

## Six Charisms of St. Francis

### **Christocentric**

Francis' spirituality was focused on Christ. Christ was the image of God. Francis' whole spiritual journey was trying to imitate or follow Christ. Christ was the guide, the inspiration, the teacher for Francis. Christ called and showed Francis the life that he was to lead.

### **Incarnational**

Francis was astounded and amazed that his God took on human form and came to be among us. This is truly a loving God who wants to be with His creation, humanity. It is a deep Franciscan perspective that God came among His people out of love. Yes, he came to save us from our sins, but the quintessential factor for His coming was His deep Love-For-Us.

### **Community**

As we know, each of the three Orders Francis helped create have community or fraternity as an essential building block. Francis believed that community was a critical part of the Christian message. And flowing from that, his conviction was that the spiritual journey was not a solitary journey. It is one that is traveled with others, that is, we need each other to grow and develop spiritually.

### **Eucharist**

Francis had a profound love and reverence for the Eucharist. He truly believed in Christ's presence in the bread and wine. He saw this as a wondrous spiritual gift of Jesus~ giving Himself to His followers. Francis honoured priests who were the ones who presided at Eucharist, and Francis remained a deacon, considering himself unworthy to be ordained as a priest.

### **Cross**

We have all seen the statuary where Francis is holding Jesus up (or taking Jesus down) from the cross. Francis saw Christ' death on the cross as an example of God's profound love for us. Francis was blessed with the stigmata, sign of his own crucifixion, dying to self and demonstrating love for others, especially the poor or marginalized. Francis used to sign his letters with the tau, a reminder of Christ's crucifixion.

### **Creational**

Francis saw the handiwork of God in all creation... His appreciation of God's creation bubbled out of Francis as the *Canticle of the Creatures*, Francis' song of praise to God for His beautiful creation. Francis saw God's animate and inanimate creation as his brothers and sisters. It is little wonder that St. Francis has been named the patron saint of ecology.