

TRANSITUS....

THE LAST MOMENTS OF OUR SERAPHIC FATHER SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI



THE PASSING OF OUR HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

October 3

I. Opening Rite

Leader: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray

Heavenly Father, we commemorate the passing of our holy father Francis of Assisi into your hands. As we celebrate in his memory, help us to accept the grace you pour out on us every day. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

II. Hymn: Prayer of Saint Francis

“Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there is hatred let me bring your love,
Where there is injury your pardon Lord,
And where there’s doubt true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there’s despair in life, let me bring hope,
Where there is darkness, only light,
And where there’s sadness, ever joy.

O Master grant that I may never seek,
So much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving of ourselves that we receive.
And in dying that we’re born to eternal life.

III. Narration:

Reader 1: A reading from I Celano, 109 (Omnibus 322)

The space of twenty years had now passed since Francis' conversion, according to what had been made known to him by the will of God. For when the blessed father and Brother Elias were staying at one time at Foligno, one night when they had given themselves to sleep, a certain white-garbed priest of a very great and advanced age and venerable appearance stood before Brother Elias and said: "Arise, Brother and say to Brother Francis that eighteen years are now completed since he renounced the world and gave himself to Christ, and that he will remain in this life for only two more years; then the Lord will call him to himself and he will go the way of all flesh." And thus it happened that the word of the Lord that had been made known long before was fulfilled at the appointed time.

When therefore he had rested for a few days in a place he greatly longed to be in and realized that the time of his death was at hand, he called to him two of his brothers and spiritual sons and told them to sing in a loud voice with joy of spirit the Praises of the Lord over his approaching death, or rather over the life that was so near. He, himself, in as far as he was able, broke forth in that psalm of David:

Psalm 142 (All sing)

With a loud voice I cry out to the Lord;
With a loud voice I beseech the Lord.

My complaint I pour out before him;
before him I lay bare my distress.
When my spirit is faint within me,
You know my path.

In the way along which I walk,
they have hid a trap for me.

I look to the right to see,
but there is no one who pays me heed.

I have lost all means of escape;
there is no one who cares for my life.

I cry out to you, O Lord,
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."

Attend to my cry,
for I am brought low indeed.

Rescue me from my persecutors,
for they are too strong for me.

Lead me forth from prison,
that I may give thanks to your name.

The just shall gather around me
when you have been good to me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reader 2: A reading from I Celano, 109 (Omnibus 323)

A certain brother, however, from among those standing about, whom the saint loved with greatest affection, in his anxiety for all the brothers, said to him, when he saw these things and recognized that Francis was approaching his end: “Kind Father, alas, your sons are now without a father and are deprived of the true light of their eyes. Remember therefore your orphan sons whom you are now leaving; forgive them all their faults and give joy to those present and absent with your holy blessing.”

And the saint said to him: “Behold, my son, I am called by God; I forgive my brothers, both present and absent, all their offences and faults, and, in as far as I am able, I absolve them; I want you to announce this to them and to bless them all on my behalf.”

Finally, he ordered the book of the Gospels to be brought and commanded that the Gospel according to St. John be read from the place where it begins:

IV. GOSPEL (Deacon)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

Before the feast of Passover,* Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced* Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel around his waist.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Master, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well.” Jesus said to him, “Whoever has bathed* has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all.” For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

So when he had washed their feet [and] put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, “Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me ‘teacher’ and ‘master,’ and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.

Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger* greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it. I am not speaking of all of you. I know those whom I have chosen. But so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'The one who ate my food has raised his heel against me.' From now on I am telling you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me." (John 13:1-20)

V. HOMILY (Deacon)

The Gospel is followed by a short homily.

Afterwards there is a moment of silent reflection.

VI. NARRATION (Cont.)

Reader 3: A reading from II Celano, 216 (Omnibus, 535)

After these things, the saint raised his hands to heaven and praised his Christ, because, freed now of all things, he was going to him free. Indeed, that he might show himself to be a true imitator of Christ his God in all things, he loved to the end his brothers and sons whom he had loved from the beginning. He had all the brothers there called to him and soothing them with comforting words in view of his death, he exhorted them with paternal affection to love God.

VII. PEACE

Leader: In memory of Francis' love for his brothers, let us greet one another with an embrace of love and peace, mindful of his words: "For if a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh, a friar should certainly love and care for his spiritual brother all the more tenderly." The Rule of 1223, 6 (Omnibus 61f)

VIII. CONCLUSION

Reader 4: A reading from I Celano, 110 (Omnibus 324)

Francis then commanded that a hair shirt be put on him and that he be sprinkled with ashes. Then, when many brothers had gathered about, whose father and leader he was, and while they were standing reverently at his side awaiting his blessed death and happy end, his most holy soul was freed from his body and received into the abyss of light, and his body fell asleep in the Lord.

(All pause for a song of meditation) ***Te Deum***

Prayer (All):

O holy father Francis, you are the light of the world, shining in the Church of Christ more splendidly than the sun;

Behold, you have withdrawn the rays of your light, and now withdrawing into the kingdom of light, you have exchanged company with us miserable ones for the company of the angels and saints!

O glorious kindness of singular renown, do not put aside the care of your sons though you have now put off your flesh like unto theirs!

Know, O indeed, in what great distress you have left them whose innumerable labors and frequent anxieties merely your presence, always mercifully relieved.

O truly merciful and most holy father, you were always ready to show mercy to your shining sons and to kindly forgive them!

We therefore bless you, worthy father, whom the Most High has blessed, who is over all things, God blessed forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: *All Creatures of Our God and King*

All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing
O praise Him! Allelujah!
Thou, burning sun with golden beam
Thou, silver moon with softer gleam
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Allelujah! Allelujah! Allelujah!

Let all things their Creator bless
And worship Him in humbleness
O praise Him! Allelujah!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son
And praise the Spirit, Three-in-One
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Allelujah! Allelujah! Allelujah!

All the redeemed washed by His blood
Come and rejoice in His great love
O praise Him! Allelujah!
Christ has defeated every sin
Cast all your burdens now on Him
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Allelujah! Allelujah! Allelujah!

He shall return in pow'r to reign
Heaven and earth will join to say
O praise Him! Allelujah!
Then who shall fall on bended knee?
All creatures of our God and King
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Allelujah! Allelujah! Allelujah!