

## The Cloud of Witnesses

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” - Philippians 4:4

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” – James 4:10

### Francis and Clare



- Francis (1181-1226) and Clare (1194-1253) both lived in the town of Assisi, Italy. Both became founders of new religious orders centered on the practice of radical poverty—Francis of the Friars Minor (Franciscans), and Clare of the Poor Clares.

- Out of all the figures of church history, Francis’ popularity has never waned. He is noted for his rampant joy, his delight in the natural world, and his simple, poignant sayings.

- Clare remained a close friend and advisor of Francis until his death. She lived a life of prayer and contemplation in her abbey of San Damiano. She described Christian communities as “mirrors”—on the one hand, reflecting the beauty and glory of Christ, and on the other, giving the outside world a chance to see itself as it really is.

- The Franciscans became a missionary force throughout much of the world. Francis himself went and preached the Gospel to a Muslim sultan in the Middle East.

#### Francis’ “Canticle of the Sun” (Abridged):

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my worshipful Brother Sun, who brings the day; you give light through him. He is beautiful and radiant in his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them bright, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great humility.



“I have been all things unholy. If God can work through me, he can work through anyone.”

“To the servant of God nothing should be displeasing save sin.”

“Preach the Gospel every day; and when necessary, use words.”

“It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.”

“All the darkness in the world can't extinguish the light from a single candle.”

“Sanctify yourself and you will sanctify society.”

Clare: “The Lord frequently reveals what is best to the least.”

*[Picture: Francis renouncing his inheritance (including his clothes) from his father]*

“Grant me the treasure of sublime poverty: permit the distinctive sign of our order to be that it does not possess anything of its own beneath the sun, for the glory of your name, and that it have no other patrimony than begging.”

“Above all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit which Christ gives to his friends is that of conquering oneself and willingly enduring sufferings, insults, humiliations, and hardships for the love of Christ. For we cannot glory in all those other marvelous gifts of God, as they are not ours but God's. But we can glory in the cross of tribulations and afflictions, because that is ours.”

*Francis' Peace Prayer:*

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;  
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
 Where there is injury, pardon;  
 Where there is error, truth;  
 Where there is doubt, faith;  
 Where there is despair, hope;  
 Where there is darkness, light;  
 And where there is sadness, joy.  
 O Divine Master,  
 Grant that I may not so much seek  
 To be consoled, as to console;  
 To be understood, as to understand;  
 To be loved as to love.  
 For it is in giving that we receive;  
 It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
 And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

*[Picture: Francis rebuking the wolf]*

