



*“Praised be you, My Lord, through all your creatures!”*

## Franciscan Readings for Week Commencing 23 August, 2009

21<sup>st</sup> Week Ordinary Time

### Sunday

23 August 2009

*(A reading from the Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul by Thomas of Celano)*

When he was praying in the woods or solitary places, Francis would fill the forest with his sighs, water the places with his tears, strike his breast with his hand and, as if finding a more secret hiding place, he often conversed out loud with his Lord. There he replied to the Judge, there he entreated his Father, there he conversed with a Friend, there he played with the Bridegroom. In

order to make all the marrow of his heart a holocaust in manifold ways, he would place before his eyes the One who is manifold and supremely simple. Thus he would direct all his attention and affection towards the one thing he asked of the Lord, not so much praying as becoming totally a prayer.

***Lord, make us totally a prayer to you in our lives and in our speech. May our lives be poured out as one intercession and song of praise.***

### Monday

24 August 2009

*(A reading from 'The Inscription of Brother Leo' in the Breviary of St Francis)*

Francis received a book of daily prayers from Brother Angelo and Brother Leo and, when he was well enough, he wished always to say the Office, as stated by the Rule. When he was too sick to say the psalms himself, Francis would sit where he could listen to the other friars praying. Francis often had the Gospel read to him as well. Francis would say that even if he could not attend Mass or be with the friars during prayer, when he heard the words of the Gospel, Jesus came alive for him in his mind and in his heart. The Poor Clares, out of respect for Francis, kept this breviary in their monastery for the centuries to come.

***Lord, you desire our prayers and the fruits of our spirit. May we pray constantly and be open to hearing your Word that it may come alive again in our day.***

### Tuesday

25 August 2008

*(A Prayer of St Francis, inspired by the Lord's Prayer)*

Our Creator, Redeemer, Consoler and Saviour,

Who are in heaven; in the angels and the saints,

enlightening them to know, for you, Lord, are Light;

inflaming them to love, for you, Lord, are Love;

dwelling in them and filling them with happiness,

for you, Lord, are Supreme Good, the Eternal Good, from whom all good comes

without whom there is no good.

May knowledge of you become clearer in us that we may know

the breadth of your blessings,

the length of your promises,

the height of your majesty,

the depth of your judgments.

May you rule in us through your grace and enable us to come to your kingdom,

and may we love you

with our whole heart by always thinking of you,  
with our whole soul by always desiring you,  
with our whole mind by always directing all our intentions to you,  
and by seeking your glory in everything.

May all our energies and affections of body and soul  
be exerted in the service of your love and of nothing else.

May we love our neighbour as ourselves and draw them all to you with our whole strength  
by rejoicing in the good of others as in our own,  
by suffering with others at their misfortunes,  
and by giving offence to no one.

### **Wednesday**

**26 August 2009**

*(A Prayer of St Francis, inspired by the Lord's Prayer)*

Father, give us this day: in remembrance, understanding and reverence  
of the love that Jesus, our daily bread, had for us  
and of those things that he said and did and suffered for us.

Forgive us our sins in your mercy, through the passion of your Son, through the intercession of Mary,  
and for the things that we do not completely forgive of others,  
make us, Lord, forgive completely  
that we may truly love our enemies because of you  
and we may pray fervently for them,  
returning no evil for evil  
and may we strive to help everyone in your name.

Lead us not into temptation, hidden or obvious, sudden or persistent.

Deliver us from evil, past, present and to come.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now, and shall be forever. Amen.

### **Thursday**

**27 August 2009**

*St Rupert was a bishop and missionary. Probably understated in his necrology, Rupert was sent to a God-forsaken part of Germany called Luvavum which is now Salzberg in 657. He was a noted preacher and a friend of the townsfolk. .*



*(A reading from 'The Legend of St Clare)*

It was Clare's custom to come to matins before the younger sisters, whom she called to the praises by silently arousing them with signs. She would frequently light the lamps while the others were sleeping; and she would frequently ring the bell with her own hand. There was no place for tepidity, no place for idleness where a sharp reproof prodded laziness to prayer and service of the Lord.

**Lord, let us be first to offer you praise. May we be an example of holiness to those around us.**

### **Friday**

**28 August 2009**

*Letter of St Clare to Blessed Agnes of Prague)*

**Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!**

**Place your soul in the brilliance of glory!**

**Place your heart in the figure of divine substance!**

**And transform your entire being into the image  
of the Godhead itself through contemplation.**

**Se that you too feel what his friends feel  
as they taste the hidden sweetness  
that God himself has reserved from the beginning  
for those who love him.**

**And, after all who ensnare their blind lovers  
in a deceitful and turbulent world  
have been completely sent away,  
you may totally love him  
who gave himself totally for your love,  
whose beauty the sun and moon admire,  
whose rewards and their preciousness and greatness  
are without end.**

**Saturday**

**Beheading of John the Baptist**

**29 August 2009**



Carlo Dolci, Salomé con la testa del Battista, Phoenix Art Museum

It was the most striking announcement of the Precursor to be found in the New Testament. Elizabeth and Zachary came to childbirth late in life but were delighted with the outcome.

His life is well known but his death was brought about by a diabolical promise, "rashly taken and criminally kept" (St Augustine). It was Salome who made the declaration that she wanted the head of John on a platter. So – it was granted. A brutal death was meted on the "brother" of Jesus.

*(A reading from 'A Mirror of the Perfection of a Lesser Brother')*

When Francis chose brothers to accompany him on his journeys, he would say to them, "Go, in the name of the Lord, two by two along the way, humbly and decently, in strict silence from dawn until terce [mid-afternoon], praying to the Lord in your hearts. Don't talk uselessly. May you behave humbly and with decency as if you were in a hermitage because we always carry our little cell with us – Brother Body is the house and the soul is its hermit who, in the depths of the heart of the friary, prays to God and meditates quietly. So if the soul does not remain in quiet in its cell, a cell made by hands does little good to a Religious."

**Lord, our body is your most precious gift to us. May we see our physical presence as the house for truly holy things – our thoughts, our feelings and our prayers. Let others see your image reflected in us.**