



Celebrating the Easter of Francis of Assisi 1226-2026

Texts

Testament: FF 110-131; *Testament of Siena*: FF 132-135 (cf. *Assisi Compilation* 59, FF 1587); *1 Celano* 109, FF 508-514; *Major Legend* 15, FF 1237-1245; *Canticle of the Creatures* (final verse) FF 263.

In contemporary society, we rarely think about death, not only because it reminds us that we are limited creatures, but also because it exposes the false security we get from believing that we are masters over time and life. Francis of Assisi, on the other hand, welcomed Sister Death with song, because he understood that death is not the termination of everything but the end that allows us to enter into full communion with God. Indeed, life is a gift that must be given back: “Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He Who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally!” (*Letter to the Entire Order* 29, FF 221).

At the end of his days, Francis contemplated his life and discovered the presence and action of the Lord everywhere. Thus, in his *Testament* he repeats, like a refrain: “The Lord gave me, Brother Francis... The Lord gave me such faith in churches... The Lord gave me, and gives me still, such faith... And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel” (*Testament* 1-14, FF 110-116). This is the same attitude shown by Clare of Assisi when she wrote her Testament, in the last days of her life. In fact, she, too, recognized God as the Divine Giver, to whom thanks must be given for all the gifts he bestows, especially the gift of her vocation (cf. *Testament of St. Clare* 1-2, FF 2823).

The celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Easter of Francis of Assisi invites us to contemplate our life, both personally and as a Franciscan Family, with the eyes of faith, and by doing so, perceive the divine presence and action in everything, even in the difficult and dramatic situations we have experienced or are experiencing now.



Celebrating the Easter of Francis of Assisi (1226-2026)

It is an opportunity to thank God for all the gifts he has bestowed on us, particularly for the gift of Francis of Assisi and his evangelical life, which has become our charism, articulated in different nuances of discipleship and apostolate, and which today still has the strength to call out to women and men of all cultures, both inside and outside the Catholic Church.

As his passing drew near, Francis said to his brothers: “Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up until now we have done little or nothing.’ He did not consider that he had already attained his goal, but tireless in pursuit of holy newness, he constantly hoped to begin again. He wanted to return to serving lepers” (*1 Celano* 103, *FF* 500). The Easter of Francis of Assisi reminds us that every day is an opportunity to start fresh, to renew our response to the call of the Lord. He sends us forth as brothers and sisters to the whole world, to bear witness to Him in word and deed, so as to draw everyone to the love of God (cf. *Prayer Inspired by the Our Father* 5, *FF* 270).

Finally, celebrating the passing of the Poverello is an occasion to remember that we are all called to holiness, and that like Francis, we are invited to reflect the beauty of the Gospel and of our Franciscan vocation, because “holiness is the most attractive face of the Church” (*Gaudete et exsultate* 9).

Our being in Christ

“Let us refer all good to the Lord, God Almighty and Most High, acknowledge that every good is His, and thank Him, “from Whom all good comes, for everything” (*Earlier Rule* 17: 17, *FF* 49).

Objective

To recognize God as the Divine Giver, whose many gifts we are to return with praise and gratitude.

Activities

- Maintain the awareness that our life is a gift to be given back.
- Enlightened by the *Testament of Francis of Assisi*, contemplate our personal history recognizing God’s action in our lives and thanking and glorifying Him for it.
- Renew our spirit of gratitude for the gift of our Christian vocation and for being members of the Franciscan Family.





**Our being
brothers and sisters**

“The Lord gave me some brothers”
(*Testament 14, FF 116*).

Objective

To celebrate the gift of Brother Francis and the gift of fraternity.

Activities

- Organize study days and reflections about Francis of Assisi and Franciscan spirituality in order to seek, as a fraternity, the most suitable ways to embody fraternity today.
- Encourage time for meetings and discussions within the various fraternities, where each person can share the way he or she lives the Franciscan charism, his or her dreams, difficulties, etc.
- Plan, with the other members of the Franciscan Family, liturgical events in which we can celebrate the gift of Brother Francis and the gift of fraternity.

**Our being
in communion**

“The Lord gave me such faith in churches”
(*Testament 4, FF 111*).

Objective

To celebrate the gift of the charism of St. Francis in the Church.

Activities

- Promote awareness of our charism, not only in our communities, parishes, educational centers, etc., but also in places where the Franciscan Family is not present.
- Organize, collaborating with other members of our ecclesial communities, meetings, liturgies, etc., to celebrate the gift that St. Francis represents for the Church.
- Propose Francis of Assisi as a model of holiness and, therefore, of true humanity, as an aid to help us nurture and bring to bloom the seeds of humanity that we find in all cultures and in contemporary society.

**Our being
in the world**

“For this reason He has sent you into the whole world: that you may bear witness to His voice in word and deed”
(*Letter to the Entire Order 9, FF 216*).

Objective

To support evangelization as an opportunity to generously return the gifts we have received.





Activities

- Encourage the fraternities to be witnesses of hope and joy through concrete initiatives of preaching and evangelization.
- Educate ourselves to read the signs of the times wisely, in order to quickly recognize what creative and novel work the Spirit is doing among the men and women of our day.
- Make the commitment to be present and to visit, frequently and willingly, those brothers and sisters who live in the most peripheral and marginalized places, in order to bring them the joy and salvation of the Gospel.
- Introduce Francis of Assisi and the history of our family to society by making use of the cultural and artistic heritage present in our fraternities, churches, museums, etc.