

Morning Prayer

Leader: Lord our God, the morning sky announces a new day.
All around us, creation is beginning its song of praise.
We now join our hearts and bodies with all peoples and all creation
As we lift up our hearts in praise to You, our God.

Song:

The Praises of God

You are holy, Lord, the only God, who does wonders.
You are strong, you are great, you are most high, you are the almighty King, you, holy
Father, are king of heaven and earth.

You are Three and One, Lord God of gods; you are good, all good, the highest good,
Lord God, living and true.

You are love, charity. You are wisdom; you are humility; you are patience; you are beauty; you are
meekness; you are security; you are rest, you are joy, you are our hope and joy, you are justice, you are
moderation, you are all our riches, you are enough for us.

You are beauty, you are meekness; you are the protector, you are our guardian and defender; you are
strength, you are refreshment.

You are our hope, you are our faith, you are our charity, you are all our sweetness, you are our eternal
life: Great and wonderful Lord, God almighty, Merciful Savior. (Francis of Assisi)

All: In the spirit of Francis, I pray for the gift of seeing God in persons in need and for the courage to
serve them in joy.

Reading:

One day Francis was riding on horseback down the road to the hospital, as usual absorbed in his
thoughts. Suddenly the horse jerked to the side of the road. With difficulty Francis pulled him back by
a violent jerk at the reins. The young man looked up and recoiled in horror. A leper stood in the
middle of the road, a short distance away... the usual wan specter, with stained face, shaved head,
dressed in grey sackcloth. He did not speak and showed no sign of moving, of getting out of the way.
He looked at the horseman fixedly, strangely, with an acute and penetrating gaze.

An instant that seemed eternity passed. Slowly Francis dismounted, went to the man, and took his hand.
It was a poor emaciated hand, bloodstained, twisted, inert and cold like that of a corpse. He put a mite
of charity in it, pressed it, and carried it to his lips. And suddenly, as he kissed the lacerated flesh of the
creature who was the most abject, the most hated, the most scorned, of all human beings, he was
flooded with a wave of emotion, one that shut out everything around him, one that he would remember
even on his death bed. As the leper withdrew his hand, Francis raised his head to look at him again. He
was no longer there...

211-212)

Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, (pp

Leader: Reflection on reading from *Praying with Francis of Assisi* p.61

Pause for quiet reflection

Song: *Voices the Challenge*