IVING FRATERNITY

Theme: The Passovers of Saint Francis of Assisi

This month of September, we share excerpts from Fr. Pierre Brunette's teaching presented during our Fraternité 2026 gathering.

Pierre Brunette is a Franciscan Friar (OFM) and an author specializing in the writings of St. Francis of Assisi and in psycho-spiritual accompaniment. He has notably served as a guest professor at the Dominican Pastoral Institute in Montreal, teaching courses on the symbolism of inner growth, discernment, and accompaniment. He has served as a formator, provincial superior, and at the Secretariat for Evangelization and Missions within the Franciscan community.

Good reflection and Sharing.

Reminder: May our fraternal gathering be a special time of encounter with Jesus, who walks among us.

SEPTEMBER 2026 MONTHLY MEETING

Opening of the Meeting

After a hymn suggested or chosen by the members of the fraternity, followed by a prayer the meeting begins.

Information

Have you ever thought about what the Passion and Easter mean today? For most people, the Passion has lost its Christian significance. For us, the Passion, as experienced by our Lord Jesus Christ, can evoke suffering and death. The dictionary defines "passion" as a general emotional phenomenon that evokes a powerful moment in one's emotional and psychological life—one so intense that it dominates one's mental state due to the intensity of its effects.

The Passion of Jesus is the final trial of his life, culminating in his death on the cross that we commemorate during the Holy Week. However, its culmination takes place on Easter morning. In the spirit of Francis of Assisi and his contemporaries, the Passion has a broader meaning that encompasses all the mysteries of Christ—his entire Passover, his passage from this world to the Father. The evangelical way of life proposed to us venerates the Passion of Christ along with its culmination, the Redemption. The Cross and Easter are one and the same mystery, evoking the mystery of the passage into Life.

Start Reading

Francis's Personal Experience

The Paschal Mystery permeates the entire life of Saint Francis, from his earliest conversions until his death. Francis became intimately acquainted with the poor and crucified Christ. Amid his sufferings and throughout his life, the experience of the Passion resurfaced. The Passion of Christ was present in Francis's heart long before his Transitus: in his personal devotion to the cross, in the liturgy, in the retelling of the Gospel accounts, and in the symbolism of the crosses he raised to bless the crowds. In the end, the Passion gave way to the silent contemplation of Christ: his definitive passage into the Life of God. The cross becomes the symbol of Redemption.

In the beginning, in the small, ruined chapel of San Damiano, Francis—frail and weakened—found himself before the crucified, living, and victorious Jesus, celebrating the salvation of the world, from the depths of Hell to the procession of angels in Heaven.

"Sovereign and glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and grant me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, as well as understanding and knowledge, Lord, so that I may fulfill your holy and true commandment."

Reflection and Sharing

How does my devotion to the cross show itself?

When I encounter trials along the way (crosses), how do I react ?

Take time to do a good sharing.

Meeting the Crucified Christ in his loneliness

After his recovery, Francis continued to search for the meaning of his life. His plans for a military career were cut short by his illness. He consulted the bishop, distanced himself from his friends and his worldly life, gave alms to the poor and the lepers, and withdrew into the solitude of the surrounding woods and caves. There, he wept, prayed fervently, and wrestled inwardly. He sensed what God was asking of him but feared going all the way: to live for God and God alone.

"Let us all, brothers, consider the Good Shepherd who, to save his sheep, endured the passion of the cross. The Lord's sheep followed him through tribulation and persecution, shame and hunger, infirmity and temptation, and all the rest; and for this, they received eternal life from the Lord. Therefore, it is a great shame for us, servants of God: the saints have acted, and we, by recounting their deeds, wish to receive glory and honor from them." (Adm 6).

Reflection and Sharing

What were your thoughts when you decided to follow in the footsteps of St. Francis?

What did you leave behind in order to move closer to Christ?

The Stigmata: A Long-Awaited Encounter

Before going to Alverne, Francis consulted the Scriptures to learn what God expected of him, and his prayer became a time of identifying with Christ's suffering. The event was long in the making and did not happen suddenly for him:

"My Lord Jesus Christ, I beg You to grant me two graces before I die: the first is that, during my life, I may feel in my soul and in my body, as much as is possible, the pain that You, O sweet Jesus, endured at the hour of Your most cruel Passion; the second is that I may feel in my heart, as much as possible, that boundless love with which You, Son of God, were inflamed and which led You to willingly endure such a Passion for us sinners." (3rd Meditation on the Stigmata)

Francis and the End of His Life: Loss of Leadership and the Experience of Rejection

Francis wanted the Order to be equally open to the poor and the uneducated, and not just to the rich and the learned. "God," he used to say, "does not sift people through a sieve, and the Holy Spirit, the true Minister General of the Order, rests equally upon the poor and the simple."

However, in the final phase of his life, Francis faced complex challenges: the Order was growing too quickly, and the Brotherhood encountered organizational problems over time. These challenges are addressed in the Rule: How should we pray? How should we spend our time and work? How can we provide for our basic needs? Despite drafting the Rule, Francis found himself overwhelmed and marginalized in his vision of what the Order should be. He felt challenged in his role as Minister General and resigned. His illnesses worsened and cut him off from community life. Frail and blind, he was overcome by discouragement. For him, this was a new Passover, a difficult transition. He experienced a sense of rejection that he tried to make sense of. All that remained for him was to set an example for his brothers. Despite everything, his longing for God grew stronger.

Réflexion and Sharing

What moved you the most about the text we just read, and why?

.Take the time to share your ideas .

Death: Francis's Final Passover

Francis's passage from life to death, and then to life, is his final Passover. It is not a somber passing but a gentle transition from one life to another. A brother alludes to his impending death as an infinite consolation. He speaks of an ocean of suffering and temptations for him as a gateway to eternal happiness (LP 100). This brother's words inspire in Francis the desire to welcome his death as a sister and friend and to celebrate it with his loved ones. He begins by welcoming his sister, Death. He forgives and blesses his brothers who are present and those who will follow. He blesses some bread and shares it with his loved ones. He invites his brothers to

praise God, then has them sing his Canticle of the Sun before passing away on the evening of October 3, serene and fully reconciled.

Death does not take him by surprise; on the contrary, it, too, enters his Canticle as a grace. God's goodness is found even in death. One might almost say that the Canticle springs from death itself. All things are united in brotherhood: they speak of God only in relation to death, which is welcomed as a passage. Francis endures trials and tribulations, wholly surrendered to the dead and risen Christ.

Reflection and Sharing

What does the experience of the Passion and the Great Passage mean to you?

Share your thoughs after the reading.

A few articles from the Rule that can help guide our reflection

Rule - Article 19: Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father...

General Constitutions-Artile 27. 1

The brothers and sisters, who are getting older, should learn to accept illness and increasing difficulties and to give a deeper sense to their life. This should be undertaken with increasing detachment as they set out for the promised Land. They should be firmly convinced that the community of those who believe in Christ and who love one another in him will go forward into eternal life as the "communion of saints".

Biblical Reflection and Sharing

Read the readings for Sunday or the day before the gathering.
Share our reflections on this Gospel using the following suggestions:

- Take a moment for reflection; underline inspiring words or phrases.* Shthcton
- Share your thoughs on the evangical text.

Life- Objective

In this month of September**, in our faternal meetings, do a reading from the life of our patrin** saint, Francŝ of Assisi **...** .

End of the fraternal gathering (song or prayer of the fraternity's choice).