

Mercy MOMENTS



Live simply that all may simply live

In celebrating the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on October 4 we are inspired by his reverence for all of God's creation and his life of simple authenticity.

As Richard Rohr describes it

...Francis was at once very traditional and entirely new in the ways of holiness—a paradox. He stood barefoot on the earth and yet touched the heavens. He was grounded in the Church and yet instinctively moved toward the cosmos. He lived happily inside the visible and yet both suffered and rejoiced in what others thought was invisible. Francis was at home in two worlds at the same time, and thus he revealed it was all one world.

Like all saints, he delighted in both his Absolute Littleness and his Absolute Connection in the very same moment. Of course, they totally depend on one another. Francis and Clare died into the life that they loved instead of living in fear of any death that could end their life. They were both so very eager to love, and they somehow knew that dying to the old and unneeded was an essential part of living this love at any depth. Most of us do not seem to know that—and resist all change.” (cac.org/one-world-2019-09-30/)

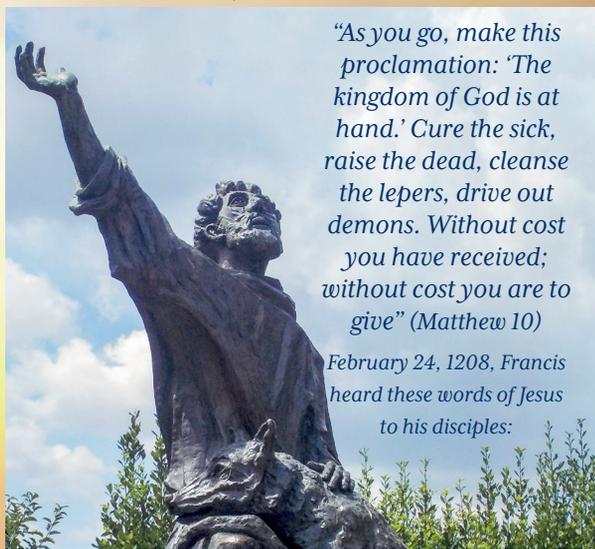
As humans we are always hungering for a meaningful wholeness, a fullness that would embrace life as it's really given – with chaos, destruction, death and sickness and suffering, as much a normal dimension of it as happiness, health, beauty, love and joy. Thomas Berry points to this deep, deep psychic drive within the Western psyche and how it tries to fill a vast empty part of ourselves with meaningless pursuits. “We don't go out into our backyard and kneel down before the soil and know that we are in the face of sacred mystery. It's just dirt to us... Whoever has the deed owns it.” (MacGillis, M. (2016). The work of genesis farm. In L. Vaughan-Lee (Ed.), *Spiritual Ecology The Cry of the Earth* (p. 71). Calofornia: The Gliden Sufi Center)

Pope Francis chose to be named after a saint “who loved and protected creation” – whose life was grounded in love for all God's creation, and who saw all creatures as his brothers and sisters. St Francis slept on the ground and eventually

made his home in an abandoned church. He wore a simple tunic, a rope for a belt and no shoes. He cared for lepers, made friends with social outcasts and embraced a life of no possessions. He showed kindness to animals and he shared his loved of God's creation through his actions, words, deeds and his most famous writing the “Canticle of the Sun”.

Like Jesus, St Francis identified with “the least of these” and showed complete trust that God would provide for his needs. His commitment to poverty went far beyond what many people today would accept. We live in a cultural that proliferates terms such as FOMO (fear of missing out), Digital Detox and Fakebooking. Our connections via social media provide a highlight reel of our best selves and our true selves get lost in the haze. We covet our neighbour's goods, we believe the grass is greener on the other side and thoughts like “if I just had [insert desire] I'd be happy” fill our minds.

Yet Francis' holiness, like all holiness, was unique and never a copy or mere imitation. In his “Testament,” he said, “No one showed me what I ought to do,” and then, at the very end of his life, he said, “I have done what is mine to do; may Christ teach you what is yours!” (cac.org/one-world-2019-09-30/)



“As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of God is at hand.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give” (Matthew 10)

February 24, 1208, Francis heard these words of Jesus to his disciples:

REFLECTION

- > Switch off, disconnect and contemplate the question: What is mine to do?
- > In what ways does my ministry embrace “the least of these”?

Reference: see in text

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE