

THE TRANSITUS OF ST. FRANCIS

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT (*stand and sing*) - O Sacrament Most Holy

Presider Let us join with the angels who are keeping watch with our holy father Francis, and all who follow him in faith.

All All praise and thanks to our Most High God.

HYMN – The Testament Prayer ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI Robert M. Hutmacher, OFM

REFLECTION OF THE LADY CLARE (*sit*)

I, the Spirit of Lady Clare, greet you on this holy evening.
I welcome you to this commemoration of the death of our beloved Francis.
Tonight, my heart is filled with memories.
Perhaps you, too, need these moments of remembering to nurture what there is of Francis in your hearts.

We have gathered here on the ground outside the little chapel of St. Mary of the Angels.
Can you see the burning torches and the shadows of the trees outlined against the night sky?
The body of Francis lies before us on the bare earth.
Our Sister Death has only recently carried away his spirit.

Our brothers are here - Leo and Angelo and Rufino.
They have come, to share with us some of the memories of Francis
so that he might live again for a moment among us here.

I, myself, was not present for that sacred moment.
Waiting with my sisters in the confinement of our little convent at San Damiano,
we had wept inconsolably.
It was clear that our beloved Francis would never again visit us alive.
It seemed impossible for us to think of life without him.
We were left feeling abandoned and desolate and so very far away.

We took comfort in knowing that Francis was happy to greet Sister Death.
This had become the one desire of his life during those last years.
It seemed that his blindness and suffering had left him with nothing but a fierce, insatiable longing to be with the Crucified Jesus.
To know the Lord and to feel what Christ had felt was all that he wanted in the end.

CANTICLE OF THE SUN (*stand*) - sing verses 1 and 2 (Simon Brue)

CANTICLE OF FRATERNITY (*sit*)

Right Side Praise be You, My Lord, through Sister Brokenness
who reveals to us your healing and your wholeness.
She is tender and fragile and invites us to share our poverty with one another.

Left Side Praised be You, My Lord, through Sister Forgiveness
who reveals your unconditional love and tender mercy.
She is gentle and asks for poverty of spirit as she seeks
to be both freely given and freely received in fraternity.

READING - Galatians 6:14 -18

RESPONSE - *Let us praise and glorify God forever!* Robert M. Hutmacher, OFM
(First time - repeat Refrain after Schola, then, once between verses.)

REFLECTION OF BROTHER RUFINO

I, the spirit of Brother Rufino, treasure in my heart so many memories of the blessed Francis.

I remember the times when, overcome by love and compassion for Jesus, he would act in such strange ways. For example, when the joy in his spirit would become too much, he would burst into French melodies. Or he would walk through the streets singing at the top of his lungs of his love for the Crucified Jesus or for the Lady Poverty.

Once, overwhelmed by the need to express his feeling, he picked up a stick from the ground and, laying it on his left arm, he drew another stick across it with his right hand like a bow, as though he were playing a violin. He imitated the movements of a musician and sang in French of his Lord Jesus Christ.

I remember when he so earnestly desired to do God's will that he would go to any lengths.

He carried heavy stones for miles and humbled himself before the townspeople in order to repair the house of God at San Damiano.

He begged for his food and gave away his clothing in order to associate himself more closely with the Lady Poverty.

He traveled an arduous and dangerous journey in order to bring the message of the Gospel to the Sultan. He would stay awake all night even after a long journey in hopes that the voice of God would whisper in his heart once more.

I remember how creatures large and small could sense his compassion and joy and be attracted to him. The birds would gather to listen to him and sing sweet melodies in order to console him.

It is said that a fearsome wolf once lay down before him.

I have seen the most wretched of men approach him in complete confidence. But most of all, I remember how knowing Jesus and following in the foot prints of Jesus was the one passion of his life.

CANTICLE OF THE SUN (*stand*) - sing verse 3 (Simon Brue)

CANTICLE OF FRATERNITY (*sit*)

Right Side Praise be You, My Lord, through Brother Conversion
who reveals your radical Gospel call
and the heart of the paschal mystery.

He is violent and requires uprooting, letting go, emptying and comes to us
through self-emptying fraternal experiences.
He is a mirror of true Eucharist.

Left Side Praise be You, My Lord, through Sister Joy
who reveals your fullness and the life of your Trinitarian love.
She is carefree. She is loving. She is genuine. She is Beatitude.
She is gift coming from you through sharing Your presence with one another.

All Most High, all powerful and good Lord,
Yours are brokenness, forgiveness, conversion and joy.
We praise and bless You, Lord, and give You thanks for fraternity.
All praise be yours, O Lord.

(text -*Canticle of Fraternity* - Renita Brunner, OSF)

REFLECTION OF BROTHER ANGELO

I, the spirit of Brother Angelo, share with you my memories of the death of our holy Father Francis.
It was Brother Leo and I who were summoned to his death bed to sing for him the Canticle of Brother
Sun, a hymn that Francis had composed during his last illness.

I was there with the brothers when Francis asked that a book of the Gospels be brought to him
and that the account of the Last Supper be read so that he could recall the manner in which Jesus
said farewell to his friends.
Seeing us gathered about him, weeping bitterly, he longed to console us as his death drew near.
Wanting to be like Jesus in all things possible, he asked that bread be brought to him.
He blessed it, broke it and gave a small piece of it to each one of us to eat so that we might find
comfort and strength in this simple, familiar action.

BLESSING AND SHARING OF THE BREAD *(stand)*

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Presider All powerful, most high, and supreme God:
all good, supreme good, totally good.
You who alone are good;
may we give You all praise, all glory,
all thanks, all honor, all blessing, and all good things.
So be it. So be it.

All Amen. Amen!

(While the bread is passed and shared, please be seated. During this time, music may be played or sung).

GOSPEL ALLELUIA *(stand - repeat Alleluia after the Schola and one time after the verse.)* Robert M. Hutmacher, OFM

GOSPEL READINGS - Mark 10:21; Matthew 16:24-25; Luke 9:3

From the Gospel of Mark:

“Go and sell everything you have and give the money to the poor,
and you will have treasure in heaven.” (Mark 10:21)

From the Gospel of Matthew:

Those who want to be followers of mine;
let them renounce themselves and take up the cross and follow me.
For those who want to save their lives will lose them,
but those who lose their lives for my sake, will find them.” (Matthew 16:24-25)

From the Gospel of Luke:

“Take nothing for the journey:
neither staff, nor haversack, nor bread, nor money;
and let none of you take a spare tunic.” (Luke 9:3)

And Francis said:

“This is what I wish.
This is what I seek.
This is what I long to do with all my heart.”

(Elevate the Fran. Lectionary and say from memory while looking at the Assembly)

The Gospel of the Lord and Words of our Father, Francis.

REFLECTION OF BROTHER LEO *(sit)*

I, the spirit of Brother Leo, carry within me the memory of Francis' great desire to share in Jesus' passion. It was in the chapel in San Damiano, that the image of the crucified was first imprinted upon his heart, but it was at La Verna that that image was imprinted upon his flesh.

How well I remember that night!

At the hour of Matins I had gone in search of Francis and found him some distance from his cave. Together we searched the Gospels, opening the book three times as was our custom. Each time that night the book opened itself to the Passion of Christ.

Suddenly there rose up against the side of the mountain a great anguished sound that filled the darkness with the pain of the whole world. A vision of Jesus came before Francis. With wounded hands and feet and a lanced heart, Jesus showed himself to be at one with every suffering creature.

Francis fell to his knees and begged for two graces.

He wanted to feel in his soul and body, the pain of Jesus,
and he wanted to know in his heart the great love that Jesus felt.

His prayer was answered. The mountain became bathed in light,
the heavens opened and a burning seraph descended.

The angel raised his eyes, opened his arms and stretched out his feet. He was nailed to a cross. He was a living cross with six flaming wings! Rays darted from his wounds and pierced Francis' hands and feet and heart.

Francis was never quite the same again.

His experience at La Verna and the painful wounds that he carried in his body afterwards filled him with a wondrous compassion.

To know the Crucified One, and to be filled with his love for all creatures were all that he ever wanted after that night.

CANTICLE OF THE SUN (*remain seated*) – sing verse 4.

(Simon Brue)

READING - (*conclusion of the Letter to the Entire Order*)

All Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, grant us in your goodness,
the grace to do for You alone what we know You want us to do and always to desire
what pleases You, thus, inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened
and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit,
may we be able to follow in the footsteps of your Beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
and, by your grace alone,
may we make our way to You, Most High,
who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity,
and are glorified, God all-powerful, forever and ever. Amen.

VOICE OF FRANCIS

"I have done what was mine to do.

My Christ teach you what is yours." (Francis' words - LM 14:3)

REFLECTION OF LADY CLARE

(During this reflection the Francis candle is extinguished as Francis passes into eternal life.)

I remember that Francis died after sundown.

When he felt Sister Death approaching, he asked to be carried outside and laid on the bare earth,
sprinkled with dust and ashes. Then, with his brothers gathered about him,
Francis' most holy soul was freed from his body.

His spirit was carried up in light to meet the Crucified Christ who waited for him in glory.

(Pause here, turn and wait until the Francis candle is extinguished and lights go down. Now, turn back to Ambo and continue.)

My Poor Ladies and I spent the night in vigil at San Damiano, waiting for word of his death to be brought to us.

Very early the next morning, the brothers and the townspeople brought the body of our beloved guide and father to us. We heard their chanting long before we could see their burning torches and waving palms. We waited at the door of the church. Francis had promised me that I would see him again and now, he did return to me.

I and my Poor Ladies came out from behind the grille and knelt around the body of Francis. We kissed the wounds of his feet, of his hands, in his side. It was my last meeting on earth with my "living crucifix."

As the body of Francis was carried away toward the town, my Poor Ladies and I returned to our cloister to find that it was not lonely and forsaken as we feared. Jesus Crucified was still there and his presence consoled us in our grief. It was as Francis would have wanted it: That Jesus himself would indeed be enough for us!

NECROLOGY *(sit)*

Executive Congregational Secretary:

During the past year, we have commended to our beloved God, the following Sisters and Affiliates. They have completed what was theirs to do. May we carefully listen to Christ in finding what is ours to do.

READING OF THE NECROLOGY *(read by the congregational secretary)*

(The bell will toll while a vigil light is carried forward in remembrance of each deceased Sister or Affiliate. When the Reader finishes, stand and join in singing RECEIVE ME)

All sing *Receive me, O Lord, according to your word and I shall live.
And do not confound me in my expectations.*

CANTICLE OF THE SUN *(remain standing)* - sing, verse 5 (Simon Brue)

PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING *(sit)*

Presider Francis longed to be led by the Spirit of God. This same desire is ours today as we seek to serve God through lives of continuous conversion and prayer.

Let us remember the Rule of Life given to us by Francis as we pray:

All Only this I want, but to know our God, and to bear the cross, so to wear the crown Christ wore.

Presider Francis urged us to love God with our whole heart, our whole soul and mind, with all our strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

All Most High God, may we stand before you humbly and come to recognize the goodness in all

that touches our lives.

Presider Francis prayed that we would always make in our hearts a dwelling place and home for the Lord God so that we might grow in love for God and one another.

All Most High God, may we be joyful and happy in you, loving one another, especially the poor and the unloved.

Presider Francis was adamant that the brothers and sisters neither dominate nor seek power over one another, but that they willingly serve and obey each other with a genuine love.

All Most High God, enlighten us, the followers of your servant Francis, to the ways of caring and selflessness that will strengthen our daily lives together.

Presider Francis constantly reminded his brothers and sisters that as they announced peace with their lips it was even more important that they carry it within their own hearts. Everyone should be moved to peace, good will and mercy because of their gentleness.

All Most High God, may our openness to your Spirit and our willingness to forgive and ask pardon teach us the ways of peace and justice in our world.

Presider Francis greatly desired that in every place and in every circumstance the sisters and brothers would acknowledge that all good belongs to the Most High God and that they give thanks to the one from whom we receive all good.

All Compassionate God, as we continually turn toward you and experience your great love, may we have the courage to free our hearts for selfless service.

Presider Most High and Loving God, you helped your servant, Francis, to reflect the image of Jesus through a life of poverty and humility. May we follow Jesus by walking in the foot prints of Francis and Clare, and may we imitate their joyful love for of all creation.

All Amen.

(All stand)

Presider Gathering our praise and prayer into one with Saint Francis, let us offer in thanksgiving the prayer Jesus taught us. *Our Father...*

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Presider Blessed be you, our God, for the life and example of Francis.
As we celebrate with thoughtful devotion, the memory of his passing from death to new life, teach us to live strong but gentle lives in this world until at last we reach your heavenly dwelling place.

BLESSING

Presider May the Lord bless us and keep us.

All Amen.

Presider May God's face shine upon us and be gracious to us.

All Amen.

Presider May God look upon us with kindness and give us peace.

All Amen.

REPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT - sing, *O Sacrament Most Holy*

DISMISSAL

Presider Go forth in peace to ignite fire in the souls of people
who are cold and aching for a relationship with God.

All Amen.

(The service concludes with the Liturgical Dancer reverencing the Paschal Candle.

Please, bow with her to honor Christ, the Light of the World. All depart in silence.)