

Living In the Spirit of Saint Francis

We begin our day together attentive to God's work in our lives as we journey in ***Living in the spirit of Saint Francis.***

What does it mean to live in the spirit of St. Francis? It is to:

- **Embrace life** with its joys and sorrows. There is a turning of our hearts and minds to Jesus
- **Encounter God** in creation, our brothers and sisters, Prayer.
- **Encounter Christ** in the incarnation (birth), crucifix (death) and resurrection (new life.)
- **Encounter the Holy Spirit** at work in our daily lives.

To be able to **live in the spirit of St. Francis** we continue to learn more about St. Francis.

What is your image of St. Francis? Many simply see him portrayed only with the birds midst elements of creation. Saint Francis is commonly known as the saint of Ecology and rightly so. The "Canticle of Creation" is in praise of all living things, all of God's creation. As we go through our time this morning, other images of St. Francis more of the stories you have read or heard

about may come to your mind.

A tavola / dossal may appear in different forms ~ a hanging ~ an altarpiece ~ a panel which has its origins in medieval Italy. It was in vogue for only a brief period of time, perhaps fifty years at the most, during the mid to the late thirteenth century. It is said that the Franciscans are thought to have begun this art piece shortly after the death of St. Francis.

The tavola tells a story with different takes on a story. The iconographer (person who creates artistic images) selects the events and the emphasis to be given to the story.

When we think of the 4 writers of the Gospels in Sacred Scripture, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, each gives an account in the life of Jesus in their own way with their own emphasis, particularly in mind with the people and events that they were addressing at that time.

As we look at the St. Francis tavola, what do we get from the stories?

We get:

- **educated** ... we learn about the person, in our case, St. Francis
- **entertained** ... we enjoy hearing the stories about his life
- **inspired** ... we are moved and motivated to follow in the spirit of St. Francis in our own way

One tavola painted by San Francisco Bardi, known as *Welcome to the Transitus* depicts 20 scenes from the life of St. Francis.

Another tavola dated panel painted by Berlinghieri includes 6 scenes from the life of St. Francis.

The Francis tavola which we will use for our reflection today, was commissioned by Robert Melnick and Joseph Wood, both OFM Conventual friars. The artist is Jennifer Holmes ~ it is oil on Wood ~ painted during in 1993 / 1994 on the 800th anniversary of the birth of St. Clare, to be the masculine compliment to the panel of St. Clare.

Using the tavola of St. Francis on the framed picture, on the table holders and on your leaflet we are going to encounter St. Francis

in 8 events in his life which the friars, Robert Melnick and Joseph Wood considered significant.

On the cover of your booklet are pictures of the 8 events in the life of St. Francis; inside are short accounts of the events. You may have heard or read the story at greater length or perhaps are not familiar with the event. Today we are going to use the tavola to reflect on these 8 events.

Notes

- Eight associates come and sit up front / will approach the microphone when it is your turn
 - ~ return to your seat up front until are finished
- Leader begins response
- After each segment is read
 - ~ pause
 - ~ gaze on the tavola on the cover of your booklet
 - ~ respond after leader