

**A SIMPLE SERVICE
FOR A MAN WHO SIMPLY
LOVED GOD**

A CELEBRATION OF THE TRANSITUS OF
OUR SERAPHIC FATHER ST. FRANCIS



OCTOBER 3
7:00 O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

NOTES

Place the San Damiano Cross in the front of the altar along with the St. Francis statue and the Easter candle (unlit) and a votive candle lit.

Prior to the start of the Transitus, the Church should be dimmed.

A table with numerous lighted votive candles will be place in the middle aisle, half way to the altar.

Four “ushers” should be located at the main entrances to welcome and distribute worship aids to all those attending.

PROLOGUE - **Poor Clare?**

At 6:55 pm, just prior to the start of the Transitus, An appointed person should read the following prologue form the large pulpit.

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, his successor as leader of the friars, Brother Elias, 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. Tonight 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 of the Good News 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!

PROCESSION: *The presider and readers process down the main aisle. All take their place in the sanctuary.*

INTRODUCTORY RITES BY THE PRESIDERS:

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 *4 SFO Readers*

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

ALL SIT, Readers 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 to go from their seats to the lectern one by one.

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 shown 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, 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 father: "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 (*John 13: 1-15*) before the feast of Passover.... (*Proclaimed by the Presider from the pulpit*)

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.

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!" 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 happily flew off to God.

Presider extinguishes the votive candle next to St. Francis and then lights the Easter Candle.

HOMILY: *by the Presider*

LITANY OF FRANCISCAN SAINTS: *the presider introduces the litany as usual. As the litany continues, the congregation comes forward one by one with lit candles to place around St. Francis.*

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL: *OFM Conventual?*

Presider: The call to rebuild God's house and embrace the leper continues in 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 Benedict the 16th, 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...Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, may she expose and untangle the errors of this age and always seek God's truth... let us pray to the Lord...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...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...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...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...Lord, hear our prayer.

For those whose physical pain leads them to despair and for those whose illnesses are channels of your love, may we always be there to bring them hope... let us pray to the Lord...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...Lord, hear our prayer.

OUR FATHER

EXCHANGE OF PEACE

CLOSING REMARKS: *Presider*

BLESSING WITH RELIC OF SAINT FRANCIS

The presider blesses the assembly with the relic and then places it near the altar and St. Francis. He returns to the altar for the recessional.

RECESSIONAL — “THE PEACE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS”

Led by a Poor Clare?

The Presider and readers leave in the same order as in the processional.