

Guided Journey with Francis of Assisi



- Move so that there is space beside you.
- Close your eyes if you can, if you prefer not, that is okay.
- Get in touch with whom you are [spouse, child, parent, Secular Franciscan].
- In your mind, go to your favorite place to pray [home, church, outside].
- The time is NOW.
- You are comfortable, take 3 deep breaths, you are relaxing.
- Think about St. Francis, see him walking toward you.
- He sits down beside you. He doesn't speak, he looks into your eyes and you know that he cares about you, just like God cares about you.
- Francis starts to pray aloud and you listen to his gentle words. It is as though he is singing.
- Francis knows that you are a Secular Franciscan and that one of your charisms is conversion.
- Francis whispers to you that he'd like to share a story about God's love and one of his conversions: [ask a male to read Francis' parts]

Francis: The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. But for God's sake, I served the lepers with great love. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. I washed all the filth from them, and even cleaned out the pus of their sores. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. [paraphrase from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* (Vol. 1: *The Saint*), Editors: Regis Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap.; J.A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv.; and William J. Short, O.F.M., 1999 – 1991, pp. 124 & 195]

- You are so touched by Francis' story that you tell him about a time when you experienced personal conversion. Francis listens very carefully and nods his head as you speak.
- Don't be afraid to share with him, he really does care.
- You know that St. Francis needs to return to his home, so you wrap up your story.
- Francis says that he has one more story to share with you:

Francis: I learned that the bishop of Assisi excommunicated the mayor. No one was to sell or buy anything from the bishop, or to draw up any legal documents

with him. And so, they thoroughly hated each other. It saddened me greatly because there was no one, religious or secular, who was intervening for peace and harmony between them. So, it came to me that I needed to add another verse to my *Canticle*.

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

I called one of my companions and told him to get the bishop and mayor together and sing the *Canticle*. He did as I requested. Two brothers said to the bishop and the mayor that I had written the *Praises of the Lord* and I asked that they listen to them with great devotion.

I trusted in the Lord that He would humble their hearts and they would make peace with each other and return to their earlier friendship and love. They did indeed apologize, embraced and kissed each other. I gave God praise for all that He had done! [paraphrase from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* (Vol. 1I: *The Founder*), Editors: Regis Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap.; J.A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv.; and William J. Short, O.F.M., 2000, pp. 187 & 188]

I must now take my leave of you. But I would like to leave you with this:

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you. May he look upon you with kindness and give you his peace!

- You thank Francis for stopping by.
- Francis turns and walks slowly away. You follow him with your eyes. Then all of a sudden he is gone.
- He gave you the courage to look at your life and to see the areas that you need to make better. Name to yourself what you want to work on to be more Christ like. Maybe to read the Gospel more; to see Christ in others; be a witness to our Faith; encounter the Sacrament of Reconciliation; promote respect and justice for all, the unborn, the refugees, the elderly, and those on the fringe of society; to simplify material needs; and the list could go on and on. Just take a moment to mention to yourself what you want to work on.
- Still keep your eyes closed.
- Wait, here is Jesus, he looks at you and smiles. He says: that Francis is really a character. I do so love him, just like I love you.
- Jesus turns and vanishes.
- Whenever you wish, you can open your eyes. May The Lord give you peace!