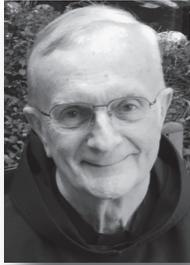


LENT
WITH
SAINT
CLARE

DAILY
REFLECTIONS

SUSAN HINES-BRIGGER



I am Father Dan Kroger, OFM, the Publisher of Franciscan Media. Welcome to *Lent with Saint Clare*. I hope it inspires and nourishes you as it has me.

Psalm 119:15 reads, “I will ponder your precepts and consider your paths.” During the 40 days of Lent please use this book for inspiration and self-examination. When you are able, pause and reflect upon your spiritual journey and listen for God’s invitation.

Will you prayerfully consider a gift to Franciscan Media as part of your Lenten almsgiving? Join a passionate community of believers who share God’s love at:
www.FranciscanMedia.org/Lent2023.

Peace and blessings,

Dan Kroger, OFM

Fr. Dan Kroger
Publisher
Franciscan Media

Ash Wednesday

.....

Today is the start of our Lenten journey. On our foreheads we wear ashes, a sign that we are made of dust and to dust we shall return. Such an outward sign conveys a message that words do not. When St. Clare left her home under cover of night, she had Francis cut off her long hair, signaling her departure from her previous life and entrance into her new one. We are now entering a new season of our faith. Clare will be our guide through her words and actions.

Prayer

St. Clare, as we receive the ashes on our foreheads and go about our day, may your story remind us to live our faith for all to see.

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

“What you hold may you always hold.
What you do, may you always do
and never abandon.”

—ST. CLARE

When Clare left her home, she was completely alone. For a brief time, she met with Francis and his brothers and then took refuge with a community of religious sisters; in essence, however, she was charting her own path; her desire was to live out her faith in a new way. Eventually she would be joined by her sister Catherine, soon to be known as Agnes, and other women. For each of us, even though we are part of the greater faith community, our faith journey is an individual one. Like Clare, we must decide how to live our faith.

Prayer

St. Clare, when we are feeling alone, may we remember that in you we have a constant companion. In your story, we can find hope.

Friday after Ash Wednesday

.....

“Gaze upon the mirror each day, O Queen and Spouse of Jesus Christ, and continually study your face within it.”

—FOURTH LETTER TO AGNES OF PRAGUE

.....

Most of the time we use mirrors to check our outward appearance. In her *Testament*, St. Clare made a number of references to mirrors: how she and her sisters should be a mirror to others, how others serve as a mirror back to them. What if we used our mirrors not only for our outward appearance, but also to reflect what lies within? What would we see? Would we be happy with what we observe staring back at us?

Prayer

St. Clare, help us to remember that we are called to reflect Christ’s love. May we always share our beauty—in spirit and action—with those around us.

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

.....

“Do not be disturbed by the clamor of the world, which passes like a shadow.”

—LETTER TO ERMENTRUDE OF BRUGES

.....

As a member of the noble class, St. Clare had the finest goods available to her—clothes, food, shelter. Yet she often shunned those possessions and shared what she had with the less fortunate. She understood that God was found not in worldly possessions but rather in our character and how we treat others. Many of us can fulfill not only our needs, but also many of our wants. The challenge is remembering that material goods and the clamor of the world often do not feed our spirits, which is most important.

Prayer

St. Clare, remind us that the many things we surround ourselves with often do not fill our spirits.

First Sunday of Lent

.....

“We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become.”

—ST. CLARE

.....

For most people, love carries some sort of romantic connotation. Love, though, is so much broader than that. A shining example of that is Clare’s love for Christ. She and Francis also had a very loving relationship. Yet neither of those fit the traditional definition to which we often default. Lent is a perfect time for us to delve into the deeper meaning of this emotion. The challenge we face is to seek out that deeper meaning and the ways in which we can manifest it in our lives.

Prayer

St. Clare, help us to go deeper into the true meaning of what it means to love and be loved. Out of that reflection, may we discover ways to share that love with others.

First Monday of Lent

.....

“Love that does not know of suffering
is not worthy of the name.”

—ST. CLARE

.....

St. Clare’s life was not easy. From the struggle to follow her religious vocation, to the physical suffering she experienced throughout her life, to the pope’s ongoing resistance to approving her rule for the sisters, she continually pushed forward with strength. It would have been understandable if at any point she gave up the fight. Yet she persevered out of the love she had for Christ. What a powerful example of leaning into, rather than away from, one’s faith for support during times of suffering.

Prayer

St. Clare, may your example of remaining steadfast in your faith inspire us during our own times of struggle.

First Tuesday of Lent

.....

“This woman, noble by birth, but nobler by manner of life, eminently preserved the virginity she had already protected from the first under this rule of holiness.”

—PAPAL DECREE OF CANONIZATION

.....

As a noble woman, Clare would have been expected to marry for the sake of uniting upper-class families in Assisi. She repeatedly rebuffed suitors, however, to the frustration of her family. One of her suitors even gave his testimony during her cause for canonization, saying she told him of her intention to be a bride of Christ. Clare’s determination not to bow to societal norms certainly was not embraced by her family. But it is a good reminder that sometimes we know our path best and must follow our hearts.

Prayer

St. Clare, in you we see a woman who is steadfast in her desires for her life. In that spirit, may we be fiercely protective of the life we believe will bring us joy.

First Wednesday of Lent

.....

“This woman was a clear spring of the Spoleto Valley that offered a new fountain of living water for the refreshment and comfort of souls.”

—PAPAL DECREE OF CANONIZATION

.....

When St. Clare died on August 11, 1253, she was only fifty-nine years old. Yet what she accomplished in those fifty-nine years has endured even today. That says a lot about her and the strength of her faith. It also gives us something to reflect upon. If we were to die tomorrow, what would our legacy be? Have we made an impact that will be felt years from now? The season of Lent seems a perfect time for us to think about the mark we would like to leave on society.

Prayer

St. Clare, your example offers a perfect challenge to us during this season of Lent. May we use your example as a light by which to move forward.

First Thursday of Lent

.....

“Let the love you have in your hearts be shown outwardly in your deeds.”

—*THE TESTAMENT OF ST. CLARE*

.....

Since St. Clare and her sisters never left the convent of San Damiano, it seems this directive could be challenging. Yet Clare still showed her love outwardly through her letters and through service to her sisters. Her life is a perfect example that acts of love don't have to be grand and flashy. Sometimes the best way to show our love is through simple, small acts that show how we feel.

Prayer

St. Clare, from within the walls of San Damiano you found a way to reach out and spread your message of love to others. May we use that example as a reminder that great love can be shown in simple ways.

First Friday of Lent

.....

“Love God, serve God; everything is in that.”

—ST. CLARE

.....

From a young age, St. Clare was encouraged by the strong faith of her mother, Ortalana, to carry out God’s work, even before she joined Francis and the brothers. Clare ministered and cared for the less fortunate when she wouldn’t have been expected to do so. Being gifted with many goods due to her place in society, Clare realized she had more than enough. That embrace of simplicity perfectly aligned with the spirit of St. Francis, and she carried it with her when she went to San Damiano. Many of us are more than blessed with abundance. Are we willing to share it with others?

Prayer

St. Clare, in your spirit, may we share what we have with those in need. Stir in us the desire to think of others rather than only ourselves.

First Saturday of Lent

.....

“Our labor here is brief,
but the reward is eternal.”

—LETTER TO ERMENTRUDE OF BRUGES

.....

One of the mistakes most of us make is to think that we always have enough time. We put off things we should do, promising to get to them later. What we don't think about, though, is the possibility that there might not be a later. St. Clare died at fifty-nine, a rather young age compared to what we've come to expect today. But look at how determined she was in her calling and everything she accomplished during those years! With that in mind, we should ask ourselves what we are doing with our time to help build up the kingdom of God.

Prayer

St. Clare, may your life serve as a guide for us as we seek ways to contribute to the building up of the kingdom of heaven.

Second Sunday of Lent

.....

“Therefore, let us be very careful that, if we have set out on the path of the Lord, we do not at any time turn away from it through our own fault and ignorance.”

—*THE TESTAMENT OF ST. CLARE*

.....

Most of us will never be canonized as saints. We are flawed individuals trying to live a life worthy of Christ’s sacrifice. That does not mean, however, that we are not called to do our very best to follow “the path of the Lord,” as St. Clare said. We are going to turn away from the Lord at times. The most important thing, though, is that we get back on the path. For that, we are blessed to have the sacrament of reconciliation. This Lent would be a good time to take advantage of that gift.

Prayer

St. Clare, thank you for your words of wisdom and the reminder for us to stay on the path of the Lord. Be with us as we travel it.

Second Monday of Lent

.....

“Therefore, beloved sisters, we must consider the immense gifts that God has bestowed on us.”

—*THE TESTAMENT OF ST. CLARE*

.....

Clare’s reference to “immense gifts” seems a contradiction to the humble and simple lives of her community. Most of us would expect those gifts to be more tactile and straightforward. For Clare, however, Christ’s love was the greatest gift that anyone could have received. She always looked to praise God for the many blessings bestowed on her, even if they didn’t seem obvious. We may need to search a bit deeper to discover the gifts that we have been given.

Prayer

St. Clare, you were able to see everything you encountered as a gift from God. Help us to open our eyes to the many gifts we, too, are being given, especially when they are not obvious.

Second Tuesday of Lent

.....

“Don’t be afraid. Trust in Jesus.”

—ST. CLARE TO HER SISTERS

.....

In 1240, a group of Saracen mercenaries attacked the convent at San Damiano on their way to the city of Assisi. St. Clare, though sick and weak, confronted the men and held them off by raising the monstrance containing the Eucharist. Surprisingly, the Saracens immediately retreated. Clare had no reason to believe that the Eucharist would drive off the attackers, but she did know that turning to Christ in a time of need was the answer. What a perfect example of the power of trust in Christ!

Prayer

St. Clare, your faith in Christ, present in the Eucharist, provides us with a wonderful example of the power of belief. May we hold on to that power in times of fear or struggle.

Second Wednesday of Lent

.....

“May the excitements of the world,
fleeing like a shadow, not disturb you.”

—LETTER TO ERMENTRUDE OF BRUGES

.....

We live in a world that is constantly changing—minute by minute—right before our eyes. We are surrounded by the never-ending cycle of social media, news, streaming services, and a whole host of other “here this minute, gone the next” sources of information and entertainment. For many of us, our attention spans are greatly diminished. St. Clare reminds us, as she does Ermentrude, to shift our focus from those momentary distractions to what is truly important.

Prayer

St. Clare, may we remember your words of direction when we are losing our focus on the things that genuinely matter.

Second Thursday of Lent

.....
“Blessed be you, my God,
for having created me.”

—ST. CLARE

.....
It has been said that St. Clare spoke these words just before her death. It is a simple prayer of thanksgiving, yet it speaks to the power of God’s vision for us. Each of us has been created for a different purpose. Clare’s path was different from each of ours, yet in many ways it is the same. We’re all blessed to have been created. What will we do with that blessing? We know what St. Clare did with hers; now it is up to us to discern where our blessing is leading us.

Prayer

St. Clare, may your prayer of thanksgiving to God ignite a spark within each of us to embrace and live out the blessing that we are simply by our creation.

Second Friday of Lent

.....

“Clare was hidden, yet her life was visible. Clare was silent, yet her reputation became widespread. She was kept hidden in a cell but was known throughout the world.”

—BULL OF CANONIZATION

.....

St. Clare had a profound effect on the world. Sometimes it's easy to forget that she spent most of her life within the walls of the San Damiano convent. The isolation we all experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic gave us a slight glimpse into what that might have been like, even though we still had means of instant communication with the outside world. Clare shared her faith and wisdom with so many outside San Damiano and far beyond her own time. What might we do with the communication possibilities available to us?

Prayer

St. Clare, by your example may we realize the potential for our impact on the world. Help us live in such a way that will see our faith travel beyond the confines of where we are.

Second Saturday of Lent

.....

“Clare was a vessel of humility,
a shrine of chastity, a flame of love,
the essence of kindness, the strength of
patience, the bond of peace, and the
source of loving unity in her community.”

—DOCUMENT OF CANONIZATION

.....

Clare probably would have been uncomfortable hearing such accolades. Clare wanted only to follow and serve Christ. She chose to do so in a quiet and humble way, along with her sisters. It was not the way of others, including Francis and his brothers, but it was her way. The fact that all these years later, we still recognize her as a model for how to determinedly live out one's faith would probably have been puzzling to her. She shows us that, no matter how we choose to live out our faith, we must do so with all our heart and soul.

Prayer:

St. Clare, may you continue to inspire us, through your example and inspiration, to live out our faith in the way we are being called.

Third Sunday of Lent

.....

“God will be your helper and best consoler.”

—LETTER TO ERMENTRUDE OF BRUGES

.....

All too often, we see God as a distant figure. When we do that, though, we fail to see the many ways that God is working in our lives. Perhaps God is present in a friend or family member who is helping or consoling us. God works through each of us, as he did St. Clare. When we begin to see God as closer and more involved, it changes our perception and reminds us that God is always with us.

Prayer

St. Clare, thank you for the reminder that God is always present to us. May we see him in those around us and realize he is never far away.

Third Monday of Lent

.....

“Because the way and path is difficult and the gate through which one passes and enters to life is narrow, there are both few who walk it and enter through it.”

—*THE TESTAMENT OF ST. CLARE*

.....

At this point in our Lenten journey, we may be growing weary of the promises we made at the beginning of the season. In those moments, we must remember St. Clare’s determination. Throughout her life, she pushed forward despite the obstacles placed in her way. She fought until her dying day to establish a rule for her sisters. It was only upon having her rule finally approved that she allowed herself to rest in Jesus. With her example before us, surely, we can forge ahead to the celebration of Easter.

Prayer

St. Clare, may we look to you for inspiration as we move forward with renewed spirits and determination.

Third Tuesday of Lent

.....

“For within a short time the reputation of the holiness of the virgin Clare had spread through the neighboring areas.”

—*THE LEGEND OF ST. CLARE*

.....

Sometimes it can be hard to be the first to do something. We hold back for any number of reasons. We might be afraid of making a mistake or of being ridiculed. After the first person takes the leap, though, we become more comfortable joining in. But what if that first person hadn't found the strength to put things into motion? Clare was that first person. She was brave enough to take the first step so that other women could follow.

Prayer

St. Clare, thank you for your courage in stepping ahead and forging a path for others so that they could also share in the joy you were seeking.

Third Wednesday of Lent

.....

“May the love you have in your hearts be shown outwardly in your deeds.”

—*THE TESTAMENT OF ST. CLARE*

.....

Love was at the heart of everything St. Clare did. Her love for Christ was her purpose. Her love for St. Francis was her compass. And her love for her sisters sustained her. Throughout her entire life, from the days before she left her family home until the day of her death, Clare was driven by her desire to demonstrate her love for others. Even when she was sick and bedridden, she expressed her love in small ways, such as sewing altar cloths for surrounding churches. For her, every action was an opportunity to be an expression of God’s love.

Prayer

St. Clare, when we are weary and either don’t have the energy to care for others or are too distracted to do so, help us remember that displaying our love for others is the best way to reflect Christ’s love.

Third Thursday of Lent

.....

“O most noble Queen, gaze upon Him,
consider Him, contemplate Him,
as you desire to imitate Him.”

—SECOND LETTER TO AGNES OF PRAGUE

.....

In this letter, Clare seems to give Agnes a four-step roadmap for following Christ. And while she wrote it for Agnes, it is something that any of us can use in our daily lives. This mantra provides us with simple reminders of how to live out Christ’s calling in our everyday encounters. For such a simple and humble woman, Clare had amazing insights into living out one’s faith.

Prayer

St. Clare, in your infinite wisdom and insightfulness, you provide us with tools we can use to share God’s love with those we encounter every day. For that we give you our thanks.

Third Friday of Lent

.....

“I admonish and exhort all my sisters,
both those present and those to come,
to strive always to imitate the way of holy
simplicity, humility, and poverty.”

—*THE TESTAMENT OF ST. CLARE*

.....

For many of us, simplicity is something that we desire but struggle to achieve. It’s so easy for us to accumulate worldly goods. We can buy things with the click of a button or a quick swipe of a card. But do we really need those things? Do they bring us true joy? St. Clare didn’t think so, and she encouraged her sisters to come to that realization as well. It is in this simplicity, humility, and poverty that St. Clare found herself most able to be open to Christ. She wanted that joy for others, too.

Prayer

St. Clare, may your example and instruction inspire us to strip away what we don’t need and embrace the blessings of simplicity, humility, and poverty.

Third Saturday of Lent

.....

“Truly in a field of faith, this woman planted and cultivated a vineyard of poverty, from which abundant and rich fruits of salvation have been gathered.”

—BULL OF CANONIZATION

.....

As spring arrives and the earth begins to once again wake up, we become aware of the resiliency and beauty of nature. St. Clare often referred to herself as the “little plant of St. Francis,” a fitting description of the impact she would have on the Church. From within the convent of San Damiano, Clare established a community of sisters that flourished and spread far and wide and has continued to do so even to this day. There is great beauty in that.

Prayer

St. Clare, in your spirit, may we plant the seeds of faith in our own lives in the hope that the beauty of its growth will inspire others.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

.....

“Let us pray to God for one another, for by carrying each other’s burden of charity in this way we will easily fulfill the law of Christ.”

—LETTER TO ERMENTRUDE OF BRUGES

.....

When Clare saw Francis preaching in the town square, certainly she was aware of people’s reactions to him. It would have been difficult not to have heard about Pietro Bernardone’s son who had renounced his family and embraced poverty. But something about Francis and his words captured her spirit. In him, she saw not a rebel but a man whose heart had been captured by God. She longed to join him in his calling to serve others. Would we be willing to take such a leap of faith for our convictions?

Prayer

St. Clare, may we be open to the possibilities and challenges we may encounter. Help us be as courageous as you were.

Fourth Monday of Lent

.....

“And I beg you...to praise the Lord by your very life, to offer the Lord your reasonable service and your sacrifice always seasoned with salt.”

—THIRD LETTER TO AGNES

.....

Agnes of Prague traveled a journey similar to Clare’s in finding her vocation. Agnes came from a noble family and had married nobility. But when she became aware of St. Francis and his friars, she was captivated. At some point, she and Clare began corresponding. In her four letters to Agnes, St. Clare encouraged her to take on a life of service for others. Eventually, Agnes joined the sisters at a monastery in Prague, where she lived in the spirit of the wisdom St. Clare had given her.

Prayer

St. Clare, may your words to Agnes of Prague and your example serve as an inspiration for us to embrace and live out our faith on behalf of others.

Fourth Tuesday of Lent

.....

“I judge you to be a co-worker of God Himself
and a support for the weak members
of His ineffable Body.”

—THIRD LETTER TO AGNES OF PRAGUE

.....

St. Clare did not let chronic illness deter her from taking care of her fellow sisters who were ill, as well as some of Francis’ brothers in their times of need. Clare also cared for Francis near the end of his life. It was, for her, the ultimate act of service on behalf of Christ. Later, she herself became the recipient of such care from others. Both she and her sisters provide us with a wonderful example of serving as Christ’s hands and raising up those who are weak.

Prayer

St. Clare, your care for those in need provides us a wonderful reminder to do the same for others. May we offer strength and comfort to them.

Fourth Wednesday of Lent

.....

“The work you have begun
so well, complete it!”

—LETTER TO ERMENTRUDE OF BRUGES

.....

Stop and think of yourself in Clare’s place. It’s difficult, isn’t it? That’s because we are all called to serve Christ in different ways. Clare’s way is not your way, nor is it anyone else’s. What we must do, however, is to seek and pray about our calling to bring God’s message to others. St. Clare can serve as an inspiration, but it is up to each of us to chart our own paths.

Prayer

St. Clare, in you we see a model of faith. In that model, may we find inspiration to discover our own way of fulfilling our ministry to the world.

Fourth Thursday of Lent

.....

“May the Lord always be with you
and may you always be with Him.”

—*THE TESTAMENT OF ST. CLARE*

.....

Have you ever noticed a tendency to make the most basic things more difficult than they need to be? We often do that with our faith and our prayer lives. This quote from St. Clare’s *Testament* is a perfect reminder that the very foundation of our relationship with Christ is to walk with him as our companion. It really is that simple. St. Clare understood this and expressed it in everything she did.

Prayer

St. Clare, help us embrace and express the love that is the solid and simple foundation of our relationship with the Lord.

Fourth Friday of Lent

.....

“We are to become vessels of God’s
compassionate love for others.”

—ST. CLARE

.....

This quote may sum up St. Clare more perfectly than anything else she said. She lived her life entirely in service to others—even before she joined St. Francis. Biographers tell us that her generosity was well known both around Assisi and while she was in exile in Perugia. Through her acts, Clare became the vessel in God’s hands.

Prayer

St. Clare, inspire us to release ourselves into the hands of God, allowing him to use us as he sees fit.

Fourth Saturday of Lent

.....

“This venerable Abbess loved not only the souls of her sisters, she also took care of their little bodies with wonderful zeal of charity.”

—*THE LEGEND OF ST. CLARE*

.....

Throughout her life, Clare demonstrated great compassion for others. Nowhere was this more evident than in the care of her sisters. There are accounts of her encouraging sisters who were struggling with the challenges of their order to have grace with themselves. She sat with those who suffered from depression and consoled those who shed tears. Hers was a ministry of presence and service.

Prayer

St. Clare, may we be present, as you were, to those in need of comfort or guidance. Help us be attentive to where we are needed.

Fifth Sunday of Lent

.....

“When she did not have a chaplet with which to count the Our Father, she would count her little prayers to the Lord with a pile of pebbles.”

—*THE LEGEND OF ST. CLARE*

.....

Clare’s holiness began while she was still a child. She was known for her mercy for others, often wore a hairshirt under her fine clothes, and vowed celibacy at a young age. Those stirrings were fueled by her mother’s staunch faith. During a war between Assisi and Perugia, she served others while her family was in exile in Perugia. It couldn’t have been easy to seem so misaligned with the society into which she was born. Despite that, however, she was determined to stay true to her love of Christ.

Prayer

St. Clare, you are a shining example of how to stay true to who you are. May we embrace your confidence in order to embrace who we are.

Fifth Monday of Lent

.....

“Cling to His most sweet Mother who carried a
Son whom the heavens could not contain;
and yet she carried Him in the little
enclosure of her holy womb
and held Him on her virginal lap.”

—THIRD LETTER TO AGNES OF PRAGUE

.....

Beginning with Mother Mary, our faith is blessed with a long line of strong and holy women. Clare is definitely one of them. Just like Mary, it took great strength and courage to take the path that she did. Just for a moment imagine what it would be like to walk away from everything you own. Could you replace a life of comfort with a rough brown robe and bare feet? Such a decision shows immense strength of character and devotion to her faith.

Prayer

St. Clare, when we need to be strong, may we be reminded of your determination in doing what was necessary to achieve the life you desired.

Fifth Tuesday of Lent

.....

“You will give birth to a light that will shine
brilliantly in the world.”

—MESSAGE CLARE’S MOTHER, ORTALANA,
RECEIVED WHILE PREGNANT

.....

In the Acts of the Process of Canonization, it was noted that Clare told her sisters about her mother receiving this message while in church one day during her pregnancy. Could this have inspired Clare’s name, which means “bright,” or was it just a foretelling of this child’s impact on the world? She certainly did become a light for society—both then and now—shining far and wide.

Prayer

St. Clare, your light of faith continues to shine bright for all to see. Thank you for lighting our way toward Christ through your example.

Fifth Wednesday of Lent

.....

“Her life was an instruction
and a lesson to others.”

—PAPAL DECREE OF CANONIZATION

.....

When we look back at the life of St. Clare, it's easy for us to see how everything she did provides a lesson and example to us. She didn't set out to be a model of faith. At the time, she was only living out what she saw as a call to serve God simply, humbly, and obediently. Knowing her actions would bring others closer to Christ would have brought her even more joy.

Prayer

St. Clare, we thank you for all that you have taught us through your life and utter devotion to Christ. May those lessons embolden our faith.

Fifth Thursday of Lent

.....

“May you go forward securely, joyfully, and swiftly, on the path of prudent happiness.”

—SECOND LETTER TO AGNES OF PRAGUE

.....

When Clare left her home to join Francis and his brothers, her family immediately sought to bring her back, even using force to try to do so. But Clare held tight to both the altar and her conviction as they tried to drag her away. She knew that this was the life she wished to lead and was willing to resist any attempts to prevent it. This was the path that would bring her happiness. Clare’s actions should make us think: What in our own lives are we willing to hold fast to, even when it is difficult, or we face challenges in doing so?

Prayer

St. Clare, may your determination in the face of extreme challenges serve as a shining example for us to remain strong in our convictions, even when we encounter resistance.

Fifth Friday of Lent

.....

“She would deprive her own body of delicate foods and, sending them secretly through intermediaries, she would nourish the bodies of the poor.”

—*THE LEGEND OF ST. CLARE*

.....

St. Clare was known to fast often, even before she left her family home. During the canonization process, one of her sisters said that Clare would fast three days a week. The other days she would subsist on bread and water. Because of her extreme fasting practices at times, at one point St. Francis had to insist that she eat. When we fast during Lent, do we truly see it as a sacrifice or just a rule to follow? For Clare, the purpose behind her fasting was what drove her actions. What is driving our actions?

Prayer

St. Clare, may we use your example as a spark to dig deeper into the meaning of our actions. In doing so, may we become more attuned to our Lenten promises.

Fifth Saturday of Lent

.....

“No less did [Francis] desire to see and speak with her, impressed by the widespread fame of so gracious a young lady.”

—THE LEGEND OF ST CLARE

.....

For most of us, Francis and Clare are intricately woven together in their desire to bring people to Christ. Many times, one is not mentioned without the other. Francis saw something in Clare that he knew was special, thus his request to meet with her. And Clare knew Francis from his preaching in the square by her house. The ways in which they served God looked very different; still, they had the same goal and inspiration.

Prayer

St. Clare, you and Brother Francis provided a new way of serving others in the name of God. All these years later, we thank you for your ministries, which continue today.

Palm Sunday

.....

“Live and hope in the Lord, and let your service be according to reason.”

—ST. CLARE

.....

Palm Sunday marks a profound moment in Clare’s life. It is on this day that, in the middle of the night and with the help of others, she left behind the life that she had known. Earlier that day, during Palm Sunday Mass, she found herself remaining seated when it was time to receive the palm. The bishop, noticing her sitting there, came down from the altar and placed the palm in her hand. Why she remained seated is known only to her. Perhaps she was focused on and anticipating her upcoming journey and entrance into a new life.

Prayer

St. Clare, oh, the feelings you must have had on that Palm Sunday knowing what was to come. May we have such strength of character when we are faced with changes in our lives—big or small.

Monday of Holy Week

.....

“May neither bitterness nor a cloud
of sadness overwhelm you.”

—THIRD LETTER TO AGNES OF PRAGUE

.....

Certainly, it would be a mistake to assume that St. Clare never had days that weighed her down. She did, after all, live a very challenging life. So, if she had felt bitterness or a cloud of sadness, it would have been completely understandable. She found great joy in her relationship with Christ, but given her humanity, she certainly wouldn't have experienced that continuously. Knowing that she experienced struggles as we might makes it easier to relate to her.

Prayer

St. Clare, in times of struggle, may we seek out the joy in Christ you so fully embraced. May we find it as comforting and uplifting as you must have.

Tuesday of Holy Week

.....

“Let the tongue of the flesh be silent when I seek to express my love for you; and let the tongue of the Spirit speak.”

—FOURTH LETTER TO AGNES OF PRAGUE

.....

We’ve all heard the saying “Actions speak louder than words.” In her letter to Agnes, St. Clare seems to be conveying that very message. We live in a noisy world. Too often we fill silent moments with endless chatter and loud distractions. Yet in silence there can be great peace. Through silence we discover feelings our words cannot convey and thoughts hidden in the recesses of our minds. In the silence, we can often find Christ.

Prayer

St. Clare, your insights challenge us to seek a different way to express our love. In that spirit, may we open ourselves to the power of silence.

Wednesday of Holy Week

.....

“Clare and her sisters had hearts
as big as the world.”

—ST. JOHN PAUL II

.....

In a letter marking the eight hundredth year of St. Clare’s birth, Pope St. John Paul II praised St. Clare and her sisters for their endless love of others. “There was no concern, suffering, anguish, or discouragement of others which did not find an echo in the hearts of these prayerful women,” he wrote. This was evident in the times that St. Francis went to St. Clare for counsel regarding his mission and vocation and her persistent care of the health of her sisters.

Prayer

St. Clare, you are a model of opening our hearts to all those in need of love or assistance. May we be as attuned to others as you and your sisters were.

Holy Thursday

.....

“She frequently and reverently washed the feet of the serving sisters who returned from outside and, after washing them kissed them.”

—*THE LEGEND OF ST. CLARE*

.....

As the ultimate act of humility and service, Clare would often wash her sister’s feet. There is a story that recalls a time when as Clare was bending to kiss a sister’s foot, the sister pulled her foot away out of humility and accidentally kicked St. Clare in the mouth. Rather than react, St. Clare simply pulled the foot close to her again and kissed it. In such an act of humility, St. Clare mirrored that of Christ as he washed and kissed the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper.

Prayer

St. Clare, as we observe Holy Thursday, may your act of humility and service inspire us to strip away our vanities and humbly serve others.

Good Friday

.....

“Meditate continually on the
mysteries of the cross.”

—LETTER TO ERMENTRUDE OF BRUGES

.....

The enormity of Christ offering up his life for us is so great that it will take continual meditation to try and wrap our heads around it. It always will. Clare knew that. All that she did in her life was done in thanksgiving for Christ’s greatest sacrifice on behalf of all of us.

Prayer

St. Clare, we stand at the foot of the cross with you and weep with love and gratitude. May we always remember the enormity of Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf.

Holy Saturday

.....

“The Lady Clare, a native of the city of Assisi, a stone precious and strong above all the others of the pile, was the foundation.”

—THOMAS OF CELANO, *FIRST LIFE OF FRANCIS*

.....

A strong cornerstone is the key to any foundation. Only upon that can one begin to build. Otherwise, the rest of the structure is weak. St. Francis probably knew this as he worked to rebuild the church of San Damiano. Without a good base, whether in a family, faith life, or community, there is no stability. St. Clare provided this foundation for the sisters and for others who sought her wisdom.

Prayer

St. Clare, thank you for your strength. As we reflect on the large stone that sits in front of Christ’s tomb, let us reflect on the fact that just one stone is needed as the base upon which many others can rest.

Easter

.....

“Love God and Jesus, who was crucified for us, from the depth of your heart, and never let the thought of Him leave your mind.”

—ST. CLARE

.....

For Clare, Christ was her everything. In Christ she found inspiration for everything she did. Her life was an act of thanksgiving for Christ’s ultimate sacrifice on behalf of humanity. Certainly today’s feast would have been one of great joy for Clare, as it is for all of us, for Christ has risen.

Prayer

St. Clare, today we join you in celebrating the joy of Christ’s resurrection. May your life continue to serve as a constant reminder for us to turn to Christ for all things.

To be united with Christ is our goal and Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi are our models. The mission of Franciscan Media is to share God's love through thoughtful communications. We do so through our innovative print and digital products—all supported by donors like you.

Many people are searching for God. Because of your past gift, we shared the Gospel over 32 million times in 2022. You help to share God's love every day through Franciscan Media.

Together we can change the world and transform hearts with the love of Jesus. Please donate today at: www.FranciscanMedia.org/Lent2023.

or mail your gift to:
Franciscan Media
PO Box 292100
Kettering OH 45429-0100

• • • • •

www.FranciscanMedia.org

• • • • •

Our mission is to share God's love
through thoughtful communications
in the spirit of St. Francis.

• • • • •

For other Lent resources, visit:
www.Shop.FranciscanMedia.org



franciscan
media[®]

Cincinnati, Ohio

ISBN: 978-1-63253-422-4

Copyright ©2023 by Franciscan Media

www.FranciscanMedia.org