

INTRODUCTION

The Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity is a committee made up of two representatives, each, from the Third Order Society of St. Francis, Province of the Americas (TSSF, Anglican Communion), the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF), and the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO, Roman Communion). This committee was formed with the hope and goal of bringing together Christians of various lineages who seek to follow the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis.

One of the guiding practices for celebrating and moving more deeply into unity is to pray together. These prayer services are offered with the hope that local and regional levels of our respective Orders will reach out to each other to celebrate our common Franciscan vocation. To this end, this booklet contains two prayer services. The first is a "Little Office" of Morning Prayer (Lauds), designed to be prayed as individuals or communities during Franciscide: from the Feast of the Stigmata on September 17 through the Feast of St. Francis on October 4. The second is an *agape* celebration, rooted in the ancient practice of blessing, breaking and sharing a meal with others. It is rooted in the hospitality of Abraham, the sacrifice of Melchizedek, the way Jesus ate and drank, even with sinners, and the practice of St. Francis, himself, who would bless and share bread with his friars.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FRANCISCAN UNITY

Father Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF
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A MORNING LITURGY FOR FRANCISCAN UNITY

-- morning prayer for Francistide: from the Feast of the Stigmata, September 17, until the Feast of St. Francis, October 4.

(inclusive language options are included in parenthesis)

INVOCATION

Come, Holy One, join your Franciscan Brothers and Sisters together in the unity of our One God.. On this Feast Day when Francis received the marks of the fire of your love, so, too, mark us with your Spirit of Peace and Joy and inflame us with your Passion,

RESPONSE

That we who walk in the footsteps of Christ and in the pathway of Francis and Clare, will find the spiritual food to sustain us on our journey.

Let your love be our love, O Christ; may we see with eyes that You have opened. Take away all jealousy and unkindness, all hardness and intolerance, that in simple and quiet service we may please You. Amen.

OPENING PRAISE

Thou art the Holy Lord, the Only God, who works miracles
Thou art strong, Thou art great
Thou are the Most High

Thou art Good, all Good, Highest Good
Thou art Love, Charity;
Thou art Wisdom, Thou art Humility,
Thou art Patient, Thou art Beauty
Thou art Gentleness; Thou art Security, Thou art Quiet
Thou art Joy; Thou art our Hope and Joy

Thou art Justice,
Thou art all our riches until sufficiency;
Thou art Beauty, Thou art Gentleness; Thou art Protector.
Thou art our Guard and Defender. Thou art Refreshment.
Thou art our Hope, Thou art our Charity, Thou art our Sweetness
Thou art our eternal Life

(from The Praises of God Most High by St. Francis of Assisi)

PSALM 133

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers (*and sisters*) dwell in unity.
It is like the precious oil on the head,
Running down on the beard,
On the beard of Aaron (*and on the shawl of Sarah*),
Running down on the collar of his (*their*) robes!
It is like the dew of Hermon,
Which falls on the mountains of Zion!
For there the Lord (*Holy One*) has commanded the blessing,
Life forevermore.

(From The Holy Bible, English Standard Version)

A POETIC READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Be humble and gentle;
Be patient with each other;
Making allowance for each other's faults.
Because of your love
Try always to be led along together by the Holy Spirit
And so be at peace with one another.
We are all parts of one body;
We have the same spirit
And we have all been called to the same glorious future.
I beg you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
To stop arguing among yourselves..
Let there be real harmony
So that there won't be splits in the church.
I plead with you to be of one mind
United in thought and purpose.
So stop evaluating Christians
By what the world thinks about them
Or by what they seem to be like on the outside
Talk with each other much about the Lord,
Quoting psalms and hymns
And singing sacred songs,
Making music in your hearts to the Lord.
Always give thanks for everything
To our God and Creator.
Honor Christ by submitting to each other.
I have loved you even as the Creator has loved Me.
Live within My love.
When you obey Me you are living in My love
Just as I obey my Creator and live in God's love.
I have told you this so that
You will be filled with joy.
Yes, your cup of joy will overflow?
I demand that you love each other
As much as I love you.
I am not praying for these alone

But also for the future believers
Who will come to Me.
Because of the testimony of these
My prayer for all of them
Is that they will be of one heart and mind
Just as You and I are, Loving Creator –
That just as You are in Me and I am in You,
So they will be in Us.

(from John 17 referenced in Earlier Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of
Penance by St. Francis)

Glory to the Father (*Creator*), and to the Son (*Christ*) and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning , is now and forevermore. Amen.

MEDITATION (by Thich Nhat Hanh)

As we are together, praying for peace
Let us be truly with each other.
Let us pay attention to our breathing.
Let us be relaxed in our bodies and our minds.
Let us be at peace with our bodies and our minds.
Let us return to ourselves and become wholly ourselves.
Let us be aware of the Source of being common
To us all and to all living things,
Evoking the presence of the Great Compassion
Towards ourselves and towards all living beings
That they are all sisters and brothers,
All nourished from the same source of life.
Let us pray that we ourselves cease to be
The cause of suffering to each other.
Let us plead with ourselves to live in a way
Which will not deprive other beings
Of air, water, food, shelter, or the chance to live.
With humility, with awareness of the existence of life,
And of the sufferings that are going on around us.
Let us pray for the establishment of peace in our hearts and on the earth.

SONG OF PEACE

(select a hymn of peace such as "Peace is Flowing Like a River, or an interfaith peace
song such as included at the end of this liturgy.)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(see listing at the end of this liturgy for inclusive language alternatives)

INTERCESSIONS

Leader: With all our heart and all our mind, we pray to you, O Lord:

People: Make us instruments of your peace.

L: For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you O Lord:

P: Where there is hatred, let us sow love.

L: For our enemies and those who wish us harm, and for all whom we have injured or offended, we pray to you, O Lord:

P: Where there is injury, let us sow pardon.

L: For all you fear God and believe in you, Lord Christ, that our divisions may cease and all may be one as you and the Creator are one, we pray to you, O Lord:

P: Where there is discord, let us sow union.

L: For those who do not yet believe, for those who have lost their faith, and those in despair and darkness that they may receive the light of the Gospel, we pray to you, O Lord:

P: Where there is doubt, let us sow faith.

L: For the poor, the persecuted, the sick and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, O Lord:

P: Where there is despair, let us sow hope.

L: For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, O Lord:

P: Where there is darkness, let us sow light.

L: For those who suffer in body, mind or spirit; that they may be comforted and healed; give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation, we pray to you, O Lord:

P: Where there is sadness, let us sow joy.

(Other prayers and petitions may be added silently or aloud)

P: Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

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PRAYER FOR FRANCISCAN UNITY

O gracious and loving Creator
Having brought us into the Body of Christ and
Called us to follow Francis and Clare;
Let your Holy Spirit inspire all in the Franciscan Family
To be of one heart and mind in love with you and one another.
Grant, we pray, that our common charism and vocation
Shared by Franciscan Orders from every tradition
May help build up the Body of Christ and
Heal the Franciscan Family,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen

SENDING FORTH

What you hold, may you always hold. What you do, may you always do and never abandon. But with swift pace, light step and unswerving feet, so that even your steps stir up no dust, go forward securely, joyfully and swiftly, on the path of prudent happiness. (from the writings of St. Clare)

BENEDICTION

May the Lord (*Holy One*) Bless you and Keep you
May His (*God's*) face shine upon you and be gracious to you
May he (*God*) look upon you with kindness and give you his (strike "his") peace

May Almighty God bless you,
+ the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit
(*Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit*)

Alternative Resources

Song of Peace:

Peace is the Longing of Every Soul
Shalom, Shalom, Shalom
Peace Is the Longing of Every Soul
Divine Peace,

Ya Salaam
Peace On the Planet, Peace in Our Homes
Peace In Our Hearts
Om Shanti Om
Peace Is The Longing of every Soul
Shalom, Ya Salaam
With A Long Breath of Peace, with a Long Breath of Peace

Lord's Prayer:

1. Our Maker who is in Heaven
Hallowed be your name
Your Reign is come
Your 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 this who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil

For the reign, the power and the glory are yours
Now and forever more.

OR

2. From the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer:

Earth Maker, Pain Bearer, Life Giver,
Source of all that is and shall be,
Father and Mother of us all.
Loving God in Whom is Heaven.

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe,
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created being!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever. Amen.

Amen.

OR

3. The Aramaic Prayer of Jesus; original transliteration and translation from the Syrian-Aramaic by Neil Douglas Klotz (Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus (Harper San Francisco, 1990).

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos
You create all that moves in light
Focus your light within us – make it useful; as the rays of a beacon show the way.
Create your reign of unity now – through our fiery hearts and willing hands
Your one desire then acts with ours, as in all light, so in all forms.
Grant what we need each day in bread and insight
Subsistence for the call of growing life
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
As we release the strands we hold of others' guilt
Don't let us enter forgetfulness
But free us from unripeness
From you is born all ruling will, the power and the life to do,
The song that beautifies all, from age to age it renews
Truly power to these statement – may they be the
Source from which all my actions grow.
Sealed in trust and faith. Amen

Abwoon d'bwashmaya
Nethqadash shmakh
Teytey malkuthakh
Nehwey tzevyanach aykanna d'bwashmaya aph b'arha
Hawvlan lachma d'sunqanan yaomana
Washboqlan khaubayn
aykana daph khnan shbwoqan l'khayyabayn
Wela tahlan l'nesyuna
Ela patzan min bisha.
Metol dilakhie malkutha wahayla wateshbukhta l'ahlam almin.
Ameyn.

A FRANCISCAN AGAPE FEAST

Because of the sad divisions that exist in the One Body of Christ, sharing in a common Eucharistic celebration is not possible at this time. This liturgy is specifically developed for use by Franciscans from different Orders and different communions who wish to share a "common table." St. Francis himself used to bless and break bread, and share it with his brothers. This practice is ancient, going back to the hospitality our Father Abraham showed to his visitors. While not the full celebration of the Eucharist, there is a relationship, in much the same way that blessing with Holy Water is a reminder of our Baptism.

The Agape Feast can be used as a stand-alone liturgy or it can be used at the beginning or end of a shared meal, or interspersed with an order of worship. The liturgy is adapted from the Iona Abbey Worship Book).

WELCOME

As Franciscans, we come from different traditions to follow the journey of Francis and Clare. We come as different people to serve One God, who calls us to unity as the family of God.

CALL TO THE FEAST

Leaders: Out of darkness came light

All: And the power of God was revealed

Men: in the running wave and the flowing air,

Women: in the quiet earth and the shining stars.

Leaders: Out of the dust came life;

All: And the image of God was revealed

Men: in the human face and the gentle heart,

Women: in the warmth of flesh and the depth of soul

Leaders: Out of justice came freedom;

All: And the wisdom of God was revealed

Men: in the need to grow and the will to love,

Women: in the chance to know and the power to choose.

Leaders: And God looked at the creation,
All: And Behold, it was very good.

SCRIPTURE: PS 34:1

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Reader: I will keep on thanking God
With constant words of prayer.
I will glory in the living God:
The humble will hear and be glad.

Leader: Let us pray.
Living God, our loving parent; you cherish your creation
and we praise you.
With earth, air, water, fire: in our element as your children,
we praise you..
With our lips, with our lives,
in all our diversity, each one made in your image,
We praise you.
Because, in Jesus, you came to share
our human lives, our sorrow and joy,
we praise you.
Because your Spirit is at work today:
encouraging, enabling, surprising us,
We praise you.
poor as we are, you give us hope:
Salt of the earth, you give us meaning and purpose
and we praise you.

All: Amen.

SCRIPTURE: MARK 9:50

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Reader: Salt is good, but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you
season it?

Leader: Giving God, you blessed us with saltiness,

All: But we became bland.

Leader: You trusted us with your Word,

All: but we did not keep it.

Leader: You lit a flame in our midst,

All: but we hid it under formality,
Smothered it with our fears.

Leader: God, in your mercy:

All: Forgive us.

(silence)

Leader: Forgiving God, we believe that you have called us

All: to be salt and light;

Leader: that you offer us time and space and strength

All: to begin again.

(silence)

Leader: Giving and forgiving God,

All. We thank you.

Reader: Have salt in yourself, and be at peace with one another.

PASSING THE PEACE

“Peace and All Good to you” or “Pace e Bene.”

GIVING THANKS FOR THE WEEK

People are invited to call our single words or brief phrases of thanks for something that happened during the week. A simple response may be used such as “Generous God, we thank you.”

(Or a short chant may be used instead such as:

Glory and gratitude and praise
Now let earth to heaven raise.
Glory and gratitude and praise
These we offer to God.

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 34:8

INTRODUCTION TO SHARING THE FEAST

Reader: We are all invited to the common table to share in an Agape Feast. At this table we come as brothers and sisters in the Holy Family of God. Taste and see that God is good.

The feast can be a loaf of bread (or oatcakes, or a sweet bread) and a chalice of wine (or cider, or grape juice). The bread and the wine are passed to one another. Each person serving the individual next to him or her.

PRAYER

(at the conclusion of each one drinking and eating)

Leader: As we share this bread,
as we pour out this water,
we thank you, God, for our daily bread
for the food which delights and nourishes us
and for the companionship that sustains us as Franciscans.
We thank you, too, for wine (or “drink”)
to quench our thirst
and for the Living Water
with which you surprise and enrich
and transform our lives.
We give thanks for this feast at which all
Franciscans can share, a foretaste of the
Holy Realm.
Amen.

(May be followed by the Lord’s Prayer, in each one’s different languages and traditions)

BLESSING

Leader: God bless each of us as we travel on.
In our times of need
may we find a table spread in the wilderness
and companions on the road.

All: Amen.

Or:

Leader: Giving God,
bless all who have gathered round this table.
May we know the fullness of your presence
at every meal and in all our sharing.

All: Amen.

CLOSING CHANT