

Assisi Pilgrimage



Spiritual Reflections
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San Luis Rey Secular Franciscan Fraternity



Pilgrimage and Retreat

- 2 dimensions of Franciscan Spirituality
- Pilgrimage (Action – affective seeking)
 - Taking the message of the Gospel on the road
 - Gospel to life
- Retreat to the inner quiet (Contemplation – inner seeking)
 - Prayer and contemplation
 - Life to Gospel

Pilgrimage and retreat

- Model of Jesus own lifestyle and spirituality
- Cannot have one without the other
- Retreat opens us to life with the Beloved Other
- Pilgrimage provides us the way to proclaim the other

- On the pilgrimage, what do you seek to gain, encounter, accumulate?
 - Grace?
 - Merit?
- If the pilgrimage is true, it begins “sina proprio” seeking, not possessing
 - Open to an encounter without expectation
 - In solitude, but not alone
 - Armed only with desire

Our arrival

- Propositum Vitae - 1209 - 2009
- the inspiration of a new way to live the Apostolic Life for everyone
- A new way/reform to live the penitential life



Arrive at the Assisi Train Station,
then on to Santa Maria degli Angeli





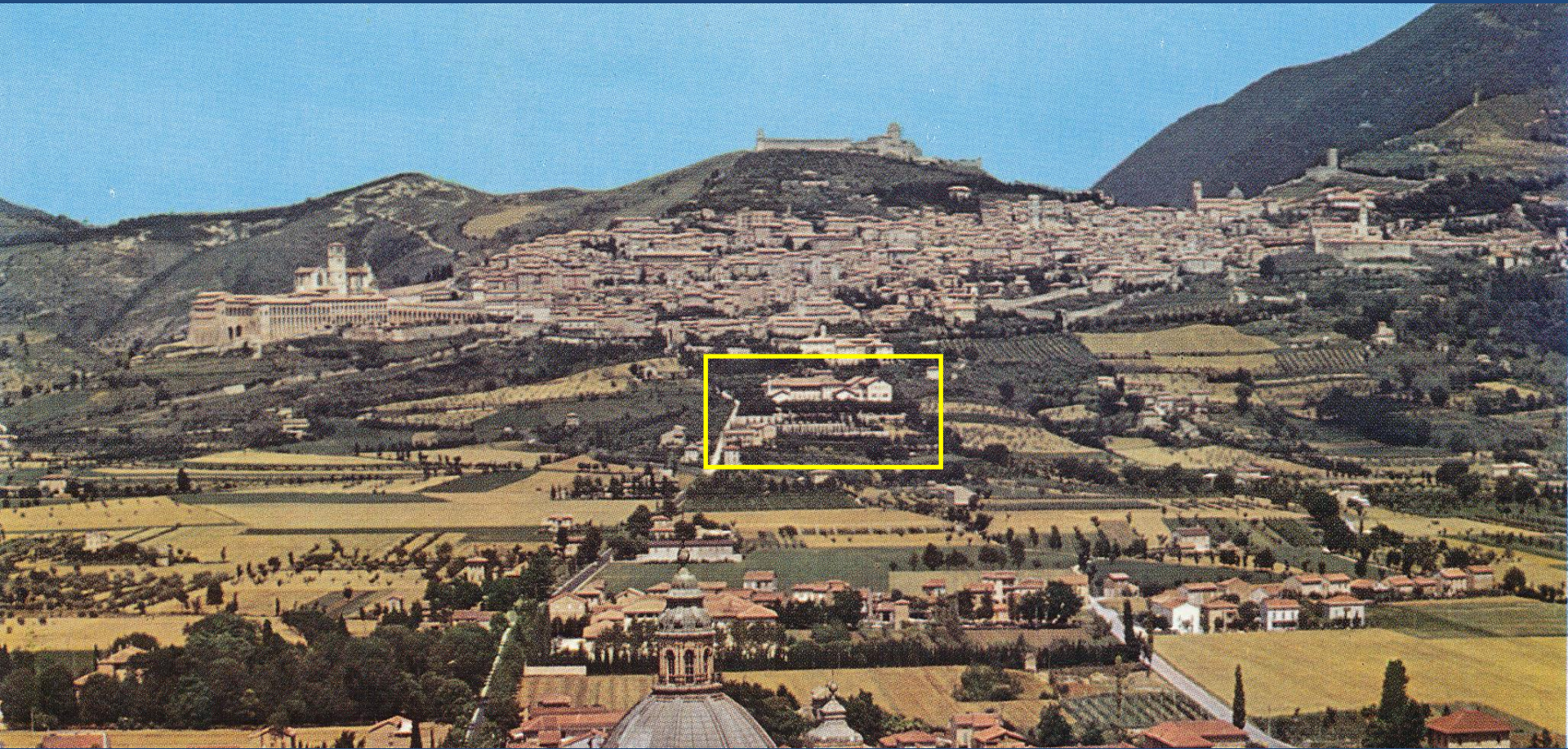


After some time to reflect at the poor and
humble birth place of the Franciscan
Movement,
the Porticuncula,

We begin to trek uphill toward the old site
of the leper Hospital, outside the walls of
Assisi.



To Assisi



Approximate spot of the old Leper Hospital
in the yellow box

Leper Hospital of St. Paul

The Lord gave to me, Brother Francis, thus to begin to do penance; for when I was in sin it seemed to me very bitter to see lepers, and the Lord Himself led me amongst them and I showed mercy to them.

And when I left them, that which had seemed to me bitter was changed for me into sweetness of body and soul. And afterwards I remained a little . . .

Testament of Francis

- Here at the leper hospital, the pilgrimage stops to embrace the little ones, the disposable ones. Those who cannot help us get to where we want to be.
- What falls along the roadside is infinitely more valuable than what **appears** to make the journey easy.
- A stranger in a strange land – sojourner – **[paroikia]** parish/exile, lives near but outside the center – on the edges



San Damiano

- “Francis, rebuild my house”
- Against the evil of their day, the dualistic approach to body and soul – distrust (evil) of the body and value of the soul
- Francis and Clare set out to re-knit together both body and soul as made in the image of our elder brother, Jesus Christ, and return us to life with the Trinity



The Basilica of Saint Clare

Pause a moment to:

Place your mind in the mirror of eternity;

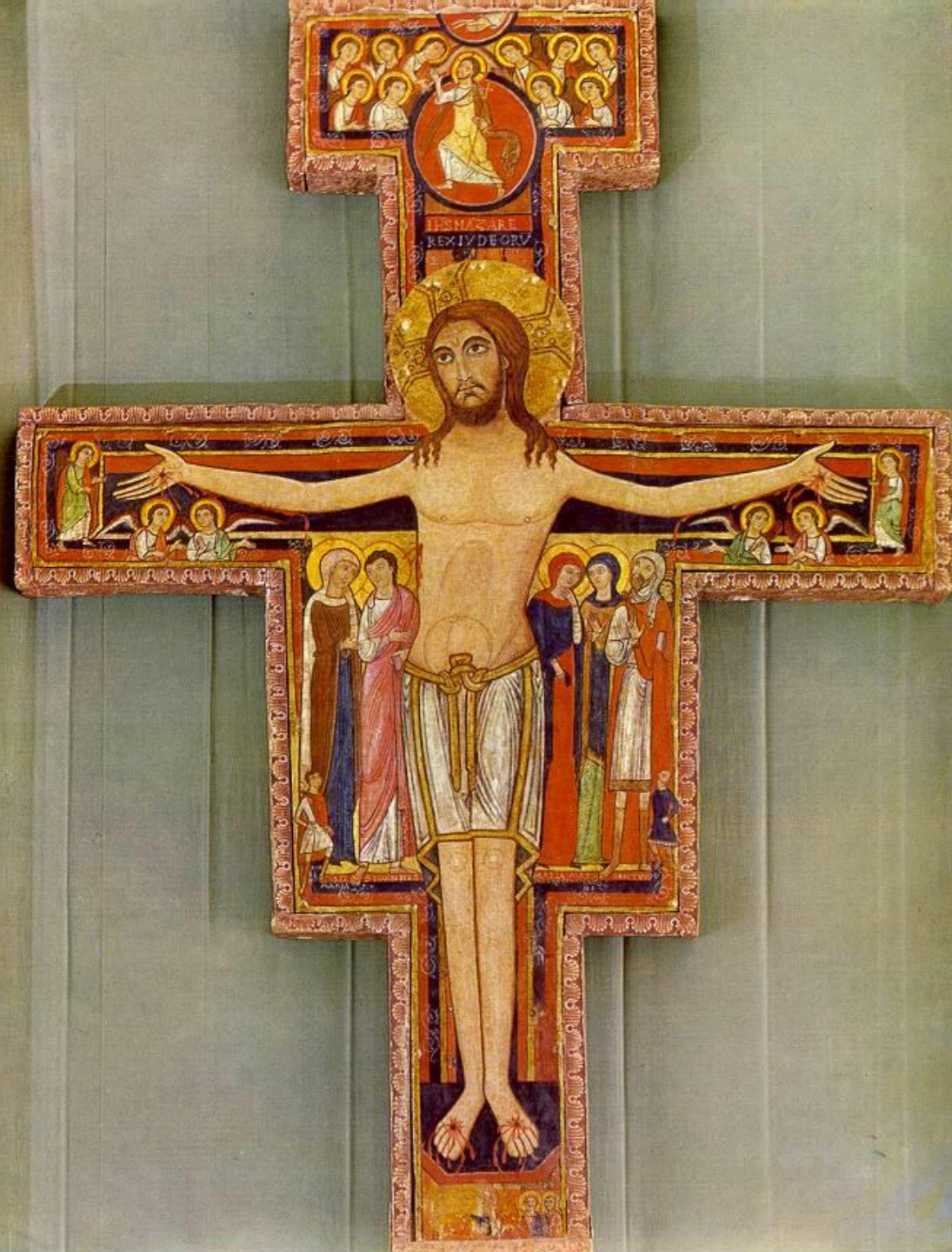
Place your soul in the splendor of glory;

And place your heart in the figure of the
divine substance;

Then:

through contemplation, transform your entire being into the image of the Divine One himself,

So that you, yourself, may also experience what his friends experience when they taste the hidden sweetness that God alone has kept from the beginning for those who love him.



And come to know - Perfect Joy

The joy of poverty
Is NOT to have nothing in this world;

The joy of poverty
is to have nothing
but God

Our journey continue cross town







Time for a brief rest at the mid-way point

S Maria Sopra Minerva

(St. Mary above Minerva)

Church over temple give us a point of
reference to reflect on the journey itself
and how attentive we are to its
unfolding.



Cathedral Basilica Of St Francis

End of a journey or just a beginning?







4-fold mission of our Pilgrimage & retreat cycle (see Good Samaritan)

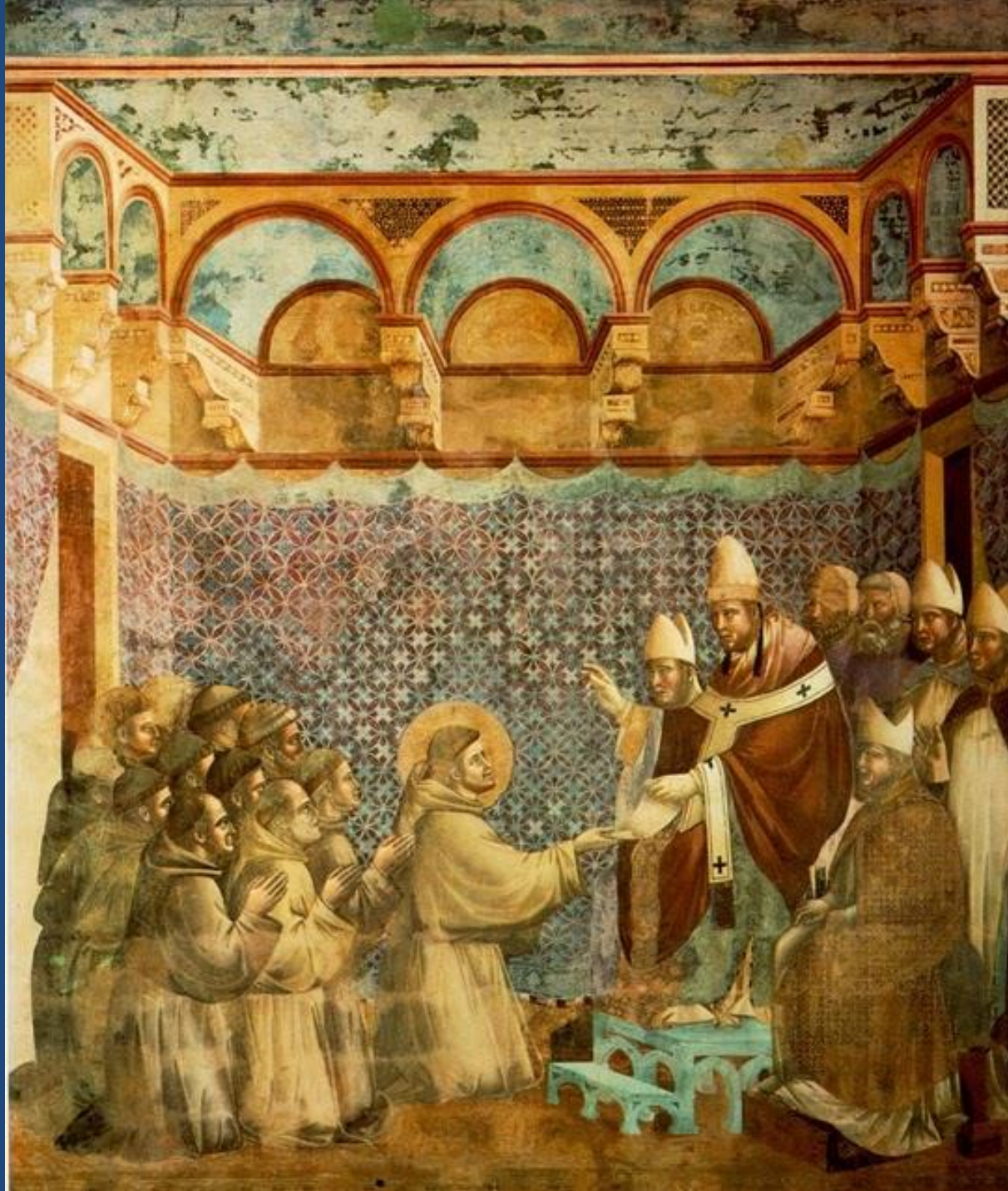
1. Contemplative seeing – begins in silence – looking at reality and learning to recognize the presence of God in the ordinary, poor, mundane, which leads us to:
2. Affective response – opening your heart to be vulnerable, to feel remorse, sorrow but also love and compassion – which leads us to:



3. Practical caring – a beginning action if even initially self-indulgent or faddish. This movement requires
4. Sustained assistance – the community that enables us to follow through in love, so the Divine part (Goodness of God) shines in the actions we do. This is a moment/place of transformation for both the giver and receiver.



- So the pilgrimage/retreat give us the opportunity to journey inward to experience a contemplative seeing of reality.
 - It allows us to engage both heart and mind to our conscious awareness and allow them to be influenced by what we see
 - It must be the basis of a community formed to sustain the goodness, not because we are good, but because we realize God is good.



- It moves us beyond our own endless introspection
- It moves us toward a simplicity and detachment that recognizes God as the source of everything
- It opens us to see God present and praised not in statutes, but in all of creation
- It opens us to experience a personal God who desires to be in relationship with us and has sanctified all creation in the Incarnation



Authentic detachment

- Making an uncluttered place and time for God
- A place where I am not the center
- For Franciscans, not a withdrawal from the world, just from power and control in favor of a fraternal relationship calling all brothers and sisters.
- Acknowledging all is from God and is therefore inherently good.



questions

- In what concrete ways can I embrace the 4-fold way in the example of the Good Samaritan?
- How does Francis help you to better understand and live in authentic detachment?
- How does the Franciscan help you to embrace all creation as images that reveal the love of God?