

## Guided by the Light



**In 2011 Pope Benedict challenged us to, 'dare to be glowing saints, in whose eyes and hearts the love of Christ beams and who thus bring light to the world'.**

He also stressed that the Christian faith is lived in community as 'light does not remain alone'. Thus Christians draw strength from fellow Christians which in turn also attracts others to Christ.

Through the inspiration of Saint Francis of Assisi we see illuminated the path to preserve a sense of community with all those good and beautiful things which God has created.

Saint John Paul II saw Saint Francis as an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation.

As a friend of the poor who was loved by God's creatures, Saint Francis invited all of creation – animals, plants, natural forces, even Brother Sun and Sister Moon – to give honour and praise to the Lord ([goo.gl/FeqDWV](http://goo.gl/FeqDWV)).

Each creature serving its purpose cannot be properly understood on its own. It's only when we consider it 'within the entirety of God's plan', that we can really begin to see the relationships God has created for us 'in the service of each other' (LS 86). As we read *Laudato Si'* we can hear Pope Francis speaking with the voice of Saint Francis.

Relationship is described beautifully in the hymn of Saint Francis of Assisi, where he expresses praise to God in gratitude for our 'brothers' and 'sisters' sun, moon, stars, wind, water, and fire. In finding God through them and praising God with them, our relationship of reciprocal service brings great glory to God (LS 87).

Saint Francis prayed daily the psalms and canticles of the bible. Prayer together with his interaction in the world informed his vision of creation. Today, this integrated vision of creation is under threat and we must all take up his mission.

Saint Francis' mission is simple:

- > praise and thank God daily for the gift of creation
- > embrace the message and example of Jesus who shows us how to love
- > see the sacraments as part of a broader sacramental vision of the material world, a world full of God's beauty and goodness, and create community reflecting these values ([goo.gl/6ZX7j1](http://goo.gl/6ZX7j1)).

And of course we must also add the challenge of Christ: 'Repent! Be the light of the world! Change your life, make it bright and radiant!' (Matthew 4 and 5).

*'Start by doing what's necessary, then what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.'* – Saint Francis of Assisi

### REFLECTION

- > **Changing from wealth to poverty was Saint Francis' choice – what changes, big and small, are we able to make to help heal the harm we have caused Mother Earth?**