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Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi (B) — White

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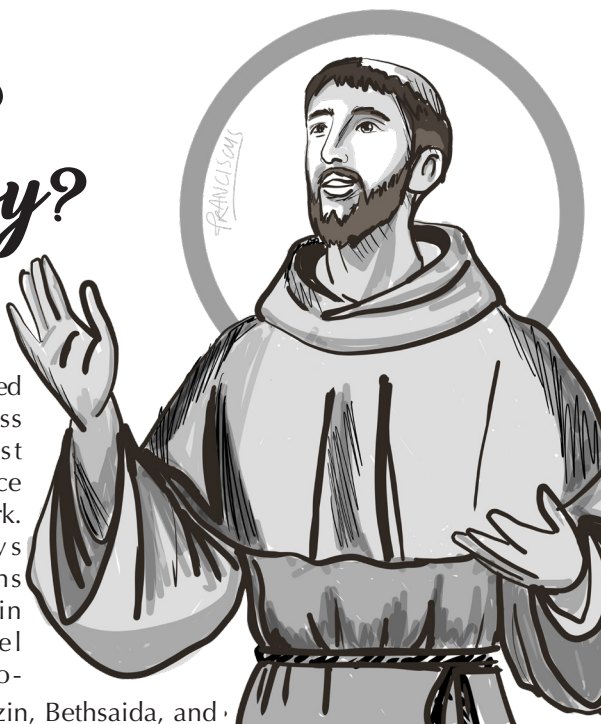
What is Perfect Joy?

Cl. Vinz Anthony B. Aurellano, SSP

Once St. Francis of Assisi was asked by Brother Leo, "What is perfect joy?" The founder of the Order of Friars Minor replied, "Besmirched by mud and cold and ice I come to the door, and after I have knocked and called for some time, a brother comes and asks: 'Who's there?' I answer: 'Brother Francis.' And then he says: 'Go away! This is not a decent hour to be going about: so, you won't get in!' And if I again insist, he might answer: 'Go away! You're no more than a simpleton and idiot, so don't come back again! We are so numerous and such that we have no need of you!' And I stand again at the door and say: 'For the love of God take me for this night!' And he responds: 'I will not! Go to the Crosiers' place and ask them!' I tell you (Brother Leo), if I put up with all this and not be upset, in this is true joy and real virtue and the salvation of one's soul!"

Today's First Reading narrates how Job realizes the magnificence of God. Job pleaded that he be allowed to see God and hear directly the reason for his suffering. In response to Job's plea, the Lord narrates not so much about his divine justice, but the wonders of his creation. Job was appeased and remained silent. He was convinced and

acknowledged his littleness in the vast magnificence of God's work. Jesus says three towns are pitiful in our Gospel reading to-day: Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. He calls them wretched because of their lack of faith in him which is also the cause of their hardness of heart—they do not repent of their sins. Worse, they lack faith even though they have seen God's concern for his people through the kind actions of Jesus. The sad story is, these towns mentioned were places of blessings for Jesus: in Bethsaida, Jesus called his first apostles—Philip, Andrew, and Peter. The town of Capernaum is mentioned many times in the gospels, a place where Jesus performed many healings and miracles. Jesus used the cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom for comparison. The towns of Tyre and Sidon were port areas, and thus places of trade, of cultural exchanges, and it was assumed, of loose morals. The people in those towns were preoccupied with worldly things. Sodom, in



the book of Genesis, was the city that God destroyed during the time of Abraham because of its sinfulness (cf. Gn 19).

The readings in this memorial of St. Francis of Assisi challenges us to imitate him—**to not lose sight of what will stay forever: God.** The hate and anger of this passing world, the love for material things, vain glories and securities, the rejection of men, the seemingly endless pain, problem, suffering—if we can withstand all of these and still remain true and faithful to God, then we have perfect joy! May the truth of Jesus' words today touch our hearts, as it touched the heart of St. Francis, who chose our Lord above all things—considering all things rubbish (cf. Phil 3:8)—that we too may solely gain Christ, our perfect joy!

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

Francis, the man of God, left his home behind, abandoned his inheritance and became poor and penniless, but the Lord raised him up.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These or similar words may be used to address the assembly.)

P—Today's Gospel reading recalls Jesus' lament over the towns where he worked miracles. The inhabitants might have rejoiced over his mighty acts but they failed to repent and believe in him. The marvels that the Lord shows us are invitations for us to examine our lives. They benefit us only if we acknowledge our unworthiness of God's gift and if we strive to change for good.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

P—Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All—For we have sinned against you.

P—Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

All—And grant us your salvation.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, by whose gift Saint Francis was conformed to Christ

in poverty and humility, grant that, by walking in Francis' footsteps, we may follow your Son, and through joyful charity, come to be united with you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading

(Jb 38:1, 12-21; 40:3-5) (Sit)

The Lord made Job realize the magnificence of his love through an exhortation. Job acknowledges his littleness and the Lord's saving power.

A reading from the Book of Job

THE LORD addressed Job out of the storm and said: Have you ever in your lifetime commanded the morning and shown the dawn its place for taking hold of the ends of the earth, till the wicked are shaken from its surface? The earth is changed as is clay by the seal, and dyed as though it were a garment; But from the wicked the light is withheld, and the arm of pride is shattered.

Have you entered into the sources of the sea, or walked about in the depths of the abyss? Have the gates of death been shown to you, or have you seen the gates of darkness? Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? Tell me, if you know all: Which is the way to the dwelling place of light, and where is the abode of darkness, That you may take them to their boundaries and set them on their homeward paths? You know, because you were born before them, and the number of your years is great!

Then Job answered the LORD and said: Behold, I am of little account; what can I answer you? I put my hand over my mouth. Though I have spoken once, I will not do so again; though twice, I will do so no more.

—The Word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 139)

R—Guide me, Lord, along the everlasting way.

1. O LORD, you have probed me and you know me;/ you know when I sit and when I stand;/ you understand my thoughts from afar./ My journeys and my rest you scrutinize,/ with all my ways you are familiar. **(R)**

2. Where can I go from your spirit?/ From your presence where can I flee?/ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;/ if I sink to the nether world, you are present there. **(R)**

3. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I settle at the farthest limits of the sea, Even there your hand shall guide me, and your right hand hold me fast. **(R)**

4. Truly you have formed my inmost being;/ you knit me in my mother's womb./ I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made;/ wonderful are your works. **(R)**

Alleluia (Ps 95:8) (Stand)

All—Alleluia, alleluia. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Lk 10:13-16)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS SAID to them, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. "And as for you, Capernaum, 'Will you be exalted to heaven? You will go down to the netherworld.' Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily *(Sit)*

Prayer of the Faithful

P—St. Francis of Assisi abandoned everything and lived a life of poverty and charity. Following his footsteps, may we mirror the face of Christ to others.

R—Lord, teach us to be poor in spirit.

C—Like St. Francis, may we follow the example of the Lord who, though he was rich, became poor so that through his poverty we might become rich. We pray: **(R)**

C—May St. Francis, who loved and even preached to birds, animals, and flowers, teach us to commune with all creation and to praise and thank God for them. We pray: **(R)**

C—Endowed with St. Francis' spirit, may all join in caring for this planet, our common home. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the Lord make us channels of his peace, to overcome hatred with love, doubt with faith, and to pardon those who have injured us. We pray: **(R)**

C—May we be delivered from the fear of death whom St. Francis called "Sister Death" for it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions *(pause)*. We pray: **(R)**

P—Loving Father, you care for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. May St. Francis, Patron Saint of Ecology, help us to treat every living thing with kindness.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts *(Stand)*

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—As we bring you these offerings, O Lord, we pray that we may be rightly disposed for the celebration of the mystery of the Cross, which Saint Francis so ardently embraced.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

Preface *(Saints I)*

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always, and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you are praised in the company of your Saints and, in crowning their merits, you crown your own gifts. By their way of life you offer us an example, by communion with them you give us companionship, by their intercession, sure support, so that, encouraged by so great a cloud of witnesses, we may run as victors in the race before us and win with them the imperishable crown of glory, through Christ our Lord.

And so, with the Angels and Archangels, and with the great multitude of the Saints, we sing the hymn of your praise,

All—Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. *(Kneel)*

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion
(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God...

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon *(Mt 5:3)*

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Prayer after Communion
(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Grant us, we pray, O Lord, through these holy gifts which we have received, that, imitating the charity and apostolic zeal of St. Francis, we may experience the effects of your love and spread them everywhere for the salvation of all.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

May your heavenly favor, O Lord, we pray, increase in number the people subject to you and make them always obedient to your commands.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.



PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART *of Jesus*

Divine Jesus, you have said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," behold me kneeling at your feet, filled with a lively faith and confidence in the promises dictated by your Sacred Heart and pronounced by your adorable lips. I come to ask this favor: *(Here silently mention your petitions).*

To whom can I turn if not to you whose Heart is the source of all graces and merits? Where should I seek if not in the treasure which contains all the riches of your kindness and mercy? Where should I knock if not at the door through which God gives himself to us and through which we go to God? I have recourse to you, Heart of Jesus. In you I find consolation when afflicted, protection when persecuted, strength

when burdened with trials, and light in doubt and darkness.

Dear Jesus, I firmly believe that you can grant me the grace I implore, even though it should require a miracle. You have only to will it, and my prayer will be granted. I admit that I am most unworthy of your favors, but this is not a reason for me to be discouraged. You are the God of mercy and you will not refuse a contrite heart. Cast upon me a look of mercy, I beg of you, and your kind Heart will find in my miseries and weaknesses a reason for granting my prayers.

O Sacred Heart, whatever may be your decision with regard to my request, I will never stop adoring, loving, praising and serving you. My Jesus, be pleased to accept this my act of perfect resignation to the decrees of your adorable Heart which I sincerely desire may be fulfilled in and by me and all your creatures forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I know that there is but one thing impossible to you: to be without pity for those who are suffering or in distress. Look upon me, I beg of you, dear Jesus, and grant me the grace for which I humbly implore you through the Immaculate Heart of your most sorrowful Mother. You have entrusted me to her as her child, and her prayers are all-powerful with you. Amen.

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