



30 DAYS OF A PEACE PILGRIMAGE

*Guided  
By Historic  
Franciscan Writers*

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Third Order  
The Society of St Francis

# *The Legend of the Three Companions*

‘Since you speak of peace, all the more so  
must you have it in your hearts.

Let none be provoked to anger or scandal by you,  
but rather may they be drawn to peace and good will,  
to benignity and concord through your gentleness.”

Chapter 58

# *Walking in the Footsteps of Peace*

This pilgrimage is designed for people wanting to spend time reflecting on and praying for peace.

For some people this pilgrimage will involve physically walking .

For others, because of personal circumstances, it will be an spiritual pilgrimage. But however we undertake this pilgrimage time the following thoughts and quotes are to help pilgrims reflect not only on peace in the world, but also on the rich Franciscan tradition of peacemaking, simplicity, reconciliation, contemplation, humility, and love.

**PEACE BEGINS WITH CONVERSION**

## QUOTE

“The Lord led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body.”

The Testament of St Francis

## *Reflection*

Peace often begins where fear ends. Francis discovered that what he most resisted became the doorway to grace. Francis discovered peace not in isolation but in crossing boundaries. His embrace of the leper became a turning point in his spiritual life.



### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Today notice who or what you instinctively avoid.*

DAY 2

PEACE AS GIFT

QUOTE

“And after the Lord gave me some brothers...”

— The Testament

*Reflection*

Violence often grows from fear and scarcity.  
Peace grows from gratitude.  
Everything is a gift.  
Francis continually speaks of life as gift:  
brothers, creation, faith, the Gospel, daily bread.



**PILGRIMAGE INVITATION**

*Walk or mediate today giving thanks silently for small things.*

## QUOTE

“May the Lord give you peace.”

— Greeting revealed to Francis of Assisi  
(*Testament 23*)

## Reflection

Peace was not simply an idea for Francis — it became the way he moved through the world. Before preaching, he would first offer peace to those he met. Francis believed peace begins in the heart and then flows outward into relationships, communities, and creation itself. The famous “Peace Prayer” was written centuries later, yet it still echoes the spirit of Franciscan living: becoming instruments of God’s reconciling love.



### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Quietly bless the people you pass or meet today.  
Pray in your heart: May the Lord give you peace.*

## QUOTE

Francis...”a brother among brothers,  
the least among the lesser, and in his life and habits,  
he strove to be like them as much as possible”

Celano’s ‘First Life’  
Chapter 15, Paragraph 38

## Reflection

Humility is not self-hatred, but is freedom from needing to be above others. As Francis also said: “A person is what he is in the sight of God and nothing more” (Admonition XIX). True peace often begins when we no longer need to prove ourselves, defend our importance, or compare our lives with others. Humility allows us to live more simply, receive others more gently, and rest more deeply in God’s love.



### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Notice moments where ego, comparison or critique  
disturb your sense of peace.*

## QUOTE

“Where there is poverty and joy,  
there is neither greed nor avarice”

(Admonition XXVII:  
“Of the Virtues putting Vices to flight”)

## Reflection

Much conflict grows from fear of losing control. ‘Our hearts will be more peaceful when we stop anxiously striving; when we recognise that we cannot control life; when we oppose the vices which can torment us and prefer radical simplicity, practice giving thanks for *this* moment, and exercise humility. These are all aspects of the monastic vow of *conversio morum* – conversion of life – which Francis clearly practiced by renouncing his own will and being ‘indifferent’ to pleasure or pain to the extent that he renounced the former and praised God through his experience of the latter.’  
(*A Saint for All Seasons*, Ch.1)

### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Walk or live lightly today.  
Carry or use only what you truly need.*

## QUOTE

“Francis preached to the birds,  
and the birds listened quietly.”

— The Little Flowers (Chapter XVI)

## Reflection

Peace includes our relationship with the natural world. Kinship with all creatures mattered deeply to Francis, who saw creation as brother and sister. He believed the world was not simply a resource to use, but a gift to cherish.

When we slow down enough to notice creation with gratitude and wonder, our hearts often become gentler, quieter, and more attentive to God’s presence within all living things.



### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Walk or slow down life enough to notice  
birdsong, wind, water, and silence.*

## QUOTE

“No one enters into the joy of contemplation without silence and rest.”

— based on themes from  
The Journey of the Mind into God  
by Bonaventure

## Reflection

Peace is not simply the absence of noise or conflict. It is the quiet rootedness that grows when we stop striving and allow ourselves to rest in God. Bonaventure understood contemplation as a journey from distraction into divine love. In silence and stillness, the soul slowly becomes gentler, less anxious, and more open to the presence of God within ordinary life.



### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Walk and live more slowly today.*

*Leave space for silence.*

## THEME

## LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

‘Loving one another with the charity of Christ, let the love you have in your hearts be shown outwardly in your deeds so that compelled by such an example, the sisters may also grow in the love of God and charity for one another.’

(the Testament of St Clare)

*Reflection*

Francis carried peace wherever he went. Before preaching, he would first greet people with words of peace, believing that reconciliation begins long before arguments are solved or divisions healed. Peace was not weakness or avoidance, but a way of seeing others as sisters and brothers before enemies or strangers. The well-known “Peace Prayer” was written centuries later, yet it still reflects something true about the Franciscan spirit: becoming instruments of God’s peace in a wounded world.



## PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Notice how you respond to  
those walking or living with you.*

## THEME

## BEARING WEAKNESS GENTLY

“Blessed is the servant  
who bears calmly from another all weakness  
that he would wish to be borne by himself.”

Francis' Admonition XIV:  
Of True Correction.

*Reflection*

Francis knew that communities are made up of fragile and imperfect people. Peace grows when we carry one another's weaknesses with compassion rather than irritation or judgement. Patience is not passive resignation but an act of love. To bear gently with others — as we hope they will bear gently with us — is part of the slow work of reconciliation and peace-making.



## PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Today practise gentleness  
when you feel frustrated with people*

## QUOTE

“The brothers... can live spiritually among the Saracens and non-believers in two ways. One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes, but to be subject to every human creature for God’s sake and to acknowledge that they are Christians.’

(Earlier Rule, Chapter XVI)

## Reflection

Francis believed peace begins when we stop seeing others as enemies or strangers. He crossed boundaries of religion, class, fear, and prejudice with humility and openness. Real peace is not won through arguments alone, but through encounter, respect, listening, and recognising the humanity of those we call “other.”



### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Pray today for those considered “other.”*

## DAY 11 PEACE THROUGH LISTENING

### THEME

# PRESENCE OVER CONTROL

### QUOTE

“He preached by his deeds no less than by his words.”

— The Major Legend of St Francis, XII  
St Bonaventure:

## ✿ Reflection

Peaceful people often listen more than they speak. Francis understood that deep listening is an act of humility and love. In a noisy and hurried world, silence can soften anger, deepen compassion, and make space for God and neighbour alike. Often we rush to correct, defend, or control. Yet peace grows when people feel heard, valued, and received without judgement. Francis preached not only through words, but through attentive presence and gentle living.



### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Spend part of today in silence.*

## DAY 12 PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

### THEME

# HEALING CONFLICT

### QUOTE

“ There is not any Brother in the world who has sinned – however much he could have sinned – who, after he has looked into your eyes, would ever depart without your mercy, if he is looking for mercy.”

Saint Francis of Assisi: The rule of 1221  
( the Earlier Rule : Chapter 11.)

## Reflection

Peace is active work. Francis did not avoid conflict or pretend divisions did not exist. Instead, he tried to bring healing where relationships had broken down and bitterness had taken root. Reconciliation requires courage, patience, humility, and a willingness to listen deeply. Harmony is rarely created instantly. Like sowing seeds, peace grows slowly through small acts of mercy, understanding, forgiveness, and honest conversation.



### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Reflect on a relationship needing healing.*

THEME

PEACE AND CONTEMPLATION

QUOTE

Gaze upon him, consider him,  
contemplate him,  
as you desire to imitate him”

(Second letter to Agnes of Prague)

✿ *Reflection*

Contemplation slowly reshapes the heart. In stillness we begin to see the world differently – less through anxiety, judgement, or distraction, and more through love and attentiveness. Clare understood that peace grows by keeping our gaze upon Christ. The more deeply we learn to contemplate, the more gently and compassionately we begin to live among others.



PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Sit quietly outdoors for ten minutes today.*

**DAY 14** PEACE THROUGH COMPASSION

**THEME**

**TENDERNESS TOWARD SUFFERING**

**QUOTE**

“His love overflowed not only toward people in need but even toward dumb animals, reptiles, birds, and all other creatures.”

— The First Life of St Francis,  
Thomas of Celano

*Reflection*

Peace grows through compassion. Francis believed that every creature was worthy of tenderness because all life comes from God. Compassion means allowing the suffering of others to touch our hearts rather than hardening ourselves or turning away. In a wounded world, peace begins when we notice pain, respond with mercy, and recognise our deep connectedness with all living things.



**PILGRIMAGE INVITATION**

*Notice suffering around you without turning away.*

THEME

PEACE AND CONTEMPLATION

QUOTE

Gaze upon him, consider him,  
contemplate him,  
as you desire to imitate him”

(Second letter to Agnes of Prague)

✿ *Reflection*

Contemplation slowly reshapes the heart. In stillness we begin to see the world differently – less through anxiety, judgement, or distraction, and more through love and attentiveness. Clare understood that peace grows by keeping our gaze upon Christ. The more deeply we learn to contemplate, the more gently and compassionately we begin to live among others.



PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Sit quietly outdoors for ten minutes today.*

THEME  
INNER FREEDOM

QUOTE

“If we endure suffering patiently and joyfully for love of Christ, here is perfect joy.”

— The Little Flowers of St Francis, Chapter VIII

“If, when we arrive soaked with rain and frozen with cold... and endure it patiently and joyfully... O Brother Leo, write that here is perfect joy.”

— The Little Flowers of St Francis, Chapter VIII

*Reflection*

Francis believed peace could survive even hardship, rejection, and failure. Perfect joy was not comfort or success, but the inner freedom that comes from remaining rooted in love and trust in God. When we are no longer controlled by disappointment or the need for life to go our way, the heart slowly becomes more patient, gentle, and peaceful. In the story of Perfect Joy, Francis imagines the brothers cold, hungry, exhausted, and rejected at the door of their own friary. Yet he insists that joy can still remain. Not because suffering is good in itself, but because love is stronger than humiliation, hardship, or failure. Peace begins when we discover a deeper centre within ourselves — a place rooted not in comfort or success, but in love, trust, and the presence of God.

PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Notice how you respond when things become difficult today.  
What helps you remain patient, gentle, and grounded?*

## DAY 17 PEACE AND REVERENCE

### QUOTE

“And we must honour and revere all theologians and those who minister the most holy divine words, because they minister to us spirit and life.”

— St Francis of Assisi, The Testament

### Reflection

Peace often begins in the way we look at one another. Francis of Assisi believed reverence changes the world. To treat people, creation, and daily life with dignity, patience, and wonder is already a form of peacemaking. Reverence teaches us to listen rather than dominate and to notice the sacred worth of others. In a hurried world, holy attention itself becomes a path of peace.



### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Treat every person you meet today as carrying divine dignity.  
Pause before speaking, and practice the gift of deep attention.*

## THEME

## INNER HONESTY

## QUOTE

“No one enters into himself  
unless Christ is his guide.”

— St Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, IV.3



## Reflection

Peace is not found by pretending everything is well. It begins when we dare to look honestly within ourselves — at our fears, wounds, desires, contradictions, and hopes. Many of us spend enormous energy avoiding silence because silence can uncover truths we would rather not face. For Bonaventure, Christ is not a judge waiting to condemn us, but a companion who gently leads us inward. Self-knowledge without love can become despair. But self-knowledge guided by Christ becomes healing and freedom. Francis of Assisi discovered this too. His peace did not come from perfection, but from allowing God to meet him truthfully in weakness, uncertainty, and vulnerability. The journey of peace always includes the courage to become more honest — with God, with ourselves, and with one another.

### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Spend time today in silence. What truth about yourself  
might God be gently inviting you to notice?*

## THEME

## FREEDOM FROM GRASPING

“Alone in all Saint Francis was with poverty’s rich Lord  
And Lady Poverty he called his calling sped abroad:  
Il Poverello, on we went as well you know it must  
Towards that aged citadel along its song of dust.”

— John Bradburne, *An Ascent* (1971)

Source: From *An Ascent* by John Bradburne OFS, the Franciscan poet, pilgrim, and missionary who lived among people with leprosy in Zimbabwe and was later killed during the civil conflict there.

## Reflection

Francis called poverty “Lady Poverty” because he believed freedom begins when we loosen our grip on possessions, status, certainty, and control. Poverty of spirit is not about rejecting the goodness of the world, but about learning to live more lightly within it. John Bradburne, who wrote these lines while living simply among people with leprosy in Zimbabwe, understood something of this freedom himself. His life became a witness that peace grows where there is simplicity, gratitude, companionship, and trust in God. When we no longer build our identity around what we possess, we become more open to love, mercy, and the needs of others. Peace often begins with discovering that enough is already enough.

## PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*What do you cling to most tightly.*

## QUOTE

“Let all who come among them,  
whether friend or foe,  
thief or robber, be received kindly.”

— St Francis of Assisi,  
The Earlier Rule (Regula non bullata),  
Chapter 7



## Reflection

Francis knew that peace cannot grow where bitterness and revenge are allowed to take root. In The Earlier Rule of 1221, Francis instructed the brothers to respond to all people with mercy and hospitality, refusing hostility and retaliation even towards those considered enemies or outsiders.

Mercy is not weakness or pretending that hurt does not matter. Mercy is the courageous refusal to let anger harden the heart. It is the decision not to answer hostility with more hostility. In a wounded and divided world, kindness itself can become an act of peace-making.

### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Pray for someone you find difficult. Ask for the grace to see them with compassion rather than resentment.*

THEME

PEACE AND BLESSING

“The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord show his face to you and have mercy on you.  
The Lord turn his countenance to you and give you peace.”

— The Blessing Given to Brother Leo



Reflection

This blessing was written personally by St Francis for Brother Leo around 1224 on Mount La Verna. Francis adapted the ancient priestly blessing from Numbers 6:24–26 and wrote it in his own hand for his close companion.

Francis understood that peace is first received before it is offered to others.

We cannot endlessly give peace while living inwardly exhausted, fearful, or disconnected from love. The blessing given to Brother Leo reminds us that peace begins with knowing ourselves held within the mercy and care of God.

Sabbath peace invites us to stop striving for a moment and simply rest in being loved.

PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Receive the peace that God offers you.*

*Rest in the knowledge that you are loved, held, and blessed  
— and allow that peace to overflow naturally towards others.*

## DAY 22 PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

### THEME

# OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD

“While you proclaim peace with your lips,  
be careful to have it more fully in your hearts.”

— Legend of the Three Companions



## Reflection

In the *Legend of the Three Companions*, written by some of Francis' early companions, Francis reminds the brothers that peace must be more than words. It must take root within the heart and shape the whole of life. Francis knew that peace is courageous. It is easy to speak of peace while still carrying bitterness, fear, or hostility within us. But true peace refuses hatred and resists the temptation to dehumanise others. In a world still marked by violence, division, and revenge, Francis chose another way. His meeting with Sultan al-Kamil during the Crusades remains a powerful sign that encounter is possible even between enemies. Peace begins when we refuse to let hostility have the final word.

### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Pray for all places affected by war, violence, and division.*

THEME  
SOLIDARITY

“And they should rejoice when they live among people considered of little value and despised, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside.”

— St Francis of Assisi,  
The Earlier Rule (Regula non bullata),  
Chapter 9, 1221

Reflection

Francis believed that peace grows when we cross boundaries and draw close to those whom society ignores or rejects.

He did not romanticise poverty or suffering. Instead, he believed that God was especially present among those pushed to the margins. To walk with the poor was to rediscover our shared humanity.

Peace begins when people are no longer treated as invisible.



**PILGRIMAGE INVITATION**  
*Today notice whose suffering society overlooks.*

THEME

ECOLOGICAL PEACE

“Creatures are shadows, echoes, pictures, vestiges, likenesses and spectacles set before us to assist us in contemplating God.”

— St Bonaventure,  
The Journey of the Mind into God (Itinerarium Mentis in Deum),  
Chapter II



Reflection

For Bonaventure, creation was never merely scenery or background to human life. Mountains, rivers, birdsong, sunlight, and stars all carried traces of the Creator. Francis shared this vision, calling the sun his brother and the moon his sister because all life belonged within the love of God. Peace with God, neighbour, and creation were deeply connected. Today our world faces ecological crisis, pollution, and climate anxiety. We are learning again that harming the earth also harms one another. Pilgrimage teaches us to move more slowly and attentively through the world — noticing birdsong, changing weather, and the feel of the earth beneath our feet. Gratitude grows, wonder returns, and creation becomes once again a gift to cherish rather than dominate.

PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Pay attention to the living world around you. Be grateful for the earth beneath your feet, for the air you breathe, for water, light, growing things, and all creatures who share this common home.*

## DAY 25 PEACE THROUGH HUMILITY

### QUOTE

“And let all the brothers... not seek to be above others, but rather let them be servants and subject to every human creature for God’s sake.”

— St Francis of Assisi,  
The Earlier Rule (Regula non bullata),  
Chapter 16



### Reflection

Written around 1221, *The Earlier Rule* instructed the brothers to reject power, status, and domination, choosing instead humility and service. Francis believed peace cannot flourish where pride and control rule. Much conflict grows from the need to win, to be recognised, or to place ourselves above others. Francis chose another way, calling the friars “lesser brothers” who lived gently alongside others without seeking privilege or superiority. This humility was not weakness but freedom — freedom from rivalry, self-protection, and the endless need to prove oneself important. True peace often begins when we no longer need to stand above others, but learn instead to love, listen, and serve with simplicity.

### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Try to live today without needing recognition or praise.  
Listen more than you speak. Allow others space to shine.*

## QUOTE

“In all his illnesses he praised the Lord and wanted the brothers to sing the Praises of the Lord with him.”

— The Assisi Compilation



## Reflection

*The Assisi Compilation*, §83, describing Francis during severe illness near the end of his life. By his final years, Francis was exhausted, in pain, and nearly blind. He carried the wounds of the stigmata and knew sorrow, weakness, and fear. Yet the early Franciscan sources tell us that even in suffering he continued to praise God and encouraged the brothers to sing with him. This was not denial, but resilient hope. Francis discovered that peace can still exist within suffering when life remains rooted in love and trust. Our world carries many wounds and invisible burdens. Peace does not always mean escaping suffering. Sometimes it means refusing to let suffering have the final word.

### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Carry one sorrow prayerfully. And pray for the grace to keep hope alive even in difficult times.*

## DAY 27 PEACE AND COMMUNITY

### THEME

## MUTUAL LOVE

“And loving one another with the love of Christ, let the love that you have in your hearts be shown outwardly by your deeds.”

— The Testament of St Clare



### *Reflection*

In her Testament, written shortly before her death in 1253, Clare of Assisi urged her sisters to remain rooted in mutual love, humility, and care for one another. Clare understood that peace is deeply relational. Communities are not sustained simply by rules or shared tasks, but by patient love lived out in ordinary daily life. At San Damiano, the sisters shared hardship, prayer, vulnerability, and joy together. Clare knew tensions and misunderstandings were inevitable, yet believed mutual love could hold a community together through difficulty. Peace grows when people forgive, listen, encourage, and carry one another gently. In a fragmented world, such communities become signs of God's peace.

### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Give thanks for the people who have sustained you  
along your journey of life and faith.*

## DAY 28 PEACE AND COURAGE

### QUOTE

“Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.”

— St Francis of Assisi,  
The Earlier Rule (Regula non bullata),  
Chapter 11



### Reflection

In *The Earlier Rule*, written around 1221, Francis of Assisi directly quotes Matthew 5:9 — “Blessed are the peacemakers” — while instructing the brothers how to live among others with humility, patience, and peace. Francis understood that peace is not weakness or avoidance. It takes courage to forgive, to listen, to speak truth gently, and to resist bitterness or revenge. In a violent and divided world, Francis called the brothers to become living signs of reconciliation. His own journey across battle lines to meet Sultan al-Kamil during the Crusades showed that peace is active and courageous. Peace walks towards others, risks encounter, and refuses hatred the final word.

### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Pray for the courage not simply to avoid conflict,  
but to become a maker of peace.*

## QUOTE

“He was always cheerful and kind,  
comforting those in distress.”

— The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul (Thomas of Celano)



## Reflection

One of the quietest ways of making peace is through kindness. Francis was not remembered simply for preaching or travelling or founding a movement. He was remembered for how people felt in his presence. Thomas of Celano tells us that Francis was “always cheerful and kind, comforting those in distress.” His gentleness became a form of witness.

In a world shaped by anxiety, anger, harshness, and exhaustion, kindness can become a holy act of resistance. A listening ear. A patient conversation. A smile offered to someone lonely. A refusal to wound others with words. Small acts can carry enormous peace. Francis understood that peace is often built not through grand gestures, but through daily compassion.

### PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*Offer one deliberate act of kindness to someone today  
— however small.*

## QUOTE

“Be Thou alone ever my hope, my entire confidence,  
my riches, my delight, my pleasure, my joy,  
my rest and tranquility, my peace...”

— St Bonaventure,  
Prayer of St Bonaventure



## Reflection

After thirty days of walking, praying, and reflecting, we arrive at the heart of peace. For Bonaventure, peace is found not in possessions, power, or certainty, but in resting in the love of God. Francis gradually discovered this freedom. The closer he grew to God, the less he needed to dominate, defend, or exclude others. That inner peace overflowed into compassion, reconciliation, and care for creation. The pilgrimage now returns us to ordinary life carrying this vision: peace is not weakness but courage; not escape but vocation. The world does not need perfect people. It needs peacemakers — people whose lives quietly witness that another way of living is possible.

## PILGRIMAGE INVITATION

*As your pilgrimage ends, ask:*