.

The Transitus

3 October · The Porziuncola

THE LITANY OF THE NINE

Leader: Sylvester sold him the stones and came back to complain.

All: Teach us to say what we are.

Leader: Bernard lay awake upstairs and watched a man pray all night.

All: Loosen our grip.

Leader: Jacoba arrived before the letter had even been sent.

All: Open the door and set a place.

Leader: Masseo spun at the crossroads until he fell over.

All: Turn us until we are pointing the right way.

Leader: William was asked to stop, and he stopped.

All: Teach us when to stop.

Leader: Angelo watched him speak courteously to the iron.

All: Be courteous with us, Lord.

Leader: John left nothing behind, and the ground is holding him.

All: Remember the ones we cannot name.

Leader: Rufino prayed, and then he walked into the courtyard.

All: Send us to both of them.

Leader: Leo wrote it all down, and they sang, and the larks came.

All: May the Lord give us peace.

Leader: Eight hundred years ago tonight, on the floor, in the dark, with nothing on, singing.

All: May the Lord give us peace. Amen.

THE QUESTION THE BROTHERS ASKED HIM

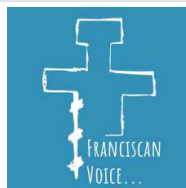
Leader: Once the brothers asked Francis what a good Friar Minor would look like, and instead of describing a virtue he started naming his brothers, one at a time, and built a whole man out of the nine or ten of them. So here is his question, put to us. What is our virtue, and what are the virtues of each one around us?

Where there is no Transitus service nearby, the account of the passing is read here, and then silence.

THE SENDING

Leader: May the Lord give us peace.

All: Peace and Goodness.



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