

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

GIVING PRAISE, GLORY, HONOR AND BLESSING

Let every creature
in heaven, on earth, in the sea and in the depths,
give praise, glory, honor and blessing To Him
Who suffered so much, Who has given and
will give in the future every good,
for He is our power and strength,
Who alone is good, Who alone is almighty,
Who alone is omnipotent, wonderful, glorious
and Who alone is holy, worthy of praise and blessing
through endless ages. Amen.

Second Letter to the Faithful of St. Francis, verses 61-62



At first glance, these verses may seem like a simple invitation for all creatures to praise and glorify God, but they are so much more. The verse that introduces this section is key to our reflection (Verse 60, John 17:24): “I wish, Father, that where I am, they may be with me . . . because you loved me before the creation of the world.” Francis of Assisi’s stance of living, his manner of praying always, demonstrates his receptivity to and experience of the interconnectedness of all persons and things with God and with one another. Francis understood that living the gospel demanded a sense of universal fraternity, a consciousness of this communal wholeness, the ability to imagine the limitless scope of love as it unifies the divine and the finite. For Francis, living contemplatively was the channel through which human and divine came together. Oneness in God is a reality toward which all of creation strives. Francis of Assisi recognized all persons and all of creation interconnected in the oneness of God.

Evelyn Underhill *describes mysticism as a process by which we consciously connect with the Divine, that sacred connection is the natural result of the “embrace of God’s unitive love.”* This description is important as we ponder these verses of Francis’ letter. Francis experienced God’s unconditional and extravagant love, he surrendered to the *embrace of God’s unitive love* and became increasingly sensitive to the Divine Presence everywhere, in every person and in everything. He so wanted for all people to know and experience that love of God. His words call us to an inner awareness, a grace filled attentiveness to God’s love that initiates and sustains a state of wonder, a sense of wholeness and of universal fraternity, a state that mirrors the glory of the unified life within the Godhead, a life in which we are invited to participate. This harmony of all is made possible in Jesus Christ.

Francis puts Christ at the Center, not only at the center of these verses, but also at the Center of giving praise and glory to God. Because the Father loved the Son and the Son desires that all be one in him, we are invited first to know that love of our God through the person of Jesus *who has given and will give in the future every good. Christ is our power and strength.*

It is because of God’s love, that we are invited to give praise to God through Christ, to experience this interconnectedness with all people and all of creation. We are called to solidarity, encounter, and gratuitousness. We are invited to know the sense of all being united in and through Jesus Christ, for this we are called *to give praise, glory honor and blessing.*

For Reflection

- ✚ Francis was able to surrender to the *embrace of God’s unitive love*, how am I attentive to God’s loving embrace? How do I nurture an openness to this embrace?
- ✚ Do I perceive God’s goodness in everyone and everything? Is my life a Canticle of Praise?
- ✚ Is it evident that Christ is the Center of my life? In what ways?