

October 1, 2022

JPIC: Love the Lord, Love His Kingdom, Love the Earth

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Let us join together in fraternal love and joy as we celebrate the feast day of our beloved saint, Saint Francis. I look forward to joining with other sisters and brothers as we pray the transitus, walking with our Beloved Saint as we remember his journey into the arms of the Father on the night of October 3, 1226, and as we celebrate his feast day on October 4.

I invite you, sisters and brothers, on this feast day to make some dedicated time to reflect upon God's call to you to our beautiful Order. Of course, I sometimes think it was all my idea, having been drawn to Franciscan spirituality, to the patron saint of ecology, and the patron saint of peace, many of the issues I relate to so strongly. And, in my lack of Franciscan humility, I can forget that it was God's idea for me, and God's call to me to pray, prepare, and profess to this Order. I love to tell the story of hearing the voice of our Beloved Saint on November 7, 2007, while walking up to the top of Christo Rey Mountain in Sunland Park, NM, to a bi-country Mass on Christ the King Sunday. I heard him say "You have read enough books and carried my statue around long enough. It is time to begin formation." I started soon thereafter and, as they say, the rest is history.

Thank you for receiving my story. Call someone, dear sisters and brothers, and tell them your story. It is an important story, one of many that over the last 800+ years makes our Order what it is today.

Then I invite you to reflect upon your profession. Perhaps you may want to review the words of your profession. To what did you say "Yes, this is what I want." These are powerful words that have given form and shape to your lives, as they have to mine. The words always lead me to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order where I review that I asked to lead a life directed by the gospel, that I committed myself to be in harmony with our beautiful Mother Church, that I root my words, thoughts and actions in prayer and contemplation, that I embrace the call to the eucharistic life. I commit devotion to the Holy Mother, to a simple lifestyle, and to embrace redemptive obedience to God as our Lord and Savior Jesus did. I review my commitment to peacemaking, to seeking creative initiatives for justice, and to being in universal kinship with all that lives. I seek to honor my work and the work of others, and to follow God everywhere and see the light of Christ within all creation.

Finally, sisters and brothers, as you review the above, reflect upon how you wish to live out your Franciscan calling in the year ahead. Always remember we are held in fraternal love and your sisters and brothers are praying for you and available to walk with you on your journey. Praise Be to God. Many blessings.

Peace and All Good, Patricia Grace, JPIC Animator, St. Francis Region