SELECTED FRANCISCAN PRAYERS

Canticle of Brother Sun

Most high, omnipotent, good Lord
To you alone belongs praise and glory, honor and blessing.
No one is worthy to breathe your name.

Be praised, my Lord, for all your creatures.
In the first place for the blessed Brother Sun who gives us the day
And enlightens us through You.
He is beautiful and radiant in his great splendor
Giving witness to You, most omnipotent One.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon and the stars
Formed by You so bright, precious, and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Wind
And the airy skies so cloudy and serene.
For every weather, be praised because it is life giving.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water,
So necessary yet humble, precious and chaste.

Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire who lights up the night.
He is beautiful and carefree, robust and fierce.

Be praised, my Lord, for our sister, Mother Earth,
Who nourishes and watches over us while bringing forth
Abundant fruits and colored flowers and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, for those who pardon through Your love
And bear witness and trial.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
For they will be crowned by you, Most High.

Be praised, my Lord, for our sister, bodily death whom no living being can escape.
Woe to those who die in sin.
Blessed are those who discover Your holy will.
The second death will do them no harm.

Praise and bless the Lord. Give thanks and serve God with great humility.
Corporate Prayer  
For Nuclear Disarmament

You have given us life, intelligence and the beauty of Creation, O Lord. Your good gifts were given so we might be stewards of all that is alive. In your mercy, help us turn from destruction, from the bombs and barricades. Lead us to life again, to affirmation of all goodness and to international disarmament. With your grace, may we begin to dismantle the bombs, beat the swords into plowshares and so transform the nuclear nightmare into the peace you have proposed. Hear our prayer, Lord, and guide us in your ways. Amen

From prayer by: Education for Justice

For a Reverent, Interdependent Relationship with Earth and all its People.

Creator of worlds beyond our knowing,  
This earth is known to us  
And often feels like ours.  
Yet where we walk and work  
And love and laugh  
And rest and play  
And swim and build  
And tend and teach  
And sleep and eat  
... and live...  
Is only for our use, today.  
May we walk as stewards...  
Lightly, mindfully, and gratefully-  
Amen.

For an End to Human Trafficking

Good and Provident God, you are the compassionate and loving Creator of all. With trust we claim your justice, mercy, compassion, and comfort for the millions affected by human trafficking in our world today. God of all goodness, give freedom to those who are bound by the chains of modern-day slavery. Comfort those who are trapped and exploited; heal their hurts; give them courage and hope. Awaken in the hearts of those who are buying, selling, and holding other human beings enslaved, a sense of righteousness and justice. Unsettle those whose apathy slows human trafficking to go unchallenged. Give wisdom and insight to all lawmakers. Give valor and integrity to those who enforce the laws. Holy Spirit, show each of us how to live as a hope-filled presence in our world until all God’s children are set free. Amen.
All Saints of the Franciscan Order

LITANY OF THE SAINTS AND BLESSED
OF THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY

Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.
Holy Mary, Queen of the Seraphic Order... Pray for us.
Holy Father, Pope Francis,
St. Bernard and companions, you first martyrs of the Franciscan Order,
St. Daniel and companions, you martyrs in Africa,
St. Peter Baptist and companions, called through the cross to life in Nagasaki (six Friar Minors, 17 of the Secular Franciscan Order),
St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, martyr, tireless in the spreading of the faith,
Blessed Apollinaris and companions, martyrs in Japan (18 Friar Minors, 27 of the Secular Franciscan Order),
Blessed Apollinaris of Fribourg (Switzerland), martyr of the French Revolution,
Blessed Engelbert Kollander who called his murderer "friend,"
St. Maximilian Kolbe who gave his life for his brother in Christ,
Saint (Padre) Pio of Pietrelcina marked with the stigmata of Jesus,
All the Saints and Blessed of the Franciscan Family... pray for us,
St. Anthony of Padua, powerful teacher of the Gospel life,
St. Ferdinand, king of Castile,
St. Louis, strong in faith,
St. Bonaventure, teacher of the Seraphic Order,
St. Roch, helper in times of the plague,
St. Bernardine of Siena, great preacher, unifier of east and west,
St. John of Capistrano, peacemaker and apostle of charity,
St. Lawrence of Brindisi, full of the Spirit of counsel and fortitude,
St. Vincent Palotti, pillar of the Church in troubled times,
St. John Mary Vianney, inspired by the Good Shepherd,
St. Joseph Cafasso, man of limitless patience,
St. Conrad of Parzham, mediator of divine mercy,
St. Pius X, full of apostolic zeal to renew everything in Christ,
Blessed John XXIII, humble and beloved pope,
Blessed Luchesius, first confessor of the Secular Franciscan Order,
Blessed Giles of Assisi, 3rd companion of St. Francis,
Blessed Contardo Ferrini, lay helper in a student community,
Blessed Joseph Freinademetz, example of missionary poverty in China,
All you holy and blessed confessors of the Franciscan Family... Pray for us.
St. Clare (Chiara, Clara), mother of the Poor Ladies of St. Damiano,
St. Elizabeth of Hungary, mother of the poor and joyful in persecution,
St. Rose of Viterbo, model of perfection at the age of 18 years,
St. Agnes of Assisi, filled with the Seraphic Spirit,
St. Margaret of Cortona, great penitent,
St. Elizabeth of Portugal, exemplary mother and promoter of
peace,
St. Bridget of Sweden, gifted with extraordinary love for the Crucified (3rd Order, foundress of the Bridgetines),
St. Colette, great reformer with the Spirit of prayer,
St. Angela Merici, caring and wise educator of the youths (3rd Order, foundress of the Ursulines),
St. Veronica Giuliani, perfected by suffering and renunciation,
St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds,
St. Mary Magdalene Postel, lover of children,
Blessed Agnes of Prague, who spent her life caring for the homeless,
Blessed Angela of Foligno, rich in contemplation,
Blessed Crescentia, miraculously joyful in suffering,
Blessed Francisca Schervier, mother of the poor,
Blessed Josepha Rosello, full of love and care for the sick,
Blessed Maria Assunta Pallotta, missionary in China,
All you blessed and holy women of the Franciscan Family….. Pray for us. 
All you blessed women who have gone before us as Sisters and Associates of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate… Pray for us.
Praise the Lord all you His saints and all who fear Him, small and great. Let us rejoice and sing and give honor to the Lord our God. Let us pray:

Almighty eternal God, we remember all the Brothers and Sister of the Franciscan family whose life is perfected in You. We beg You because of so many people who pray for us. Give us, too, the promised land after this our sojourn in a foreign land as You have promised to those who love You. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

(Prayer and picture from website of Five Franciscan Martyrs’ Region—Secular Franciscan Order)
FRANCISCAN PLACES TO KNOW

Assisi
This little medieval town in the Umbrian region of Italy sits on the west side of Mt. Subasio and was the home of St. Francis and St. Clare.

San Rufino
Bishop Rufino for whom the Cathedral is named is credited with the conversion of Assisi to Christianity in the third Century. Both Clare and Francis were baptized here. Clare lived right off the square in front of the San Rufino Cathedral. Assisi.

Basilica of St. Clare
At the present time the original San Damino Cross is hanging here. This Basilica of St. Clare was built on the site of the Church of St. George, the first burial place of St. Francis and the site of his canonization just 2 years after his death.

Basilica of St. Francis
Francis’ body and the story of Francis’ life through Frescoes and relics are found here. The first cornerstone was laid by Pope Gregory soon after Francis’ death and canonization.

Portiuncula
The Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels replaced the small St. Mary of the Angels, the Portiuncula, located in the valley below Assisi. The church was given to Francis by the Benedictines at the beginning of the Order of Lesser Ones. It was here that Francis accepted Clare as his follower. It was here that the Chapter of Mats was held. It was here that Francis died in 1226. This Basilica was begun in 1569.

Rome:
St. John Lateran
Francis traveled here in 1209 to request approval of his new way of life from Pope Innocent III. The statue of St. Francis as Patron of Italy commissioned by Mussolini is across the street.
San Damiano
Francis heard a voice from the cross: “Francis, go repair my house, which, as you can see, is falling into ruin.” It is here that Francis began to repair the church literally. It became the home for St. Clare.

Rivotorto
The early beginnings of the small community of followers of Francis came here from Rome when the rule was approved. These stone buildings are located within the present church dedicated to Our Lady of Consolation.

La Verna
Sanctuary in the Tuscan territory where Francis visited often. He received the Stigmata on his last visit in 1224 and composed the praises of God here in the same year.

The Carceri
Located right outside the walls of Assisi on Mount Subasio. Francis spent much time here in prayer in solitude, time critical to his conversion.

Rieti Valley: Francis’ Four Sanctuaries
Fonte Columbo
This is the sanctuary where Francis put together the final version of the Rule for his brothers. This is thought to be where he received his eye cauterization 1226 as well.

Puggio Bustone
One of the most impressive of Franciscan places; it is high, rugged and remote. It is here that Francis greeted the people with “Good Morning, Good People.” He found solitude, direction and inspiration for the Order here.

La Foresta
Francis was sent here to heal after the stigmata when his eyes were also worsening. Many people came to see Francis here. There is said to have been a miracles of the grapes here.

Greccio
Another mountain retreat where Francis sought solitude. It is here that Francis popularized displaying the Christmas creche in 1223. Francis used very concrete means to awaken faith in the lives of the people.

Compiled by Sr. Peg Quinn
CELEBRATED FEASTS

April 16: The Feast of the Profession of St. Francis - 1209 - Innocent III accepted the first rule and the Order received its canonical status. On this day we as Franciscans renew our commitments.

August 2: The Feast of Our Lady of the Angels of the Portiuncula - is remembered because the chapel of Our Lady of Angels near Assisi was important to Francis. Here the order had its beginning, Clare was received and Francis died. It is also considered the founding birthday of our Congregation and the founding of Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home (OLA) in Joliet.

August 11: The Feast of St. Clare - For many years this feast day of St. Clare was the day for postulants to be received and habits to be given to novices.

September 17: The Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis - commemorates Francis’ reception of the wounds of Jesus in his own body in 1224. Francis had a burning love for the Crucified.

October 3: The Transitus of St. Francis - remembers the death of our Father Francis, his moving or transitioning from this life to the next. The story of his life and death is a rich look at the journey of a man to “love with his whole being, to love God, the poor Christ, Lady Poverty, his brothers and sisters and all creation.”

October 4: The Feast of St. Francis - is one of our two key community celebrations as Congregation along with December 8. We celebrate the joy and peace given by Francis.

November 17: The Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary - is remembered in a simple way. She is considered the founder of the third order Regular. Tradition connects this day with the giving of apples as St. Elizabeth did for the poor in her time.

November 24: All Souls of the Seraphic Order - A day of gratitude to remember those Franciscans who have gone before and on whose shoulders we humbly stand.

November 29: All Saints of the Franciscan Order - On this day we remember the rich heritage that is ours as Followers of Francis and Clare through the lives of the saints throughout the centuries. Included is a litany of the Franciscan Saints.

December 8: Feast of the Immaculate Conception - As our second key community celebration, this day commemorates and renews our dedication to Mary Immaculate, bearer of the Word Incarnate.
The Tau is a letter of the Hebrew and Greek alphabet. The origin of its use as a sign is found in Ezekiel.

In 1215, at the Fourth Lateran Council, Pope Innocent III made reference to the sign of the Tau. He recalled Ezekiel 9:4, where the prophet envisions a linen-clad man who went throughout Jerusalem, marking the foreheads of those who lamented the sins of their city. The Pope set forth the Tau as the sign of penance and renewal in Christ. The Pope’s speech had a profound impact on St. Francis. Francis embraced the sign of the Tau as an expression of Christ’s cross. The Tau represented the depths of God’s love for us in Christ crucified. The Tau became a treasured symbol for Francis.

Bonaventure wrote in *The Minor Legend of Saint Francis* that Francis venerated the Tau symbol with great affection. “He often spoke of it with eloquence and used it at the beginning of any action.” He signed it with his own hand in letters he sent. “It was as if his whole desire were, according to the prophetic text (Ezekiel 9:4), to mark with a Tau the foreheads of those moaning and grieving, of those truly converted to Jesus Christ.”

Thomas of Celano noted that “Francis favored the sign of the Tau over all others. With it alone he signed letters he sent and painted it on the walls” of all the places in which he stayed.

(Information from this article comes from *Francis of Assisi, Early Documents, Volume 2.*)
The Crèche

Francis was always looking for new ways to make God’s truths easily understandable to others. At Christmas 1223, while visiting the town of Greccio, Italy, he had the idea of showing people what Jesus’ birthplace must have been like. He found a mountain cave near the village and fashioned it into a rough stable. St. Bonaventure (d. 1274), in his *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, gave this account of what followed. “Then he prepared a manager and brought hay and an ox and an ass to the place appointed. The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise. The man of God (St. Francis) stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy. Then he preached to the people around the Nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, he called Him the Babe of Bethlehem.

Saint Francis is also considered the “father of the Christmas carol” for having been the first to include carols in Christmas worship services. As a boy, Francis had perhaps learned more in the school of the troubadours— itinerant composers and performers of songs—than from the priest of St. George’s of Assisi, where his father had sent him for an education. That joy was contagious, and still is.
The Franciscan symbol of the “crossed arms” is the most familiar to us. It depicts the arms of JESUS and Francis crossed over the TAU, both bearing the imprint of the Crucifixion nails. Francis’ arm is enclosed in the sleeve of his habit. It is a celebration of that remarkable gift of grace which St. Francis received on Mt. Alverna, September 17th - the Stigmata… the bearing in his own body the marks of his crucified Lord.

Just before he died on October 3, Francis stretched out his arms over his brothers in the form of a CROSS and blessed them in the power and in the name of their crucified Lord. Then he told them, “I have done what was mine to do; may Christ teach you what is yours.

So we consider this symbol of our Franciscan life a true expression of the life of St. Francis, as well as a reminder to us of our own Christian call and sincerity of response. It is symbolic of the challenge and the mark we have accepted - to transform our lives, and become faithful followers of Christ, by living the gospel life, in the spirit of our Seraphic Father Francis of Assisi.
The San Damiano Cross is the one St. Francis was praying before when he received the commission from the Lord to rebuild the Church. He was called to serve the Church in need of “repair.” He responded saying,

Great and glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart

and give me genuine faith, firm hope and perfect love.

Grant to me, O Lord, true perception and understanding

so that I may fulfill your Holy Will

The original cross presently hangs in Santa Chiara (St. Clare) Church in Assisi, Italy. All Franciscans cherish this cross as the symbol of their mission from God. The cross is called an icon cross because it contains images of people who have a part in the meaning of the cross. The tradition of such crosses began in the eastern Church and was transported by Serbian monks to the Umbrian district of Italy.

The San Damiano Cross was one of a number of crosses painted with similar figures during the 12th century in Umbria. The name of the painter is unknown.

The smaller symbols found on the San Damiano Cross are described on the next two pages.

Brief Explanation by: Fr. Michael Scanlon, T.O.R.  
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Province, USA
The History of the San Damiano Crucifix

An unknown Umbrian artist painted the Crucifix Icon in the 12th Century. There is strong Syrian influence, and history tells us that there had been some Syrian monks in the area. It is painted on wood (walnut) to which cloth had been glued. It is about 190 cm. high, 120 cms. wide and 12 cms. thick. Most likely it was painted for San Damiano to hang over the Altar, as the Blessed Sacrament was not reserved in non-parish churches of those times and especially those that had been abandoned and neglected as we know San Damiano had been. In 1257 the Poor Clares left San Damiano for San Giorgio and took the Crucifix with them. They carefully kept the Cross for 700 years.

In Holy Week of 1957, it was placed on public view for the first time, over the new Altar in San Giorgio's Chapel in the Basilica of St Clare of Assisi.

The Icon of the Transfigured Christ

For Eastern Christians the Icon is a representation of the living God; and by coming into its presence it becomes a personal encounter with the sacred, through the grace of the Holy Spirit. The San Damiano Icon is, then, a personal encounter with the transfigured Christ - God made man. The Crucifix contains the story of the death, resurrection and ascension into glory. It expresses the total and universal Paschal Mystery of Christ. It invites us all to take part in it with a lively and lived faith, just as St Francis did. Christ's saving death is shown in John's Gospel in its serene majesty, and the Crucifix portrays this in picture form. It is not surprising that Saint Francis was attracted to this Icon and that the inspiration for his life came from this Christ who spoke to him "Go repair my Church .... "

The Figure of the Christ

The central figure of the icon is Christ, not only because of the relative size, but because Christ is a figure of light dominating the scene and giving light to the other figures "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12). Christ stands upright, not nailed. The eyes of Jesus are open: He looks out to the world, which He has saved. He is alive, the one who is eternal. Jesus' vestment is a simple loin cloth - a symbol of both High Priest and Victim. The chest, throat and neck are very strong, Jesus gives power of re-creation to His Disciples (John 22:23). He breathed on His Disciples (John 20:22), the Greek word used recalls the moment of Creation (Gen 2:7). The shadow over the face of Jesus is increased by the fact the halo and face are tilted forward on the original Icon. The humanity of Christ veils the true glory of the Word who lives in the super luminous darkness of the Godhead. Behind the outstretched arms of Christ is His empty tomb, shown as a black rectangle.
The Medallion and Inscription

The Ascension is portrayed within this circle of red: Christ is breaking out of the circle, holding a golden cross which is now His Royal Scepter. His garments are gold - a symbol of royalty and victory. His red scarf is a sign of His Dominion and Kingship, exercised in love. Angels welcome Him into Heaven. IHS are the first three letters of the name of Jesus. The little bracket above indicates it is shorthand. NAZARE is the Nazarene; REX is 'king' and IJDEORUM is 'of the Jews', which is reported in St John's Gospel "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews"

The Hand of the Father

From within the semi-circle at the very top of the Icon, He whom no eye has seen reveals Himself in a benediction. This blessing is given by the right hand of God with the finger extended - the Holy Spirit. The Father gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to all because of the merits of the Christ's Pas

The Mystical Vine

Around the Cross are various calligraphic scrolls which may signify the mystical vine "I am the vine, you are the branches... " (John 15), which also contain the words "Greater love has no one than this that one lays down one’s life for one’s friends." At the base of the cross there seems to be a section that looks like a rock - the symbol of the Church. The seashells are symbols of eternity - a mystery hidden in the vast and timeless sea of eternity is revealed.

Mary and John

As in John's Gospel, Mary and John are placed side by side. Mary’s mantle is white meaning victory (Rev 3:5), purification (Rev 7:14); and good deeds (Rev 19:8). The gems on the mantle refer to the graces of the Holy Spirit.

The dark red worn under the mantle indicate intense love, while the inner dress is purple - the Ark of the Covenant (Ex 26: 1-4). Mary’s left hand is raised to her cheek - her acceptance and love of John, and her right hand points to John while her eyes proclaim acceptance of Christ's words "Woman, behold your son... " (John 19:26). The blood drips onto John at this moment. John's mantle is rose color indicating eternal wisdom, while his tunic is white - purity. His position is between Jesus and Mary as is fitting for the disciple loved by both of them. He looks at Mary "Son, behold your Mother", but points to Christ.
Numbers

There are 33 figures in the Icon - Two Christ figures, 1 Hand of the Father, 5 major figures, 2 smaller figures, 14 angels, 2 unknown at His hands, 1 small boy, 6 unknown at the bottom of the Cross and one rooster. There are 33 nail heads along the frame just inside the shells and seven around the halo.

The Other Major Figures:

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene is next to Christ making her very special; her hand is on her chin indicating a confided secret "He is risen." She wears scarlet, which is a symbol of love; her mantle of blue deepens

Mary Clopas

Some authorities make her the mother of James. She wears garments of an earthen color, a symbol of humility, and her light green mantle - hope. Her admiration of Jesus is indicated by the gesture of her hand.

The Centurion of Capernaum

He holds a piece of wood in his left hand, indicating his building of the Synagogue (Luke 7: 1 - 10). The little boy beyond his shoulder is his son healed by Jesus. The three heads behind the boy show "he and his whole household believed" (John 4: 45 - 54). He has extended his thumb and two fingers, a symbol of the Trinity, while his two closed fingers symbolize the hidden mystery of the two natures of Jesus the Christ. "Truly He is the Son of God" (Mark 15:39).

The Lesser Figures:

Longinus

The Roman soldier who pierced Jesus' side with a lance.

Stephen

 Tradition gives this name to the soldier who offered Jesus a sponge soaked in vinegar wine after Jesus cried out "I thirst" (John 19: 28 -30).
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF SISTERS 2015

Alabama: 2
Arizona: 2
California: 1
Colorado: 3
Florida: 3
OLA: 39
OLA Village: 23
Congregational Houses: 9
City of Joliet: 17
Other Joliet diocese: 13
Other Illinois: 8
Massachusetts: 1
Michigan: 1
Minnesota: 1
Ohio: 13
Oregon: 1
New York: 1
Wisconsin: 5
Dioc. Goiania, Brazil: 9
Dioc. Jatai, Brazil: 2
Prelancy of Cristolandia: 2
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF ASSOCIATES, 2015

Arizona 2
Chicago dioc. 17
Colorado 4
Florida 1
Joliet dioc. 59
Other Illinois 16
Kansas 1
Kentucky 1
Indiana 2
Maryland 2
Minnesota 1
Missouri 1
New York 2
No. Carolina 1
Ohio 12
So. Dakota 1
Wisconsin 3
Goias, Brazil 22
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>THEMATICAL RESOURCES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design for Life</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature and Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celibate Chastity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
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<td>Obedience</td>
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<td>Prayer &amp; Liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministries</td>
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<td>Vocation &amp; Formation</td>
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<td>Government</td>
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<td>Cross</td>
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<td>Word</td>
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<td>Eucharist</td>
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<td>Dependence on Father</td>
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<td>Women of Prayer</td>
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<td>Simple Lives</td>
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<td>Compassionate</td>
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