

Transitus of St Francis

(Adapted short form suggested for use in Ireland OFS Fraternities)



Giotto di Bondone, Scenes from the Life of Saint Francis, 4. Death and Ascension of St. Francis (Wikimedia Commons)

Saint Francis died just after sunset on October 3. He recited Psalm 142 and, during the closing verse, he died. This event is solemnly recalled each year by Franciscans to honour their holy Father's entrance into joy for "It is in dying that we are born to eternal life".

Role of Narrator should be divided among Fraternity members, if possible

Narrator: The Testament of Saint Francis

And I worked with my hands, and I still desire to work; and I earnestly desire all brothers to give themselves to honest work. Let those who do not know how to work learn, not for desire to receive wages, but for example and to avoid idleness. And when we are not paid for our work, let us have recourse to the table of the Lord, begging alms from door to door. The Lord revealed a greeting to me that we should say: "May the Lord give you peace."



Narrator: Lead the Hymn to be said together

All Creatures of our God and King,

Lift up your voice and with us sing

Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beam,

Thou silver moon with softer gleam:

O praise him, O praise him,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thou rushing winds that are so strong,

Ye clouds that sail in heav'n along,

O praise him, Alleluia!

Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,

Ye lights of evening, find a voice:

O praise him, O praise him,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

[After the hymn, the following Antiphon is said.]

Antiphon: Alleluia, Alleluia, Francis, poor and humble, enters heaven rich and is welcomed with celestial hymns. Alleluia.

Narrators: Psalm 142

(If possible: Narrator A to say verse 1, Narrator B and all to say verse 2 etc.)

With all my voice I cry to the Lord,
with all my voice I entreat the Lord.
I pour out my trouble before him;
I tell him all my distress
while my spirit faints within me.
But you, O Lord, know my path.



On the way where I shall walk
they have hidden a snare to entrap me.
Look on my right and see:
there is no one who takes my part.
I have no means of escape,
not one who cares for my soul.

I cry to you, O Lord.
I have said: "You are my refuge
all I have in the land of the living."
Listen, then, to my cry
for I am in the depths of distress.

Rescue me from those who pursue me
for they are stronger than I.
Bring my soul out of this prison
and then I shall praise your name.
Around me the just will assemble
because of your goodness to me.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Narrator: Reading from the Gospel according to John 13:1-15

"Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter who said to him: "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus answered: "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand. Peter said to him: "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered: "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him: "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus said to him: "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said: "Not all of you are clean." After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe and had returned to the table, he said to them: "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."



Narrator: The Transitus of Our Holy Father

Then Francis had himself placed naked on the ground. Placed thus without his garment of sackcloth, Francis raised his countenance to heaven, and giving his entire attention to that glory, he covered the wound in his right side with his left hand. Then he said to his brothers:

St Francis said “I have done what was mine to do; my work is finished; may Christ teach you to carry out yours”

Meanwhile Francis’ guardian hurriedly arose and taking a habit said to him.

The guardian said: “Francis, realise that this habit has been lent to you by me. I take away from you all authority to give it away to anyone else.

Then Francis rejoiced for he saw that he had kept faith with Lady Poverty to the very end of his life. Happy in the thought of this last acceptance of the spirit of poverty, Francis smiled and allowed himself to be re-clothed with the habit.

By now his end was only a few hours away. At this supreme moment, Francis in the most solemn way possible, remembered the ties of friendship and loyalty which bound the brothers together, and with that faith and simplicity which always encouraged him to imitate the example of Christ in the most literal of ways, he asked that bread be brought to him. Too weak to break it himself, he asked that it should be broken for him and then gave a piece to each of those present

Narrator : Concluding the ceremony

Let us pray together: Our Father

O God, you granted our blessed Father Francis the reward of everlasting joy: grant that we, who celebrate the memory of his death, may at last come to the same eternal joy; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the Lord + bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen