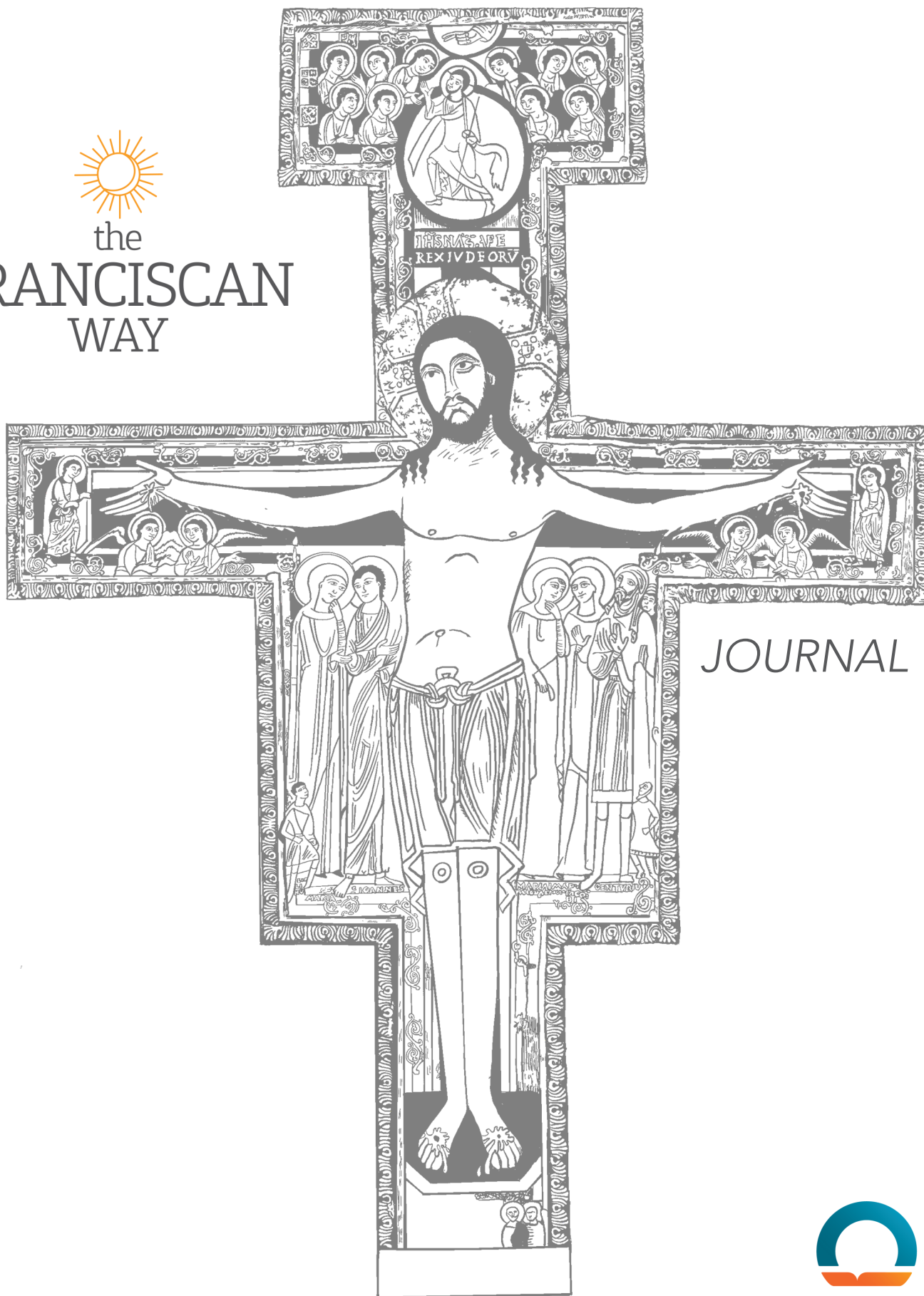




the
FRANCISCAN
WAY



JOURNAL



InterVarsity
VIA DIVINA

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Orientation

BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY

Introduction

WALK. LOVE. REBUILD.

Even where there are deepening divisions, love is possible.

Even when there is suffering, joy is possible.

Even in the midst of brokenness, rebuilding is possible.

Welcome, pellegrino, to the Franciscan Way. Like all pilgrimages, this is a journey to places that hold stories of deep meaning. We are following Francis, a young man from 13th century Italy who walked the streets and pathways around Assisi - and at times as far away as Rome and even Egypt. He walked in a way of love and joy as he came to know God incarnate - Jesus Christ - ever more intimately. And he walked in a way that made inroads into rebuilding the Christian church of his day by living out Jesus' words and ways.

As we walk with Francis' stories, and those of Clare, a young woman from Assisi who followed a similar path, we get to know their hometown. Though Francis left this town many times throughout his life, he always returned. More often than not, his journeys away allowed him to see this familiar place anew. T. S. Eliot echoes this type of journey in his work *The Four Quartets*.

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

Over the years Francis found that place of home within himself, in recognizing Jesus' love and presence wherever he was. Out of this way of living Francis created places of belonging for others so that they may also know God's love.

Returning home is an essential, though often overlooked, part of pilgrimage. Francis' journey can be model of how to carry the practice of pilgrimage back home. By following these stories in and around Assisi, we not only venture to these distant locations, but also look at our places of home anew.

Blessings as you walk, love, and perhaps even rebuild, along this Franciscan Way.





ORIENTATION

How to Use This Journal

When embarking on pilgrimage, it is helpful to record and reflect on the places and people that you encounter, and, in particular, how God meets you along the way. This journal provides "field notes" space to reflect at the end of each session. In addition to reflecting on elements from the audioguide, there are invitations for additional Contemplation and Action practices to go deeper into the theme of each walk.

You are invited to use as much or as little of this journal as you find helpful. It is an interactive PDF, so you can use your device to type directly into it, or you are welcome to print out the pages in order to be able to hand write, draw, or color.

In the Appendix, you will find additional resources to accompany you along the Franciscan Way.



Timeline of Francis and Clare

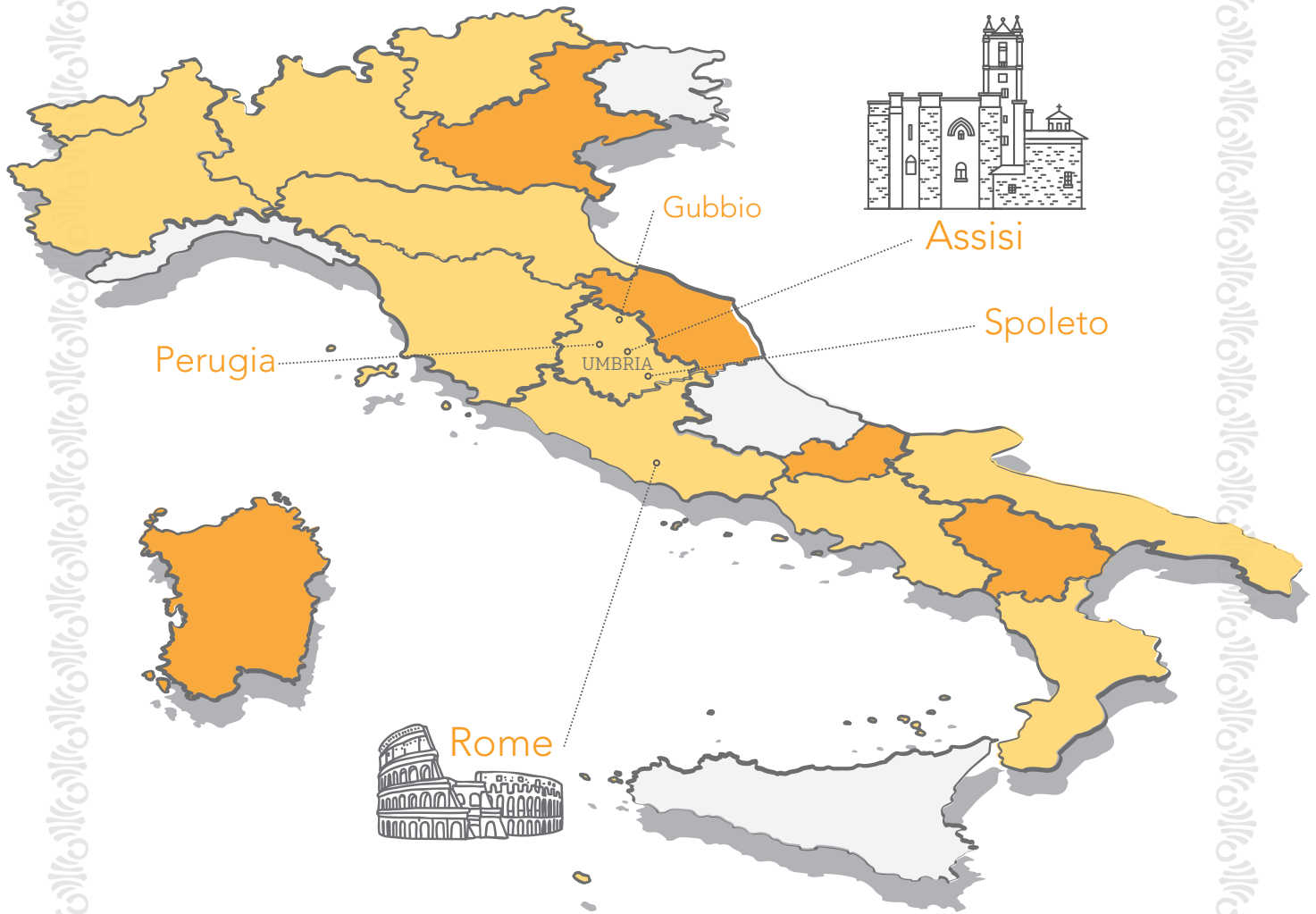
Francis

- 1182 | Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone (later renamed Francesco) was born
- 1202 | Fought Battle of Collestrada and was captured and held in Perugia
- 1204 | Left for Fourth Crusade and returned to Assisi
- 1205 | Prayed before crucifix in church of San Damiano
- 1208 | Heard Gospel readings at the Porziuncola that defined his ministry
- 1219 | Traveled to Egypt to meet the Sultan, Al-Kamil
- 1224 | Received the stigmata during retreat at La Verna
- 1225 | Composed Canticle of the Creatures at San Damiano
- 1226 | Francis died at the Porziuncola

Clare

- 1193 | Clare was born to Favarone and Ortolana di Offreduccio
- 1211 | Met with Francis to learn about following Gospel life
- 1212 | Left her home to join Francis in his mission at the Porziuncola
- 1212 | Moved to San Damiano where she remained the rest of her life
- 1215 | Accepted title of abbess
- 1226 | Body of Francis brought to San Damiano
- 1240 | Turned away Saracen invasion
- 1253 | The Form of Life of Clare of Assisi approved by Pope Innocent IV
- 1253 | Clare died at San Damiano

Map of the Franciscan Way



Egypt

How to Debrief in Small Groups

With any significant experience, it's important to process in an external way and with others. After every other walk or so, take time to reflect and share in a small group using some of the questions below, plus a question or two from each walk (found in the journal).

Encourage everyone in your group to speak. Notice if you haven't heard from someone or if one person is dominating the conversation, and if so, gently invite equal participation.

RECOGNIZE

- Where did you go?
- What did you see on your walk? (Feel free to share pictures.)
- What did you think about while walking?

REFLECT

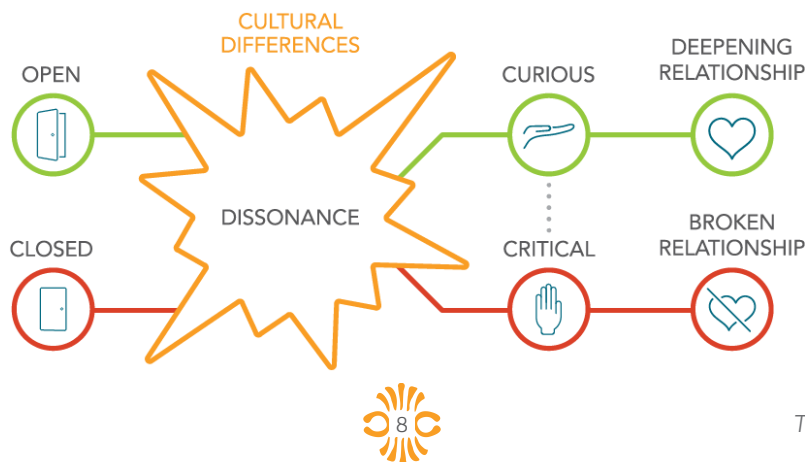
- What stuck out to you from the audioguide?
- Discuss a walk-specific question from each walk.

RESPOND

- What have you been learning about a particular walk's theme that you want to remember?
- Is there a next step you feel led to take in light of that walk's theme?

Approaching Differences

Some things in our Franciscan Way experience might stretch you: exercise, speakers at special events, things said in debrief, the repetitiveness of breath prayer or other spiritual practices you may not be familiar with. Any time you experience this dissonance, we invite you to view it as an opportunity for growth. Ask God what he is teaching. Be curious. Build relationships.





ORIENTATION

Questions Upon Arrival

Use the space below to reflect on these questions:

- How is your soul as you set out on pilgrimage?
- What do you need to let go of in order to be fully present to what God?
- What are you hoping for on the Franciscan Way?





Joy and Suffering

WALK 1

WALK 1: JOY AND SUFFERING

Brief Context

On this first walk, we encounter Francis in early 13th century Italy carousing along the stone streets of Assisi; heading out to war against Perugia, the town across the valley; then riding off to fight in the Fourth Crusade after recovering from a year as a prisoner of war. When he returns to Assisi, his dreams of knighthood ended, he wanders familiar streets, but he is changed. Not far below the town, he meets a leper in the valley and hears God's call to him in the dilapidated church of San Damiano.

Scripture Reflection: John 16

In this passage Jesus has been speaking to his disciples about the most important things on his mind as he spends time with them just prior to his own death. He is aware that his death is going to be hard on them and very confusing.

What are one or two things that seem to be uppermost in his mind, in this chapter? Notice that this chapter contains both suffering and joy. What is one thing Jesus says about suffering? And one thing about joy?

Jesus wants to prepare them for what lies ahead, hardship involving not only loss but also persecution. Yet he also wants to draw their attention to the gift he plans to leave with them and how significant that will be. What is this gift and why so significant? Jesus seems to suggest that we can hold both great sorrow and great joy in our hearts at the same time. Have you ever experienced this? Why would it be important to be able to hold both in tension, simultaneously?



WALK 1: JOY AND SUFFERING

Breath Prayer

PSALM 16: 1,11

Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.

You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Breathe in: In your presence...

Breathe out: There is joy

Contemplation

Imagine Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest and crucifixion. Hebrews 12:2 says, "For the joy set before him, he endured the cross." Jesus knew that there was joy on the other side of his suffering, but he couldn't rush to get there, so he spent time in prayer during one of the hardest moments of his life.

Think about your own current suffering and enter the garden with Jesus. He feels it too. What might he say to you about how your suffering makes him feel?

Action

Put on your favorite dance song and dance! This is a true embodiment exercise- you have to release your socialization to bodily communicate. Let go of everything burdening you for a few minutes. Do this alone in your room. Do it with headphones on your walk! Let the joy come to you.



WALK 1: JOY AND SUFFERING

Prayer

FRANCIS' PRAYER BEFORE THE CRUCIFIX AT SAN DAMIANO

*Most High, glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart and
give me true faith,
certain hope, and
perfect charity,
sense and knowledge,
Lord, that I might carry out your holy and true command.*

Walk Reflections

We invite you to experience the Franciscan Way with your whole self. When we tune into our breath and all of our senses, we can become more present to our bodies, our surroundings, and to God. Use the space below to write or draw anything that you would like to remember about your walk. For example, what did you see, hear, smell, touch, taste? Also note any responses you had to reflections questions within the walk.

- Can you identify with the challenge of trying to make it through another day in a messed-up world? How does anyone find or hold onto joy with such suffering?
- How do you relate to Francis at this point in his story?



 WALK 1: JOY AND SUFFERING FIELD NOTES

 WALK 1: JOY AND SUFFERING FIELD NOTES



Poverty and Abundance

WALK 2

WALK 2: POVERTY AND ABUNDANCE

Brief Context

After hearing the call to rebuild the church, Francis starts to repair the broken walls of San Damiano. The result of this action leads Francis along a series of dramatic interactions around Assisi – from house arrest in his family home to the public renunciation of his former life in the town square. At this point, Francis and a small group of followers start to gather in the valley below Assisi to live out a radical understanding of following Jesus.

Scripture Reflection: Luke 18:18-30

Jesus was committed to helping people understand the nature of the Kingdom of God and how their perspectives might need to change in order to grasp what he was talking about. We all have ways of defining “the good life.” In his teachings about the Kingdom of God, Jesus wants to convey an idea about this as well. We can reflect on what really constitutes “the good life” as we spend time in this passage.

What do you think the ruler is hoping to gain in this story? What do you think Jesus is hoping for in this conversation? Note the young man’s mood after Jesus counsels him. What does this suggest to you? Have you ever thought about why it is so hard to let go of earthly things?

Why does Jesus think it is important for this man to release his wealth? What is the relationship of wealth and the kingdom of God in the minds of the disciples? Of Jesus?

Breath Prayer

PSALM 36:5-9

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your judgments are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.



WALK 2: POVERTY AND ABUNDANCE

(BREATH PRAYER CONTINUED)

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house,

and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life;

in your light we see light.

Breathe in: How precious your love...

Breathe out: We feast on your abundance

Contemplation

Make a list of everything you own and sit with the abundance of your possessions. Then, make a list of everything God has given to you that isn't material. What stands out about these two lists?

Action

There is nothing sinful about possessing something, but the problem is when we become possessed by our possessions. Material abundance is best enjoyed as a community. Privately owned wealth can present dangers. Let's attempt to experience momentary freedom from the possessions that may possess us on the next walk.

Consider these symbols of our material attachments, some of which you may have on you right now.

- Jewelry
- Watches
- Wallets
- Smartphone
- Home/car/major purchase



WALK 2: POVERTY AND ABUNDANCE

(ACTION CONTINUED)

Before you set out on your next walk, strip from yourself the first 3 items above. Include shoes and socks as symbols of our attachment to fashion if you can manage walking barefoot. Before departing, ask God to reveal anything else which may occupy more space in your heart and mind than it should. Write that down on a piece of paper and leave all these things in your room.

Prayer

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI'S PRAYER IN PRAISE OF GOD GIVEN TO BROTHER LEO

*You are holy, Lord, the only God,
and Your deeds are wonderful.
You are strong.
You are great.
You are the Most High.
You are Almighty.
You, Holy Father are King of heaven and earth.
You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good.
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good, Lord God, living and true.
You are love. You are wisdom.
You are humility. You are endurance.
You are rest. You are peace.
You are joy and gladness.
You are justice and moderation.
You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.
You are beauty.
You are gentleness.
You are our protector.
You are our guardian and defender.
You are our courage. You are our haven and our hope.
You are our faith, our great consolation.
You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord,
God Almighty, Merciful Saviour.*



WALK 2: POVERTY AND ABUNDANCE

Walk Reflections

We invite you to experience the Franciscan Way with your whole self. When we tune into our breath and all of our senses, we can become more present to our bodies, our surroundings, and to God. Use the space below to write or draw anything that you would like to remember about your walk. For example, what did you see, hear, smell, touch, taste?

Also note any responses you had to reflections questions within the walk.

- When it comes to your provision and contentment, your responsibilities and dreams, where is your trust located?
- How might a new sense of abundance come from letting go of possessions that possess you?
- Consider some of the steps you have taken to follow Jesus and to love those on society's margins. Imagine yourself taking courageous steps in the future. What would this look like and what kind of impact might it have in the lives of others around you?



 WALK 2: POVERTY AND ABUNDANCE FIELD NOTES

 WALK 2: POVERTY AND ABUNDANCE FIELD NOTES



Community and Contemplation

WALK 3

WALK 3: COMMUNITY AND CONTEMPLATION

Brief Context

Our attention in this walk turns to Clare. Her journey starts in the upper section of Assisi, where the nobility lived, near San Rufino Cathedral. She leaves this home to join Francis at St. Mary of the Angels in the valley below Assisi, and then eventually lives the rest of her life cloistered at San Damiano.

Scripture Reflection: Luke 10: 38-42; John 11:1-43; John 12:1-8

In all these passages we see an unfolding of Mary's relationship with Jesus. They are together socially, and they are together when her brother dies. In each passage we can see what Mary understands about Jesus. This is not a casual friendship. There is depth in the relationship they share. What does Mary seem to understand about Jesus in these stories? How does Mary conduct herself when she is with Jesus? What happens when Mary loses her brother and talks to Jesus about it?

Notice that friendship is important to Jesus. He kept going back to Mary and Martha's home in Bethany. There was something tender and important in their friendships with each other. They were close and they supported one another.

We can watch Mary and reflect on our own intimacy with Jesus—how close we come to him, how much we look for from him, how important and significant he is to us. We can consider how Jesus meets us in regular life, but also in loss. And we can think about how we decide to express our love to him, even if we are not doing that with expensive perfume.

If this kind of relationality was so important and central in Jesus's life, how much more important this will be for us. Do you experience Jesus inviting you into close friendship? Do you find yourself seeking him, his presence and input, as you go about your life?



WALK 3: COMMUNITY AND CONTEMPLATION

Breath Prayer

PSALM 84:1-4

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.
Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God.
Blessed are those who dwell in your house,
ever singing your praise!

Breathe in: Blessed are those...

Breath out: Who dwell in your house

Contemplation

Spend some time in gratitude for the people who make up your true community and those who encourage you to sit at the feet of Jesus. Maybe journal about them or thank God for them aloud.

Action

Take a relational risk such as inviting someone over for a meal after church or initiating a conversation with your neighbor. Is there an important conversation you need to have with people in your church community? Or do you need to set up a time of contemplation and ask your community to keep you accountable to doing it? Maybe you simply invite a friend on the next walk with you!



WALK 3: COMMUNITY AND CONTEMPLATION

Prayer

CLARE, LETTER 4 TO AGNES OF PRAGUE

*Happy, indeed, is she
to whom it is given to share this sacred banquet,
to cling with all her heart to Him
whose beauty all the heavenly hosts admire unceasingly,
whose love inflames our love,
whose contemplation is our refreshment,
whose graciousness is our joy,
whose gentleness fills us to overflowing,
whose remembrance brings a gentle light,
whose fragrance will revive the dead,
whose glorious vision will be the happiness
of all the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem;*

Walk Reflections

We invite you to experience the Franciscan Way with your whole self. When we tune into our breath and all of our senses, we can become more present to our bodies, our surroundings, and to God. Use the space below to write or draw anything that you would like to remember about your walk. For example, what did you see, hear, smell, touch, taste? Also note any responses you had to reflections questions within the walk.

- What barriers or challenges make contemplation and stillness difficult to sustain?
- Are there personal or communal expectations that make it hard for you to sit with Jesus?
- How might Jesus be inviting you to make space for this type of contemplation and community?





WALK 3: COMMUNITY & CONTEMPLATION FIELD NOTES



WALK 3: COMMUNITY & CONTEMPLATION FIELD NOTES



Make Peace

WALK 4

WALK 4: MAKE PEACE

Brief Context

On this walk we follow Francis beyond Assisi to the small town of Gubbio in the northeastern part of Umbria, and then much farther away to Egypt.

Scripture Reflection: John 4:1-42

The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman could have played out in many different ways. It is worth noting that when Jesus approached this woman, everything he did was to build trust and to build relationship. They had all kinds of differences. He was male, she female. She had not exercised the restraint in her relationships with the opposite sex that he had. He was Jewish and she was a Samaritan. He was in good standing in the community but she was not---and on and on. But Jesus found commonality and then moved closer to her. Thereby he was able to hear more of her personal story.

Jesus did not primarily focus on points of disagreement, though he did mention those. He instead focused on their common humanity under God—mentioning that all people need to worship God in spirit and in truth. This is what the Father desired. He included her in this type of worship which opened the door to her new-found faith.

Can you imagine yourself calming your inner reactions to folks with whom you disagree or who are threatening to you, in order to make space for listening and thereby gaining greater understanding? What would this be like for you? What is one first step you could take in this direction?

WALK 4: MAKE PEACE

Breath Prayer

2 CORINTHIANS 13:11

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Breathe in: Live in peace...

Breathe out: God is with me

Contemplation

Pick a time this week to go people-watch. Maybe when you go to the store or when you're at the dog park, pay attention to the people around you. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you about their dignity and how they are made in the image of the Divine. Spend as much time people watching as you are alert to God's voice telling you about other human's value and beauty.

Action

Are there people in your life who come to mind when you think about conflict and disunity? Maybe you've felt distant and estranged from some people because of political or theological disagreements.

- What might be God's invitation for you in stepping closer to them in peace and unity?
- What do you need to do internally and externally to reconcile?
- What will it take for you to say yes to this invitation? What's one concrete next step?



WALK 4: MAKE PEACE

Prayer

PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS, ANONYMOUS AUTHOR

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Walk Reflections

We invite you to experience the Franciscan Way with your whole self. When we tune into our breath and all of our senses, we can become more present to our bodies, our surroundings, and to God. Use the space below to write or draw anything that you would like to remember about your walk. For example, what did you see, hear, smell, touch, taste? Also note any responses you had to reflections questions within the walk.

- Where do you perceive breaks in shalom? With creation? Between people?
- What might it take to build a bridge instead of widening the divisions?



 WALK 4: MAKE PEACE FIELD NOTES

 WALK 4: MAKE PEACE FIELD NOTES



Rebuild the Church

WALK 5

WALK 5: REBUILD THE CHURCH

Brief Context

On this final walk, we return with Francis to Assisi, and to the place where so much of his ministry began, San Damiano.

Scripture Reflection: John 13: 1-17

When Jesus was in the upper room with his disciples on the night before his death, he was very concerned to give them final concepts and words that would carry them through. His highest concern was that they should learn to love. He did not want them to live without knowing how to love each other. Part of love is humility and serving, so he demonstrated what that looked like by washing the feet of his disciples. It was a dramatic way to show them what he meant.

It is interesting that of all the things he could have focused on that night, this was what he chose. He did not have a strategy session. And if you could call this a training session, it was intriguing that he chose to train them in humility and servanthood. Apparently, that is how Jesus planned to have his Kingdom unfold - it would be through humility, servanthood, and love. After all, he was about to go out and do the ultimate act of humility and love himself and he wanted his followers to understand this and to follow his example.

How do you hear Jesus calling you to love and servanthood? What would that look like for you today? What is hard about that? When have you noticed others loving and serving you?



WALK 5: REBUILD THE CHURCH

Breath Prayer

ISAIAH 58: 6-7, 9-10, 12

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

...

If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.

...

“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.”

Breathe in: Repairer of broken walls...

Breathe out: Restorer of streets with dwellings



WALK 5: REBUILD THE CHURCH

Contemplation

This is an imaginative prayer activity. We place ourselves in the scene in Scripture in order to better hear from God. If this is difficult for you, that's okay.

Imagine yourself as one of the disciples at the Passover supper, and it's your turn to let Jesus wash your feet. Jesus is refilling the basin with clean warm water and asks you to remove your sandals. How do you feel about Jesus washing your feet?

As he returns and kneels down with the towel around his waist, what thoughts come to mind about your Savior on the ground before you? Do you feel similar to Peter - uncomfortable, prideful, wanting to prove yourself?

Jesus looks up at your face and smiles kindly. Then he begins to tell you how he plans to serve you in your life. What does he say? What are the things he wants to clean and make new in your current situation? How does he want to love you in this season?

Wait as long as you need as you ask Jesus those questions. No matter what you receive, after a while, thank Jesus for washing your feet and bless this time you've had with him.

Action

- How might Jesus be inviting you to wash others' feet in your community? Are there practical ways that you can serve and love others? Here are some ideas:
- Can you sit with someone in their suffering and bring them some moments of joy? Perhaps visit an elderly care facility and spend time with the residents.
- Is there anything you can give away from your list of possessions? Give as much away as you can!
- Gather with friends for a time in prayer, worship, or for fun and encouragement. Is there anyone who has been missing for a while? Invite them in.
- Is there anything local that you can volunteer for that will help your community? Beautification projects, serving the poor and needy, helping with a fundraiser?
- Spend some time in communal lament over the ways we've been disunified and unloving as followers of Jesus. Make a plan with your community to move forward in love.



WALK 5: REBUILD THE CHURCH

Prayer

FRANCIS' LETTER TO THE ENTIRE ORDER IN 1225

*Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God,
grant us in our misery
the grace to do for You alone
what we know you want us to do
and always to desire what pleases You.
Inwardly cleansed,
interiorly enlightened
and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit,
may we be able to follow
in the footprints of Your beloved Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
and, by Your grace alone,
may we make our way to You,
Most High,
Who live and rule
in perfect Trinity and simple Unity,
and are glorified
God almighty,
forever and ever.
Amen.*



WALK 5: REBUILD THE CHURCH

Walk Reflections

We invite you to experience the Franciscan Way with your whole self. When we tune into our breath and all of our senses, we can become more present to our bodies, our surroundings, and to God. Use the space below to write or draw anything that you would like to remember about your walk. For example, what did you see, hear, smell, touch, taste? Also note any responses you had to reflections questions within the walk.

- Where does your heart break for the church, your community, the world? Consider how you carry these troubles in your soul and your body.
- Where does this love of Jesus meet you? What words and images come to mind that you can carry with you?
- Out of this love, where are you called to live out Christ's example of the towel and basin?
- What are ways you may be called to humble service as a model of rebuilding a divided and ailing church community? A divided and ailing world?



 WALK 5: REBUILD THE CHURCH FIELD NOTES

 WALK 5: REBUILD THE CHURCH FIELD NOTES



Appendix

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

APPENDIX: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Breath Prayer

Breath prayer invites us to let our physical body represent what's going on spiritually. We're involving our bodies in our prayer, you might even say letting our bodies pray.

In Genesis 2:7, the scripture says, "and the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." Right at the very beginning, we have this intimate inhale from God and exhale into our bodies. And the truth is, this hasn't changed, this wasn't a one-time deal in Genesis. This is a picture of the reality we live in: As you inhale, you're breathing in God's breath, the gift of life to you. And, as you exhale, you're expressing life and love back to God. Breathing becomes both a reminder of the God in whom we belong, and an embodied declaration that we are God's with every Spirit-filled, Imago-Dei breath that we breathe.

We can integrate our breathing with scripture and prayer using an ancient Christian practice called breath prayer. At its simplest, it involves repeatedly inhaling and exhaling a truth about God for several minutes.

Because breath prayer is repetitive and uses very few words, it helps us surrender and free us from having to figure out what to say to God. We don't need to say a lot to convince God to intervene. He knows our needs and can choose to respond whether we say a lot, a little, or nothing at all.

Considerations for breath prayer while walking or sitting:

- Allow a passage of scripture to inspire the phrase you choose to repeat as your prayer. Is there a particular name for God that feels meaningful? What is a simple truth about God you find in the passage?
- Find a comfortable rhythm to your breathing.
- As you breathe in, call on a biblical name or image of God.
- Breathe out a simple truth about God or a God-given desire of your heart.

Examples:

- Breathe in "Jehovah Jireh," breathe out "you provide" (Genesis 22:14).
- Breathe in "Good Shepherd," breathe out "lead me through this valley" (Psalm 23).
- Breathe in "Nothing can separate me," breathe out "from the love of God" (Romans 8:38-39).



APPENDIX: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

The “One Step” Prayer of Examen

Introduction: The prayer of Examen has served people for hundreds of years in deepening their relationship with God and in making them more aware of the movement of the Spirit of God in their lives, enabling them to experience much deeper intimacy with God and fulfill the admonition of Galatians 5:25 to “keep in step with the Spirit.”

The prayer of Examen originated as part of the teaching and spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola. The prayer is built upon movements of reflection around a period of time. Most consistently, people will use this exercise to reflect upon a day in their lives, praying through the five movements of thanksgiving, petition, review, response, and looking ahead.

Over time there have been many different adaptations for practicing the prayer of Examen. In that same spirit, the “One Step” prayer of examen offers an approach to the prayer of examen that allows us to consider our life and how God is at work in it through the lens of our movement. This approach can create a greater awareness of the work of the Spirit in our lives and provide opportunity for us to consider how God might be at work each day to “direct our steps” (Proverbs 16:9).

Starting your prayer: Find a comfortable place to sit. It can often be helpful to have your feet flat upon the floor and to take a moment to establish good posture. The hope is that you can find a position that will allow you to stay both still and alert throughout the exercise. Take a few deep breaths and set your intention for this time of prayer, inviting God’s Spirit to be at work with you and in you as you pray.

Now engage the first movement of **thanksgiving**. Simply offering gratitude to God and specifically recognizing anything from the day that you are particularly grateful for.

When you are ready, engage with the second movement of **petition**. Asking that as you review your day God would shine light into your life and heart that would allow you to see Him more clearly and to grace you to see you and your life as He sees them.

When you are ready, engage the third movement of **review**. This is where the uniqueness of the “One Step” examen begins. As you begin to review your day, do so through the lens of your movement and in particular your steps. One helpful tool for this part of the prayer is to have taken the time prior to the prayer to look at your step counter for the day (if you have one). Likely, that counter is in the thousands. Knowing that God knows each and every one of those steps begin to consider how they accumulated. What was your first step of the day? While most people find it easiest to move chronologically through their day during this time of review feel free to experiment with other lenses if you want to. Examples of other lenses might be based upon location, interactions with people, the different emotional experiences of the day, etc.





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A key element of this movement is to not be in a hurry and to try to be as specific as you can in the review. As you complete your initial review of the day, invite God now to lead you to one single step where He was present in a meaningful way. Maybe it was very clear to you in that moment. Or maybe you had no real sense of God's presence at work in that moment but now it is being highlighted to you by the Spirit. Focus your attention towards that step, try to remember where you were, how you were feeling physically, emotionally, and what was going through your mind? Explore what about that step was meaningful and what the invitation of God's Spirit is for you as you are being drawn to reflect around that step. For those who want to go deeper with this prayer, you can also invite the Spirit to highlight for you any steps that you took that moved you away from what God was doing in your life today or perhaps if there were steps He was inviting you to take that you did not.

When you are ready, engage the fourth movement of **response**. Invite God's Spirit now to help you respond to what you have seen regarding your day and your awareness of God's movement in your life. Is there something specific you want to give thanks for? Is there something you are wanting to confess? Is there a request for help that you want to give voice to?

Finally, engage the fifth movement of **looking ahead**. Consider for a few moments tomorrow. How do you want to engage the next day? What are the activities that are planned? Who are the people you expect to encounter? Where will your steps likely take you? What will it look like to see God directing your steps? How might you become more sensitive to God's movement in your life tomorrow?

Concluding your prayer: As you conclude your prayer, thank God for being with you in the prayer exercise. Become aware of your body. Thanking God for the gift that it is in your life. Finally, take a few deep breaths and acknowledge the gift of being present to God and having God present to us.

Created by Adam Peacocke





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Visio Divina & Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina—divine reading—is an ancient spiritual practice for listening to or reading a passage of scripture in a way that is different from Bible study as most of us are familiar with it. Instead of a more intellectual approach, Lectio Divina invites us to alleviate some of the effort that we might normally put in, and allow ourselves to lean more into a posture of receiving the words of scripture as we are in that moment. As Paul says in Hebrews 4:12, “the word of God is alive and active,” and Lectio Divina is another way to experience that.

As you’ve experienced at the beginning of each Root and Branch before our walks, Visio Divina—divine seeing—offers us the same way to connect with God through artwork.

We look and listen with the eyes and ears of our heart, as if we are in conversation with God, and God is suggesting the topic of discussion.

Here are four contemplative movements you can use with artwork or a scripture passage:

1. VISIO/LECTIO - Seeing/Reading

Gently let your eyes move through the image or your ears listen.

What catches your eye or ear? Where do you notice Christ? Focus on that and sit with it for a minute.

2. MEDITATIO - Reflecting

Breathe in and out, and let your body and mind slow down as you meditate on the image or scripture passage. Invite the Lord to speak to you about what you noticed.

What feelings does this image or passage evoke? Why might a particular aspect of the image or a certain word/phrase be resonating with you today?

3. ORATIO - Responding

What kind of prayer rises from within you as you ponder it?

Enter into dialogue with God. Listen for what God might be saying to you.

What do you say to God?

What is God’s invitation to you?

4. CONTEMPLATIO - Resting

Finally, when your prayer is finished, rest quietly in God’s loving presence, allowing the prayer to be absorbed into your heart.





APPENDIX: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Retreat Days

There is tremendous value in routinely setting aside a day to disconnect and be in solitude with God; InterVarsity staff are encouraged to do this monthly. Jesus himself took time regularly to distance himself from everything else in order to be alone with and renewed by the Father.

You might spend an extended time in scripture, or a book about spiritual growth, or revisiting your journal or calendar to process what has been happening since your last retreat.

Visit the following links from InterVarsity for more information:

- Days of Retreat in InterVarsity offered by Learning and Talent
<https://learningandtalent.intervarsity.org/spiritual-formation-prayer/spiritual-formationtraining/days-retreat-intervarsity>
- Retreat of Silence Guides for InterVarsity Staff (login required)
<https://staff.intervarsity.org/retreat-silence>
- Seeds of Hope 4-Week Prayer Guide (\$10)
<https://www.bettedickinson.com/shop/p/seeds-of-hope-4-week-guide>
- Seeds of Hope 4-Day Guide through Loss & Disappointment (free)
<https://mailchi.mp/8b64efb4a659/seeds-of-hope>

Spiritual Direction

InterVarsity Press author and spiritual director, Beth Booram, says that “Spiritual direction helps us integrate our splintered lives.” These are people who are called and gifted in listening for the movements of God as they accompany you and listen to whatever seems important to you. All have been through a training program for spiritual direction.

Everyone: You can locate and interview a potential spiritual director through websites like <https://sdc Companions.org/>

InterVarsity Staff: A growing number of seasoned staff are available to accompany you in your spiritual journey. Find a list of InterVarsity spiritual directors at <https://learningandtalent.intervarsity.org/resources/spiritual-formation-support-list>



APPENDIX: FRANCISCAN RESOURCES

Bibliography

The following list includes works you may find interesting in relation to the content of Via Divina: The Franciscan Way.

Bodo, Murray. [Francis: The Journey and the Dream](#)

Bodo, Murray and Susan Saint Sing. [A Retreat with Francis and Clare of Assisi: Following Our Pilgrim Hearts](#)

Chesterton, G.K., [St. Francis of Assisi](#)

Cron, Ian Morgan. [Chasing Francis](#)

Francis of Assisi. [The Little Flowers of St. Francis](#)

Francis of Assisi, Clare of Assisi. [Francis and Clare: The Complete Works \(Classics of Western Spirituality\)](#)

Green, Julien. [God's Fool: The Life and Times of Francis of Assisi](#)

Moses, Paul. [The Saint and the Sultan: The Crusades, Islam, and Francis of Assisi's Mission of Peace](#)

Murray, Wendy. [Clare of Assisi: Gentle Warrior](#)

Spoto, Donald. [Reluctant Saint: The Life of Francis of Assisi](#)

Thompson, Augustine. [Francis of Assisi: A New Biography](#)



APPENDIX: VIA DIVINA TEAM

Via Divina: The Franciscan Way Team

Thanks to everyone who has worked on developing Via Divina: The Franciscan Way. It has truly been a pilgrimage in itself.

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APPENDIX: STUDY ABROAD AND FACULTY MINISTRIES

InterVarsity Study Abroad

InterVarsity Study Abroad exists to support and equip students to keep Jesus at the center of their study abroad experience. We offer digital discipleship groups, leadership training, local community connections and in-person pilgrimages - Journeys - along with Via Divina. Alternatively, we also have summer and semester study abroad programs with our partners.

Journeys with InterVarsity Study Abroad

We welcome students, staff, and ministry partners to join our in-person pilgrimages in Europe.

Visit <https://studyabroad.intervarsity.org/get-involved/european-journeys> to learn more and email studyabroad@intervarsity.org if you'd like to be notified about upcoming Journeys.

InterVarsity Faculty Ministry

God has strategically placed faculty, staff and administrators on college campuses across the world. InterVarsity's Faculty Ministry provides resources and support for faculty to flourish on campus as they follow Jesus together. You can learn more at: <https://faculty.intervarsity.org>.

Faculty Ministry in partnership with Study Abroad is hosting in-person Journeys for Faculty and Friends, including Journey Ireland and Journey Italy. If you would like to be notified of upcoming journeys, email faculty@intervarsity.org.

