

Reflection

Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate
Joliet, IL

Feast of St. Francis

By: Sr. Jeanne Bessette — October 4, 2024

Good morning, good people! That was the greeting St. Francis loved to use. Although he likely said: *Buongiorno, buona gente!*

You know St. Francis:

- Gentle soul
- Little poor man
- Lover of all creation
- Man who found God in ALL of creation
- One who loved Jesus as both God and human
- The one saint almost universally known and beloved –
 - ◊ Across religions
 - ◊ Even to the non-religious
 - ◊ Patron saint of Italy
 - ◊ Patron saint of Ecology
 - ◊ A saint for all seasons

What would Francis say to us if he walked among us today? I don't think he'd be standing in the garden gathering birds to himself! What would his message be, not just to us Franciscans, but to Carmelites, Benedictines, to any and all of us, people of good will? It would not be an easy message – it would be as challenging a message as you've ever heard. He was a man of his time; imagine if he was a man of our time!

I believe he would have three clear but very challenging things to say to us:

Good morning, good people! And if you really do think of yourself as a good person, how can you not embrace the persons beside you,

behind you and before you as good people, people who deserve your loving care, your warm embrace, your supportive words, your peaceful presence, and your deep respect. We, one another – made in the very image of God – are the people whom Francis would embrace – and so must we.

Secondly, I know that Francis would invite us to look for God in all of creation. This beautiful world, so fruitful, so delightful, so rich and varied, so sheltering, so surprising, so nourishing – so like God! How can we possibly not regard it with the same respect that we ourselves deserve? The only creatures on Earth that can destroy this beautiful creation are the only ones who can also save it. Francis would say: What are you waiting for?

And thirdly, Francis would live today as he did in the 13th century – as a man of peace. What more could this world possibly need more of than peace? Every year, every month, every day brings another horrifying reminder that we good people must work toward peace. Francis met others with an attitude of peace, especially those that others would have cast aside:

- People whose religious beliefs were different than his own
- Brothers who disagreed with one another
- The pope who wanted to reign him in
- Even a wolf who was terrorizing the townspeople

Does our world need peace today?
Good God, yes!

Can we start it right here in our hearts and
actions?

I think, yes!

And so, Good morning, good people:

Let us be touched, changed, and inspired
by this man for all seasons
this saint for all reasons!

**Reflection by:
Sr. Jeanne Bessette
St. Francis Day
October 4, 2024**