



*A Franciscan  
Leaf  
of Hours*

# *A Franciscan Leaf of Hours*

*This is a work in progress compiled by Gary Paul Nabhan, OEF  
(Brother Coyote) for sisters & brothers  
in the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans,  
in honor of their daily practice and work.*

## *DAWN*

### *Call to Prayer*

Welcome all of you into this dawning light,  
From poorwill and eagle to raccoon, man and woman,  
Welcome to Our Creator's Altar:  
This dew-covered earth, this glistening sky,  
Remembering this:  
However asleep it seems you have been,  
You are already moving among the Sacred.  
Do not be scared before it, but awaken into awe,  
Re-mem-bering how simply its joy wells up in you.

### *Request to Be Fully Present*

My whole being seeks to waken with Your Spirit  
Just as a hatchling tries to fly  
Oh how clumsy I feel as I stumble  
Out of the nest and  
Into Our Creator's embrace.

### *Franciscan Canticle for the Morning*

Glory be to God,  
Well-spring of all being,  
To you we sing praise, glory,  
We bring honor and all blessing!  
Blessed be our Lord

In all of the creatures,  
Blessed be our Brother Sun  
Who brings us this day,  
Making bright our way.  
Illuminate our work,  
Shed light on our path,  
Never-failing Brother Sun  
Emitting God's glory,  
Our source of all holy. Amen.

### *Antiphon*

Why does distraction sometimes come  
As soon as I open my eyes,  
As if I must immediately overcome  
So many petty things to realize  
I am already there in Your embrace?  
Am I like the groggy teenager  
Who must begrudgingly admit he or she is now awake?  
Do I even need another step, a little push  
To realize Your Spirit is all around me,  
That I don't really need to go anywhere at all,  
Or do any particular thing to get to You,  
For with every breath I take, I take you in?

### *Psalms*

Holler praise for Our Creator, all You Landed Creatures  
Who run and leap and squirm across the Earth,  
And hear the Joy among all the Sea Creatures  
Wailing where they swim and dwelling in the Deep.  
Among the Raging Fire and the Piercing Rain,  
Among the Glistening Snow and the Shadowy Fog,  
Our Joy taking flight in the Tempestuous Wind,  
Which sends us out to do Her Work in Creation.  
Shout out Her Name from the Mountain Tops,  
From the Hill Crests and the Echoing Hollows,  
From the Highest Branches of Cedars and Cherry Trees;

Let the Wild Beasts howl and Livestock low,  
Let the Winged Birds chirp and the Creeping Things drone,  
Let the Politicians and Queens prostrate themselves  
Just as all the Princes and Paupers and Diverse Peoples  
Of the Entire Planet should do, kissing the Earth itself.  
Let the Young and the Old, Women and Men,  
Straight and Queer, Human and Other-Than-Human  
All sing Praise to Creation.

### *Psalm Prayer*

The honey-colored light of rising sun  
Sparkles with Our Creator's glory  
The very air we breathe,  
Which bathes and caresses us,  
Is the wet morning kiss of our Creator.

How long have we traveled  
That we have forgotten  
We are already here  
Capable of owning our joy  
Any moment we wish?

I want to leave You offerings  
Of freshly-opened flowers  
Their sweet morning nectar  
Saturated with Your Presence.  
acknowledge you are here with me.  
I want to warble out a sunrise song  
That You have let well up in me,  
A song that was already rising up my throat  
But needed me to stop the noise in my head  
Long enough to let it out!

Let it out, let it out  
Let it be aroused by the silence,  
Let it fly out!

## *Silence*

### *Small Verse*

So let us listen  
Until Your Spirit speaks to us  
Through all the unheard voices  
Which are already whispering around us  
Which we now allow to rise,  
In crescendo, to unspeakable Joy!

### *Thanksgiving*

Oh have we needed this moment  
To look around us and to listen  
For all the gifts  
Already given to us.  
We are awestruck with wonder  
For Your loving kindness  
Whenever we take the time  
To see or hear these many blessings.

### *Final Petition*

Lord, send us out into the sunglow  
To plant more flowers,  
Warble more songs  
To see and smell and listen  
To all the many worlds around us  
That every day bless our lives.

## DUSK

### *Call to Prayer*

I come back weary from my day of work,  
Seeking a rest in Your Presence,  
Ready again to deeply breathe in  
Your refreshing Spirit,  
Ready again for the dark to seep in  
Restoring all those who need sleep,  
Ready once more to listen and smell  
Those who awaken with nightfall,  
All of those nocturnal saints: bats, foxes,  
Hawkmoths, cereus cacti and ghosts.  
Being alive is not just production.  
Let us make time for the decomposition,  
The slow fermentation and release of our souls!

### *Night Hymn*

In my ending is my meaning  
Says the season.

No clock:  
Only the heart's blood  
Only the Word.

O lamp  
Weak friend  
In the knowing night!

O tongue of flame  
Under the heart  
Speak softly:  
For love is black  
Says the season.

Midnight!  
Kissed with flame!  
See! See!  
My love is darkness!

Only in the Void  
Are all ways one:

Only in the night  
Are all the lost  
Found.

In my ending is my meaning.

*(Taken from Thomas Merton, "A Book of Hours")*

### *Antiphon*

Let go of your weary air,  
Let it all out of your lungs,  
It is time to respire,  
Time to retire,  
Let it all go.

### *Franciscan Canticle for the Evening*

Glory be to God,  
Well-spring of all being,  
To you we sing praise, glory,  
We bring honor and all blessing!  
Blessed be our Lord  
In all of the creatures,  
Blessed be our Sister Death,  
Decomposer and composteer of our bodies,  
Through all the worms and germs we can't escape!  
Blessed be those who walk or fall, slide or glide  
Propelled by God's will,  
For a second, more sinister, death can do them no harm:

They've given up their own cells to regenerate others,  
Playing their part in keeping  
God's circle of being going.

### *God's Spell*

So said our teacher, Yeshua of Nazareth:  
Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened,  
And I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke  
And learn from me, for I am gentle and humble n heart,  
And you will find rest for your souls.  
(Matthew 11:28-29)

### *Silence*

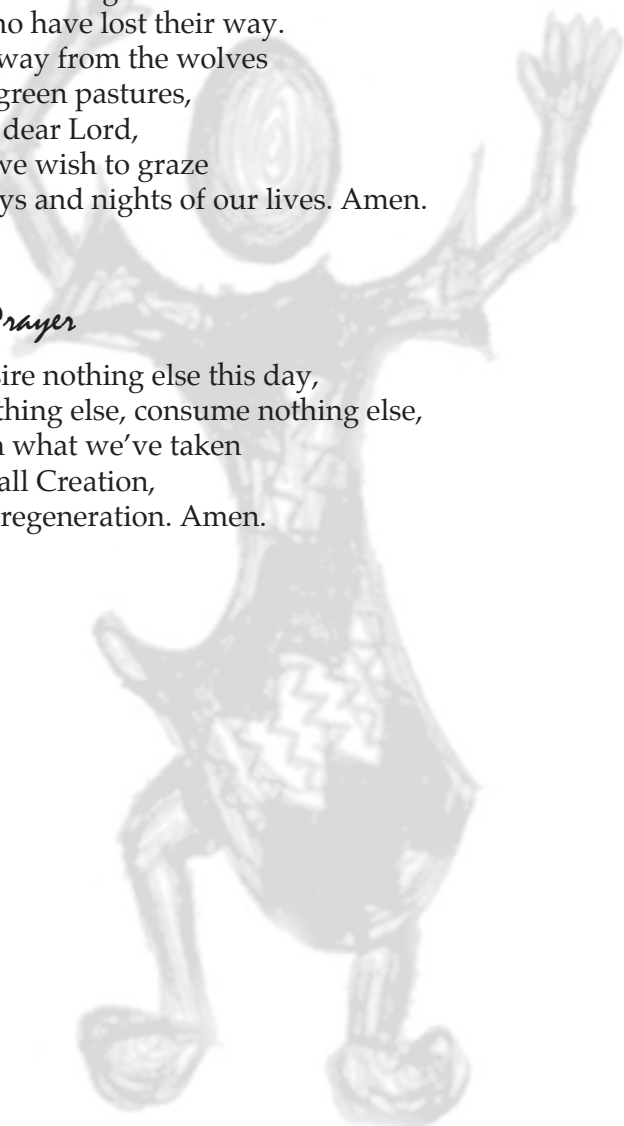
### *Intercessions*

Our shepherd, keep a watchful eye on our flock,  
As we seek a place of refuge  
Where we can rest for the coming night.  
Bless and empower all those poor creatures  
Whose vital work is often out of our sight:  
Bacteria, molds, fungi, yeasts and lichen,  
Blind snakes and bottom feeders,  
Dung beetles and saprophytes,  
Night watchmen, nurses, garbage collectors,  
Bakers and undertakers.  
Let all their good work in scavenging, gleaning,  
Cleaning, composting and fermenting this world  
Keep us from being endlessly productive,  
Allowing us to give back to the earth  
The very stuff that sustains life.

### *The Lord's Prayer*

Father, Mother, Elder Brother,  
Even by saying your name  
We feel your sacredness gather.





Give us, this day, just enough bread  
To keep our family fed,  
Forgive and guide us, poor lambs,  
Whenever we go astray  
Just as we will forgive and rescue  
Others who have lost their way.  
Lead us away from the wolves  
And into green pastures,  
For there, dear Lord,  
Is where we wish to graze  
All the days and nights of our lives. Amen.

### *Closing Prayer*

Let us desire nothing else this day,  
Desire nothing else, consume nothing else,  
But return what we've taken  
To honor all Creation,  
And help regeneration. Amen.

## BEDTIME

### *Call to Prayer*

All you drifting, homeless, wayward seafarers and nomads!  
All you isolated or imprisoned, landlocked home-bodies!  
All you wounded, branded, beleaguered or bullied victims!  
All you unheard, untouched, uncared-for children and old folks!  
Come together, and let your voices loose before God!  
We are here to hear you and not the tired, cliched tapes of  
too-often told tales and excuses looping around our heads!

### *Hymn*

O my God, I cried in the daytime,  
But didn't immediately hear Your answer,  
I cried by night as well, and still gave myself no rest at all.  
Yet I know I am in reach of the Holy One  
Enshrined by the praises from old Palestine, old Israel.  
Our father and mothers have always put their faith in You,  
And when they trusted You, You delivered them.  
Yes, they too cried out to you and were released;  
They placed their faith in you and were not left out...

### *Antiphon*

This seems like a reasonable time to search our souls for some corner where humanity resides...I wish our national anthem were not the one about bombs bursting in air, but the one about purple mountain majesties and amber waves of grain. It's easier to sing and closer to the heart of what we really have to sing about. A land as broad and green as ours demands of us thanksgiving and a certain breadth of spirit. It invites us to invest our hearts in invulnerable majesties that can never be brought down

in a stroke of anger...We've inherited the grace of the Grand Canyon, the mystery of the Everglades, and the fertility of the Iowa plain—we could crown this good with brotherhood. What a vast inheritance for our children that would be, if we become a nation humble before our rich birthright, whose graciousness makes us beloved.

*(Taken from Barbara Kingsolver, "Small Wonders")*

## *Silence*

## *Intercessions*

Creator, cast your traveling mercies down around  
Those who once moved who can hardly get up,  
Those who set out but got lost in the fog,  
Those who ventured forth only to be robbed and beaten,  
Those who took a turn in the wrong direction,  
Those who ran out of gas.  
Each one of us is the lone sheep askew from the flock,  
Each one of us is worth bringing back home.

## *Closing Prayer*

Let us fall asleep in the poorest but loveliest of places  
Where a manger full of hay eases our tired bone.  
Let us hear the lullabies of the muted  
Who can now only hum a few bars of their once-glorious songs.  
Let us cuddle to keep away the cold  
With all the disenfranchised amongst us:  
The weediest, most wayward,  
The orneriest, most ominous,  
The homeliest and hardest,  
Until we become the sleepers joining hands  
And praying for the Last Supper we will ever taste.  
Let us dream ourselves back into one another's arms.  
Amen.



*art by Rebecca S. Ward*