

Precious Passing

Image courtesy of Franciscan Friars of [Holy Name Province](#)

I love the feast of the Transitus, celebrated on the evening of October 3. It is a ceremony peculiar to Franciscans, in which we commemorate the transition of St. Francis from this life to the next in 1226. We read the narrative of his passing and his last words to his brothers. In some services, we also read the gospel passage that Francis asked his brothers to read aloud while he was on his deathbed: the Last Supper and Jesus washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-17). We sing hymns based on famous words of Francis, such as his Canticle of the Creatures and perhaps his prayer before the crucifix at San Damiano. In some cases, there is a recreation of the procession of the friars with Francis' body, with an empty friar's habit resting on a bier accompanied by dozens or hundreds of candle-bearing participants.



Does this sound grim or even morbid? If you have ever attended a Transitus, you will know it is anything but that. It is, rather, an intimate recollection of the poignant last hours of our beloved Francis and a healthy acknowledgment that Sister Death comes to us all. Having been present at the passing of several close family members, I know how sacred those last hours are and at the Transitus I feel blessed to share somehow in the experience of the brothers who accompanied Francis as he made his final journey into eternal life.

Transitus services gather all sorts of Franciscans—vowed religious sisters and friars, professed Seculars, missionaries, and many others with Franciscan hearts—and once the service is over, there is a sense of celebration as we appreciate all that Francis has given to each one of us. For me, Francis came into my life about a decade ago, at a time when I was experiencing painful disillusionment with the paths I had pursued in search of happiness and meaning. While I considered myself a committed and practicing Catholic, I had nonetheless fallen prey to the lure of pride, professional success, and financial security. God knew that Francis' particular way of following Jesus—characterized by humility, voluntary poverty, and joy—was the exact antidote to what ailed me. I often think of the words of St. Clare of Assisi, who explained succinctly that “Christ is the way, and Francis showed it to me.”

As we remember Francis' passing, we also recall his wise words as he lay dying: “I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you what is yours!” Whether this will be the fiftieth time you commemorate the Transitus or the first, may God bless you with fresh insight about what is yours to do now.

Michele Dunne, OFS
Secular Franciscan

Franciscan Action Network Executive Director

Suggested action:

Attend a live or [online Transitus service](#) this evening and reflect on how God is showing you what is yours to do now.

Suggested petition:

For the courage to give our all in following Jesus, as Francis did, we pray....

Prayer: (Prayer of St. Francis before the Crucifix at San Damiano)

**Most High, glorious God,
Enlighten the darkness of my heart
And give me, Lord, a correct faith,
A certain hope, a perfect charity,
Sense and knowledge, so that
I may carry out your holy and true command.**

Amen

Last Chance to Get Your Gala Tickets!

If you haven't yet purchased a ticket for our annual gala happening this **Thursday, October 6**, now is your last chance. The link to view the program online will be sent on Wednesday. [Get your tickets here.](#)

We are delighted to host our gala **in person for the first time since 2019** and we hope that as many of you as possible will join us for **dinner and our program at St. Francis Hall, Washington, D.C. at 6:00pm**. For those out of the D.C. area, we will **livestream the program from 7:30-8:30 pm ET (4:30-5:30pm PT)**.

Our theme will be "[Peacebuilding in the Spirit of Sts. Francis and Clare](#)," and our speakers and honorees will include **Margaret Carney, OSF** (Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities), **Gloria Purvis** (America Media), **Marie Dennis** (Pax Christi), and **Greg Jackson** (Community Justice Action Fund). [Click here for more details and bios of our speakers](#). Our musical guests for the evening will be '[SmithJackson](#)' a duo from Washington, D.C. [Read more about them here.](#)



Tonight: Join us at our Virtual Transitus Service

To commemorate the Feast of St. Francis, we invite our whole network to our [virtual Transitus service](#) tonight, **October 3 at 5:30p ET / 2:30p PT** presented by members of our Franciscan Justice Circles.



Thanks to the initiative of one of our Circle members, we offer this opportunity to unite across the country in remembering Francis of Assisi's passing from this life on earth. If you are able to go to a live service, please do so; we don't want to compete but instead offer this as an alternative for those who cannot attend a service in-person.

[Please register in advance by clicking here.](#) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the service.

Join us for Part 2 in our Series on Confronting Environmental Racism

On **Thursday, October 13th, 4-5 pm ET / 1-2 pm PT**, we will hold the second of our four-part series on [Confronting Environmental Racism](#).

At this timely gathering we will watch the next documentary of the series with a focus on New Orleans, Louisiana and Cancer Alley. Recently, RISE St. James [celebrated a victory](#) when permits that would allow

Formosa Plastics to build a huge complex were rescinded. Our **guest speaker will be Jo Banner, co-founder of The Descendants Project**. [Click here to register.](#)

The oil, gas and petrochemical industry have long placed their facilities in areas inhabited by Black, Brown, Indigenous, or poor communities deemed “sacrifice zones.” As Franciscans, we are called to stand with our sisters and brothers who have been most directly affected. **It's time for us to stand with communities on the front lines of this environmental racism.**

Franciscan Action Network, the Franciscan Federation and the Franciscan Friars (OFM) US-6 JPIC Working Group are pleased to present this 4-part webinar series which will run once a month from September 8th-December 8th. [Register to attend one or all the events by clicking here.](#) If you have registered previously for all the webinars, there is no need to register again.



Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

As the Sept. National FAN Justice Circle (FJC) gathering focused on the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, the Delaware Valley FJC met the day before and explored a complementary relationship: the United Nations' International Day of Peace (Sept. 21st) theme of “End racism. Build peace.” With an inspirational reflection by Br. Benedict Ayodi, OFM Cap, from Franciscans International, there was a compelling dialogue on how racism has touched all of our lives and can be a global trigger for migrants, refugees, and victims of human trafficking.”

