



Third Order  
The Society of St Francis

# Walking Transitus Francis and Us

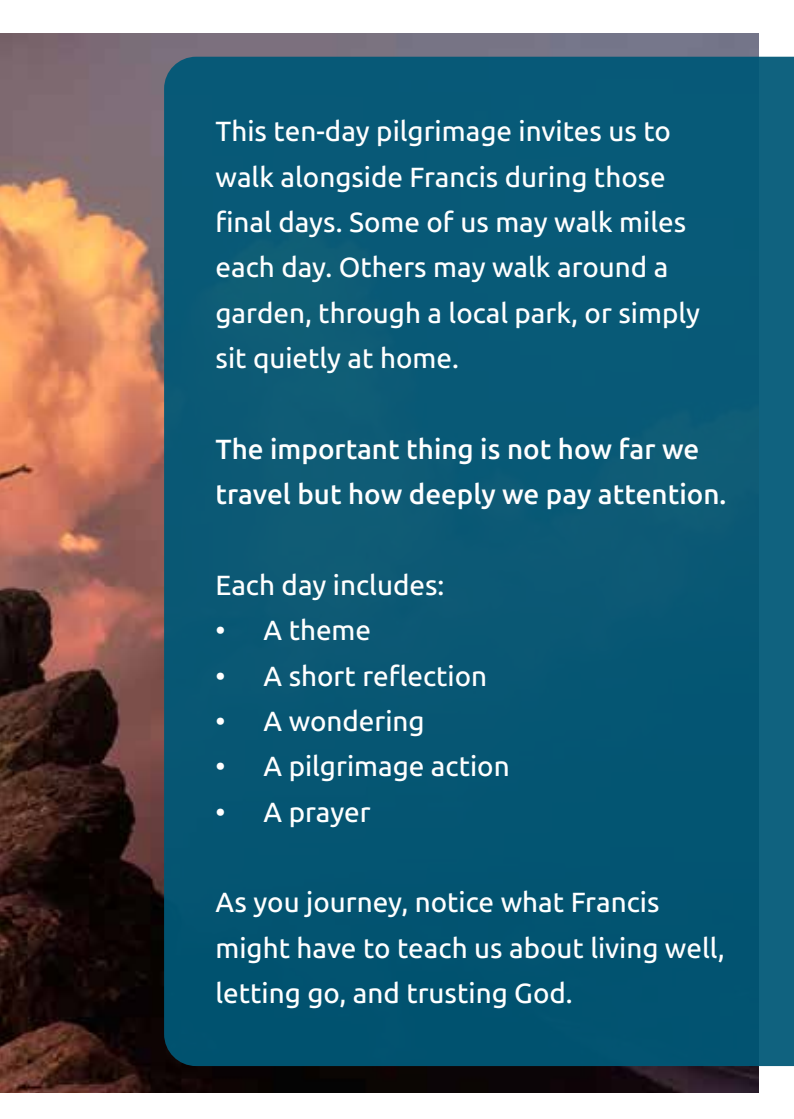
A Ten-Day Pilgrimage of Letting Go,  
Trust, and Returning to God

## A Ten-Day Pilgrimage of Letting Go, Trust, and Returning to God

In October 1226, St Francis of Assisi reached the end of his earthly journey. His companions gathered around him at the Portiuncula chapel, the small place where his Franciscan journey had begun. Francis knew he was dying, yet he faced death not with fear but with trust. He called death “Sister Death” and welcomed her as part of God’s creation.

The word *Transitus* means “crossing over” or “passing through.” For Francis, death was not simply an ending but a passage into the fullness of God’s love.





This ten-day pilgrimage invites us to walk alongside Francis during those final days. Some of us may walk miles each day. Others may walk around a garden, through a local park, or simply sit quietly at home.

The important thing is not how far we travel but how deeply we pay attention.

Each day includes:

- A theme
- A short reflection
- A wondering
- A pilgrimage action
- A prayer

As you journey, notice what Francis might have to teach us about living well, letting go, and trusting God.

**DAY 1:**

## Beginning Again

### **WONDERING**

Where did your own spiritual journey begin?

### **PILGRIMAGE ACTION**

Walk slowly today. Reflect on people, places, and experiences that first awakened your awareness of God.

### **PRAYER**

Lord, help me remember where your love first touched my life.

May I walk today with gratitude for the journey so far. Amen.



## REFLECTION

As Francis approached death, he asked to be taken back to the Portiuncula, the small chapel he called “the little portion.” It was here that he first heard the Gospel call to live simply and follow Christ. Thomas of Celano tells us that Francis loved this place above all others. Near the end of life, he wanted to finish where his journey had begun.

Pilgrimage is often imagined as travelling somewhere new. Yet sometimes the deepest journeys involve returning to the places, memories, and moments that first awakened our hearts. Francis reminds us that spiritual growth is not always about moving on; sometimes it is about rediscovering the grace that first called us.

A person's silhouette is shown from behind, walking through a field of tall grass. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, golden glow that filters through the grass. The background is a clear, light blue sky. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

**DAY 2:**

## Travelling Light

### **WONDERING**

What am I carrying that I no longer need?

### **PILGRIMAGE ACTION**

As you walk, imagine placing one burden into God's hands.

### **PRAYER**

God of freedom,  
teach me what to hold  
and what to release.  
Amen.

## REFLECTION

Throughout his life Francis practised letting go. Wealth, status, possessions, certainty, even reputation—he gradually released them into God’s hands. Near the end of his life he owned almost nothing, yet many people described him as deeply joyful.

Pilgrims know that carrying too much makes the road harder. Francis discovered that poverty was not about deprivation but freedom. We all carry burdens: worries, regrets, expectations, resentments, responsibilities. Some are necessary; others weigh us down. The Transitus invites us to ask what we might release in order to walk more freely with God.



**DAY 3:**

# The Gift of Companions

## **WONDERING**

Who has helped me become the person I am today?

## **PILGRIMAGE ACTION**

Give thanks for three people who have accompanied you through life.

## **PRAYER**

Thank you, Lord,  
for all who have walked with me.  
Bless them with your peace.  
Amen.



## REFLECTION

The early Franciscan accounts tell us that Francis did not die alone. His brothers gathered around him, praying, singing, listening, and weeping. They accompanied him during his final hours. Their presence mattered.

Francis understood that discipleship was never a solitary achievement. We become who we are through friendship, encouragement, challenge, forgiveness, and love. Pilgrimage may sometimes feel lonely, but none of us walks entirely alone. We are carried by countless relationships, both past and present. The Transitus reminds us to treasure the companions who have shared our journey.



**DAY 4:**

# Listening to the Story

## **WONDERING**

What story is shaping my life today?

## **PILGRIMAGE ACTION**

Read a Gospel passage during your walk or pause to recall a favourite Bible story.

## **PRAYER**

Speak to me through your story,  
Lord Jesus,  
and help me follow your way.  
Amen.



## REFLECTION

As he neared death, Francis asked for passages from John's Gospel to be read aloud. The story of Jesus had shaped his life, and he wanted to hear it once more. His final days were surrounded by scripture, prayer, and remembrance.

The stories we return to reveal what matters most. Some stories leave us fearful or divided. Others call us towards compassion, courage, and hope. Francis spent a lifetime listening to the story of Christ. The Transitus invites us to reflect on the stories that guide our own lives and shape our choices.

## DAY 5:

# Blessing Others

### WONDERING

Who needs my blessing today?

### PILGRIMAGE ACTION

As you walk, silently bless the people you pass, the homes you see, and the community around you.

### PRAYER

May your blessing  
flow through me, Lord,  
bringing hope and peace  
wherever I go.  
Amen.





## REFLECTION

One of Francis' final acts was to bless his brothers. Knowing that he would soon leave them, he offered words of encouragement, peace, and hope. Even in weakness he continued to give rather than grasp.

Blessing is one of the simplest and most powerful gifts we can offer. A blessing does not solve problems or remove suffering. Instead, it reminds people that they are seen, valued, and held within God's love. Francis teaches us that every stage of life offers opportunities to encourage others.

## DAY 6:

# Walking with Sister Death

### WONDERING

How do I feel when I think about death?

### PILGRIMAGE ACTION

Walk quietly for a few minutes, reflecting on the preciousness of life and the gift of each day.

### PRAYER

Lord, help me live fully and trust you with all that lies beyond my knowing.  
Amen.



A person is holding a glowing lantern on a beach at dusk. The background shows the ocean and a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on a dark blue semi-transparent box.

## REFLECTION

In the Canticum of the Creatures Francis wrote: "Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape." These words remain among the most remarkable in Christian spirituality.

Francis was not romanticising death. He experienced pain, illness, and fear like anyone else. Yet he refused to let fear have the final word. Instead, he recognised death as part of life's journey and entrusted himself to God. The Transitus invites us to face our mortality honestly while living each day more fully and gratefully.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small amount of dark brown soil. The background is blurred, showing a warm, golden light, possibly from a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and grounded.

## DAY 7:

# Returning to the Earth

### WONDERING

What does humility mean in my life today?

### PILGRIMAGE ACTION

Pause to notice the ground beneath your feet, the soil, grass, stones, or sand that support your journey.

### PRAYER

Creator God,  
keep me humble, grateful,  
and aware of my place  
within your creation. Amen.

A hand is shown holding a small amount of soil, with a sunset or sunrise in the background. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal box containing text.

## REFLECTION

According to the early sources, Francis asked to be laid upon the bare earth as death approached. Having embraced Lady Poverty throughout his life, he wished to possess nothing at the end.

This simple gesture speaks powerfully today. We come from the earth and depend upon it every day. Humility is not thinking less of ourselves but remembering that we belong within a larger story. The Transitus reminds us of our dependence upon God, one another, and the created world that sustains us.

## DAY 8:

# Joining the Song of Creation

### WONDERING

What is creation teaching me today?

### PILGRIMAGE ACTION

Walk attentively. Listen for birdsong, wind, water, insects, or the sounds of life around you.

### PRAYER

May I join the song of creation and learn again to praise you with joy.  
Amen.



A lark is perched on a mossy rock on the left side of the image. The background is a warm, golden sunset sky. The text is overlaid on a dark teal rounded rectangle on the right side of the image.

## REFLECTION

A beloved Franciscan tradition tells how larks gathered near the Portiuncula as Francis died. Whether remembered as history or symbol, the story captures something important about Francis' relationship with creation.

Throughout his life he saw the natural world as a family of praise: Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Fire, Sister Water. Creation was never merely scenery but a companion in worship. As we walk today, we are invited to notice again the beauty, fragility, and sacredness of the world around us.



**DAY 9:**

## Crossing Over

### **WONDERING**

What transition am I facing at this time in my life?

### **PILGRIMAGE ACTION**

When you come to a gate, bridge, path junction, or doorway, pause and reflect on the changes you are currently navigating.

### **PRAYER**

God of every journey,  
walk with me through  
every transition and change.  
Amen.



## REFLECTION

The word *Transitus* means crossing over, passing through, or making a journey from one place to another. Francis' death became a symbol of this deeper spiritual movement into God's presence.

Yet life itself is filled with smaller transitus moments. We move through grief, change, ageing, new beginnings, endings, uncertainty, and hope. Every transition asks something of us. Every crossing invites trust. Francis teaches us that God is present not only at the destination but also in the crossing itself.

**DAY 10:**

# Homecoming

## **WONDERING**

What do I hope others will remember about the way I have travelled through life?

## **PILGRIMAGE ACTION**

End your walk slowly.

Give thanks for the journey behind you and for the road still ahead.

## **PRAYER**

Into your hands, loving God,  
I place my life, my journey,  
my hopes, and my future.  
May I walk in your peace  
today and always. Amen.

A person in a white shirt and shorts is walking away from the camera down a path in a field of tall grass. The sky is a mix of orange and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and peaceful.

## REFLECTION

When Francis died on the evening of 3 October 1226, his companions grieved deeply. Yet they also believed that he was returning to the God he had loved and served throughout his life. Bonaventure later described this moment as a homecoming rather than a defeat.

Every pilgrimage eventually reaches its destination. The Christian hope is that our final destination is not emptiness or isolation but love. The *Transitus* encourages us to live today in the light of that hope—walking gently, loving generously, and trusting that God accompanies us every step of the way.

## Final Blessing

May Christ be your companion on the road.  
May Francis encourage you  
to walk simply and joyfully.  
May Sister Death remind you  
to treasure each day.  
May Brother Sun warm you,  
Sister Moon guide you,  
and all creation sing alongside you.  
And when life's many journeys  
and crossings are complete,  
may you discover that the God  
who called you at the beginning  
has been walking beside you all along.  
Peace and all good.