



Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis Consilium Internationale

Prot. n. 3981

Rome, 4th of October 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

May the Lord give you his peace!

This year is the last year of the great Franciscan jubilees, and we are remembering the very last moments of the life of Saint Francis of Assisi here on the Earth. However, when I invite you to reflect on the transitus of Saint Francis of Assisi, I invite you to contemplate on his entire life, too. The last days were not only a short period of time but a moment which completed the work of God in his whole life, as he said: *"I have done my duty; may Christ teach you what is yours to do!"*

Transitus means to pass over, to go through. Let us follow the life of Saint Francis, as he went through seven stages of his life, let's say, he passed through 7 doors, which God has opened before him. Let me share some simple thoughts about these stages, in the image of the doors which are opened by God for us, too. Maybe they can help all of us to understand Saint Francis a little better, and find some clues, how we might be guided by God through our life.

7 doors

When we walk on the ways of God, we have to pass through doors, stepping over thresholds. But these doors are one-way passes if we walk with God. *"No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."*¹ Once we go through a door it does not only mean that there's no return if we follow the guidance of God. It also means, that the doors are closed behind us, and God excludes everything what made it difficult to go on, so that they cannot be obstacles for the next step. The storms cannot break through these doors. The inner fights, the uncertainties, the temptations, the troubles cannot pass through this closed door. God is always guiding us forward. Let us look at the life of Saint Francis with this kind of eye, and in line with this let us seek the ways of our life, living the gift of our wonderful secular franciscan vocation.

1st door – To become a great knight

We have to see the great projects of God in our life. The young Francis used to be the son of his times, enjoying party time almost every day, without thinking of tomorrow. But still in his early years, Francesco Bernardone began to turn from someone who is only living for the day, to someone who has great goals. Already before his conversion, at a certain moment of his life, instead of only living for the day, hanging out with friends, passing time, he wanted to do great

¹ Lk. 9.62

things. The momentary goals started to change into one final goal of life, even though this goal – being a great herald, an invincible knight - was not fully a project of God. However, he started to think in – let’s call it – a vocation. Our small goals scatter us unless they are united by a greater purpose, and this is what he discovered when he was in prison. Without something to direct us toward God under all circumstances, we simply wander among these minor objectives. This is what God revealed to Francis: your life is more than just living for the moment and for trivial things. He has kept this attitude to keep the eyes always on the great things, all along his life. Our life, too, is more than just living for the moment. Let us keep in mind that God has a great project for the life of each one of us.

2nd door – From bitter into sweet

God wants us to turn to him, because he wants us to have a life full of sweetness and not of bitterness. Having great goals in mind may make everyone very determined. If something is good, it is very good and will be so. If something is wrong, will not easily change in a determined mindset. Francis had this same kind of mindset, but God could change it. Conversion is an absolute change of the mindset. It is not about thinking differently about marginal things, or doing things better, more, or less, or a little bit differently. Conversion is a fundamental change. It was such a turning point, when Saint Francis met the leper. Francis was still on the horseback. Seeing the lepers was still a bitter thing for him. However, God has changed him and made him go through this second door, do the unthinkable, and embrace the leper. This is the real change: stop the horse, get off it, and move close to the leper. So did Saint Francis, and God has turned into sweet what was bitter before. From this moment he was ready to see Christ in any person. Neither the lepers of our times ride a horse; we have to stop and get off our high one to meet them. Conversion is such a tough but significant act, and it has consequences, fundamental ones, if we discover that God may use anyone, lepers too. If we do our part, pass through this second door as Saint Francis did, God will do the rest, what we never can do: change the bitter into sweet. With this sweetness in his heart Saint Francis started to seek the will of God. Let us do the same!

3rd door – Guided into fraternity

We are created to share our life with others. After his conversion, Saint Francis wanted to be only with God. He did things alone. He started to rebuild the church of Saint Damian (and two others) alone. He was seeking solitude, he *‘went forth from the world’*². At the beginning, he went to the lepers alone and *“worked mercy with them”*³ alone. However, God had a different plan, and as Saint Francis said: *“And after the Lord gave me some brothers”*⁴. He did not seek them, he did not want to live together with others, in a community. But he, who wanted to be with God alone, became from someone who wanted to live in solitude to someone who accepted the brothers and thus fraternal life became one of the most important aspects of the franciscan spirituality. It is a fundamental part of our vocation to live in a fraternity. Whoever has a vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order, has a vocation to live in fraternity. God does not want to turn us into solitary heroes or hermit saints; rather, He wants us to demonstrate how good it is—and how it comes from Him—when we do things together, and above all, when we strive

² Test. 1

³ Test. 1

⁴ Test. 2

for holiness together. Let us leave no one out. The Lord gave brothers and sisters to us, too. Let us give thanks to God for them, and let us live with this gift!

4th door – To see not only the forest but the trees, too.

The great goals of our life have to be put into practice. Being responsible for his brothers, being the gifts of God, Saint Francis began to discover how to plant the great visions into small, personal encounters. He became the brother who had an eye looking at everyone in a deeply personal way. He gave up his personal fasting for the sake of the novice, he immediately stopped when someone asked him to pray for, and he gave personal message in writing to Brother Leo. He started to realize that great visions, great goals need to be applied in the daily life, for the persons in front of him. Let us look around in the family, in the fraternities, at work, and see the persons who need our love, our help, our good words. God wants to use us!

5th door – The gift of love and passion

Saint Francis had an extremely special, graceful experience at the mount La Verna. He kept seeking the full unity with Christ. In that deep moment he did not ask from Christ something he could do or do better, but he has asked something he could live, something that would mean him the most. At that very moment he changed from someone who wanted to act to someone who is simply being with Christ - instead of doing, guiding, leading, he only asked to love and to feel the passion. God has granted him the stigmas and all what he asked: passed through the next door, living a life in which he was much more simply living his unity with Christ, than doing good things and right things, which he never gave up though. God has guided him to the life of the full and complete experience of love and compassion. 'Being' full of love and compassion for Christ became first before 'doing' love and mercy for the sake of Christ. Let us give thanks for 'being' together with Christ in love and in passion, for this makes it possible for us, too, to do something with him in love and in compassion.

6th door – The depth of being

We will all arrive to the moment, when 'being' means something much more simple, but much more in its depth. Saint Francis had to pass this door, living in illness, blindness, being unable to do anything. Not many of us could've kept that kind of grateful and joyful spirit, what Saint Francis had during these last times of his life among us. Having lost his capacity to move, to see, to act has revealed him the real value of life: God loves us because of who we are and not for what we do. Saint Francis was passing though the sixth door, and has arrived to that kind of poverty, when he not only did have nothing as his own, but he has lost his eyesight, health, strength, too. Passing this door has lead him to such a peace in the hands of God, that he really felt to write the Canticle of Creatures. What about us? Can we find peace among the difficulties? What do we need in order to feel being in the hands of God?

7th door - from this world to heaven

Death of the body is part of life. However, it is not a joyful moment, sometimes it is really hard. It means difficult hours, days. It means mourning. Usually it means silence, too. But also, music

begins with silence. Silence is part of the music; it is the preparation. Though death is the end of life here on earth, it is not the definitive end of life. we believe and hope that we continue living with God in heaven. This is what Saint Francis and his companions have understood and believed, and this is why we call it 'transitus'.

At this very moment of his life, Saint Francis could live the fullness of life. Everything he received from God was compressed in this one moment. He became the herald of the Great King, praising God in his last moments, too. He has lived the sweetness, not only by receiving the sweets prepared by lady Jacopa for him, but the inner sweetness, too. He was surrounded by his brothers; fraternity was present in his last moments. He blessed his brothers one by one, and he could feel the greatest love and the greatest passion at the same time. He could do nothing but lay his life into the hands of God. His transitus was a peaceful moment, being lived not as the end of something but as a passing over; *"One of his brothers and disciples, a man of no small reputation, ... saw the soul of the most holy father ascending straight to heaven above many waters; and it was like a star, as large as the moon, and as bright as the sun, and carried on a little white cloud. ."*⁵

Let us continue!

God has lead Saint Francis all along his life until his death on the night of October 3rd. From the importance of the external things, he has arrived to the absolute importance of what is inside the man. From a loud life, announcing by actions and words he has arrived to an absolutely silent life when even the actions and words are missing, only the 'being' is there. From a speedy life into a slow way of life. From proclaiming the Gospel by what you say and what you do to a stage when proclaiming the Gospel rather means what you accept and in what you are listening to. At the end he became *"the herald of the great king"*⁶, but in an absolutely different way than he imagined at the beginning.

Let us observe and pay attention to how and where God leads us, from our own ideas into His plan, and from the things of this world into the things of God. God does not make a difference between saint Francis and any of us, in terms of how much he wants us to be guided into heaven. Let us look at Saint Francis, and we may say: *"to accomplish the wonderful work which he intends to do, he (God) has found no creature more vile than I am on earth"*⁷. God has opened these seven doors for us. All the doors for all of us, so that we may show the wonderful work of God in our life.

After these three years, after the solemnity of October 4th, 2026, our life cannot continue as before. It cannot continue as if nothing special has happened. We have received a lot of treasures when we remembered the last years of the life of Saint Francis, and it is a responsibility, too. We are responsible to learn from what we have heard, seen, lived, we are responsible to share it and to make our fraternities a better place to live our vocation.

Let us give thanks for those who had been inspired by Saint Francis in the past, because without them - without their example, their teaching, and their faithfulness - we could not be Franciscan either. Let us live and pass on this spirituality in such a way that those who come after us may also say how wonderful it is that Franciscan spirituality remains alive and enduring.

⁵ 1Cel 110

⁶ 1Cel 16.

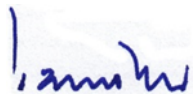
⁷ Fior. 10.

On October 4th we do not celebrate a death. We remember the grace of God and we give thanks for Saint Francis; we remember his transitus, his passing from this world to heaven. Let the remembering on the transitus of Saint Francis be a fresh input for all of us to renew our vocation and our mission. Based upon the example of Saint Francis, may God teach us and guide us, so that at the end each one of us may say: *I have done my duty; may Christ teach you what is yours!*

May we all „be filled in heaven with the blessing of the Most High Father and on earth with the blessing of His Beloved Son with the Most Holy Spirit”⁸!

Saint Francis, pray for us!

Your brother and your minister



Tibor Kauser OFS
minister general



⁸ Test. 4.