

800th Jubilee Celebration of the SECOND LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL (1221) St. Francis of Assisi

Let us love God, therefore, and adore Him with a pure heart and a pure mind, because He Who seeks this above all things has said:

True adorers adore the Father in Spirit and Truth. ^{Jn 4:23}

Second Letter to the Faithful #19

Francis speaks from his experience when he writes about prayer; he heard the words of Jesus as if he were sitting next to the Samaritan woman, listening attentively.



... In the clefts of the rock he would build his nest and *in the hollow of the wall* ^{Song of Songs 2:14} his dwelling. Totally *emptied of himself* ^{Phil 2:7}, he rested for a long time in the wounds of the Savior. That is why he often chose solitary places to focus his heart entirely on God. ...For his safest haven was prayer; not prayer of a fleeting moment, empty and proud, but prayer that was prolonged, full of devotion, peaceful in humility. If he began at night, he was barely finished at morning. Walking, sitting, eating, drinking, he was focused on prayer. He would spend the night alone praying in abandoned churches and in deserted places where, with the protection of divine grace, he overcame his soul's many fears and anxieties.

From the First Life of St. Francis, Thomas of Celano, XXVII, 71

The invitation to the Samaritan woman is for all, for Francis and for each of us. It is God's invitation to come to the still, solitary haven of peace and communion with God. "If only [we] knew the gift of God..." Francis reminds us that we meet our God in inner truth, simply, as we are with a pure heart and a pure mind: it is the grace of being embraced by unmasked and profound love. If we only knew...

For reflection:

- ✚ How am I a true adorer of the Father?
- ✚ What are the ways that the Word of God grounds my call to the Franciscan way of life?
- ✚ What would Francis say to me today about love and about devotion expressed in my personal prayer in "the solitary places I choose to focus my heart entirely on God"?
- ✚ Francis chose caves, clefts of rock and abandoned churches to be alone, where is my heart most attuned to the soft, gentle words of God?

We pray:

Most high and glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out your holy and true command. AMEN.