

STIGMATA PRAYER ACTIVITY: The Franciscan Family Chaplet

St. Francis of Assisi learned from Jesus and understood the power of prayer for deepening his relationship with God and he practiced it frequently. Most of his prayers began with praising, honoring and thanking God for all His graces and gifts to us. Then he would seek God's help for the needs of the Order and/or the needs of those who sought his intercession.

"In celebrating the Centenary of the Gift of the Stigmata as a Franciscan Family, we are invited to restore the dimension of prayerful and contemplative silence in our daily lives, the silence that places us before the *Essential*, that lets us recognize our desire for the infinite that resides in our hearts, that allows us to listen to ourselves, to others and to God." (Centenary materials)

The Stigmata of St. Francis was a special gift from God to acknowledge Francis' deep desire to become more like Jesus, Who was *wounded* out of His great Love for us. We recommend that you take time to ponder, acknowledge and seek healing for your personal *Woundedness* and for the *Woundedness* of our sisters and brothers, especially our Franciscan sisters and brothers.

What does your *Woundedness* look like?

Is it sin that we have difficulty overcoming?

Is it chronic pain or illness that prevents us from performing services/ministries that we performed in the past? Other?

What do you do with this *Woundedness*?

Do you complain to God & others about it?

Do you ask God to remove it? What else could you do?

1. "The encounter with the Beloved became a song of praise; therefore, after his encounter with the Crucified One, Francis composed the Praises of God, a prayer which sprang from a heart in love, totally focused on the divine "You": "You are the holy Lord God Who does wonderful things. You are strong. You are great. You are the most high" (Praises of God 1-2, FF 261)"
2. "Just as the finger of God touched Francis, so, Francis went forth to touch the poor, the sick and the needy, to transmit that divine love to them. Francis' meeting with the Crucified One prompted him to meet those who had been crucified throughout history, those whose pain he wished to alleviate."

3. "Remembering and celebrating Francis being touched by the Crucified One inspires us to come out of ourselves and go forth "touching Christ's suffering flesh in others" (Gaudete et exsultate 37)
4. Being in communion: "By his wounds we were healed" (Is 53:5). Are you willing to let your "wounds" heal others? Others who are suffering in a similar way? Help your sisters & brothers in fraternity who are hurting? Help your local Fraternity Council and the councils of the higher levels of fraternity? (1 – 4 above are from Centenary materials)

One way of doing this could be praying the Franciscan Family Chaplet (see below); this short prayer form offers prayer for an increase in new vocations & spiritual support for current members of all branches of our Family. While there is no sign up sheet or definite commitment to a specific time, we are suggesting that Regional Leadership take the initiative of assigning one or two fraternities to a specific month from February 2024 through January 2025. Ask the local fraternity leadership to ask their members to pray for this intention during the assigned month. By implementing this suggestion, we should have at least a few generous souls praying for each one of us every day throughout the year. We also suggest that you invite our Sisters and Brothers in the First, Second & Third Order Regular residing within your regional area to participate as well.

The Franciscan Family Chaplet may be found on our national website – www.secularfranciscansusa.org . It may be found both under "Pray with Us" – Traditional Franciscan Prayers at bottom of the list – available in several different languages and with the Centenary materials: Stigmata – Activities. Use the "Search" button & type "Franciscan Family Chaplet" then click "enter".

May God show you what is yours to do. St. Francis of Assisi