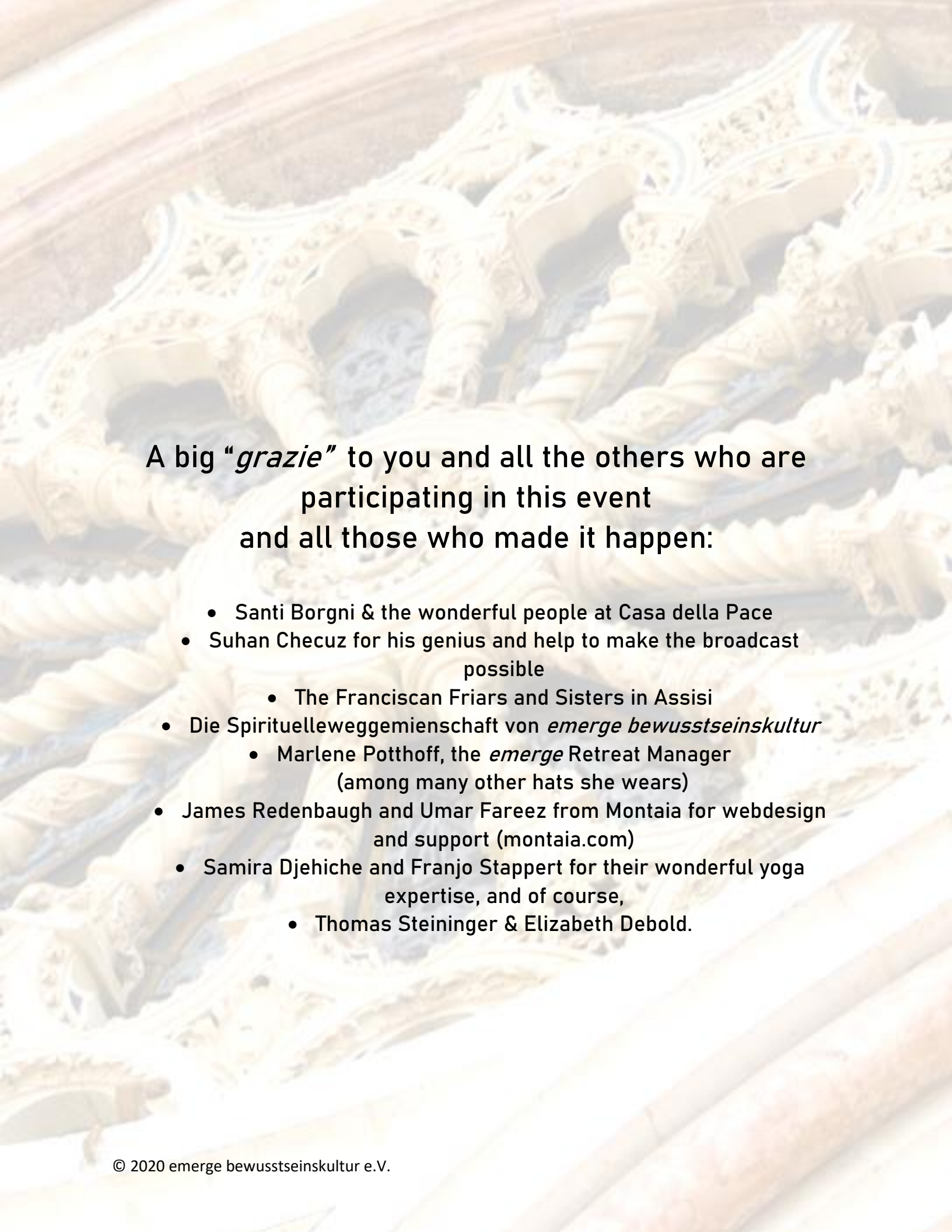




Guide for Participants:
Global Pilgrimage
to the Sacred Heart of Italy

**Meditation & Dialogue
Retreat**

31. July – 7. August



A big “*grazie*” to you and all the others who are participating in this event and all those who made it happen:

- Santi Borgni & the wonderful people at Casa della Pace
- Suhan Checuz for his genius and help to make the broadcast possible
 - The Franciscan Friars and Sisters in Assisi
- Die Spirituelleweggemeinschaft von *emerge bewusstseinskultur*
 - Marlene Potthoff, the *emerge* Retreat Manager (among many other hats she wears)
- James Redenbaugh and Umar Fareez from Montaia for webdesign and support (montaia.com)
- Samira Djehiche and Franjo Stappert for their wonderful yoga expertise, and of course,
 - Thomas Steininger & Elizabeth Debold.

Retreat Basics

Welcome! Benvenuto! Willkommen!

Thank you for joining our first Global Pilgrimage Retreat. We were inspired to extend our annual summer retreat to include online participants when we realized how many people had their plans cancelled because of the coronavirus. And we were also inspired to create a global mandala of people around the world focused on the depth and spiritual power of St. Francis's Assisi.

Please be a little patient with us—there are some challenges to do this, such as getting internet access in the remote hills of Umbria and finding ways to bring you to Assisi with us. This is our first attempt at such a multi-faceted event, so we are very likely to have some mistakes.

Basically, there are two parts of the retreat. The **first part** is in Assisi. On Friday, 31. July and Saturday, 1. August, we will spend a few hours in different sacred places in Assisi to ground ourselves in the spiritual power that has been developed over hundreds and hundreds of years of devotion to St. Francis, who is buried in the basilica that bears his name.

The **second part** will be at Casa della Pace in the Umbrian hills. This small retreat center, founded by Santi Borgni, was inspired by the dialogues of J. Krishnamurti, the Indian sage. It is located in a small medieval chapel that has been de-sacralized and renovated. We will meditate in this old stone chapel. We will spend two and a half days in intensive meditation, with readings from some extraordinary souls, and then we will add the practice of *Lectio Divina* and *emergent dialogue* to the meditation so that we bring silence and depth into language. (Later in this Guide, you can learn more about Lectio Divina.) And, the chapel will be open on Zoom 24 hours a day every day of this part of the retreat.

You will need to create your own retreat schedule. This is a global event, and we are located in the Central Europe Summer Time timezone. We have planned our meditation so that you, wherever you are, can join for meaningful parts of the meditation and group practice.

Your Zoom Links

We have two Zoom Rooms that we will be using for the retreat.

- ❖ One will ONLY be for the meditation at Casa della Pace, which begins on Sunday, 1. August.
- ❖ The other one is for all additional events: the experiences in Assisi, yoga practice with Samira, Santi's Philosophy of Food... If it is not meditation at the Casa, then use this Zoom Room.

Global Pilgrimage to Assisi & Umbria: Events

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86970700320>

Password: 082020 (those are all zeros)

Global Pilgrimage Meditation Room at the Casa della Pace

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86526763601>

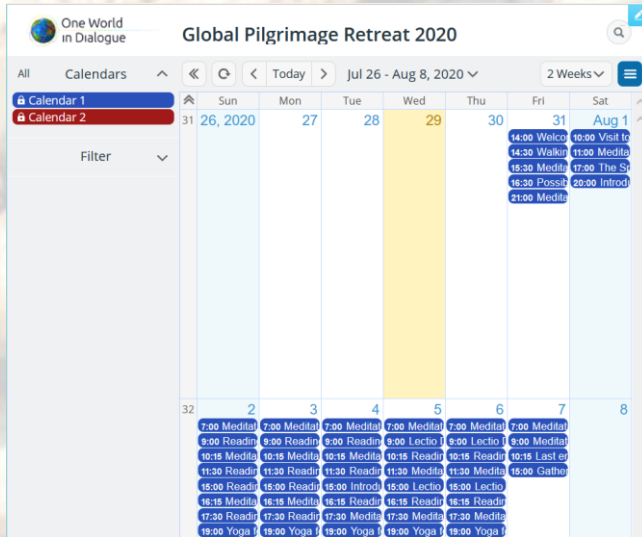
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Creating Your Schedule

How do you create your own schedule?

First, go to the schedule that you find on our “Retreat Touch Point” webpage: <https://oneworldindialogue.com/retreat-touch-point>

It looks like this:

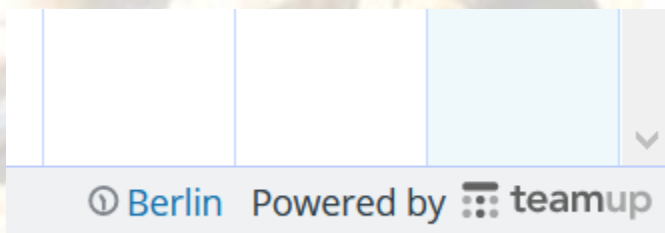


See, there is the schedule for each day, beginning with 31. July and below the first week in August. You can click on each day on the schedule or any event—the blue things that you see on each date.

THE TIMES THAT YOU SEE ARE YOUR TIMES. This schedule calendar may look complicated but the great thing about it is that it will change the timezones so that

it matches where you are.

Take a look at the bottom right corner of the schedule. You should see something like this:



The name of the city should be a city within your local timezone. That’s how you know what times you are seeing. (The retreat team is located in Frankfurt, the

same time as Berlin. That’s why “Berlin” is written on this example.)

Review the times of the events. Notice that, as of 2. August, there will be three sets of 3-hour meditations. Which ones work best in your time zone? What are the best options for your retreat?

Second, what is your intention for the retreat? Is this a deep dive in silence for you? Or are you going to move in and out of the retreat as a daily practice support? Decide what you are inspired to commit yourself to.

Write your intention below:

Third, think about the program components that you want to include in your retreat. Here are some aspects to keep in mind:

- All of the “welcome and introduction” events will be recorded live, so that you can view them at a time convenient for you. They will be on the [Retreat Touch Point](#). Include these in your first day or two of retreat.
- All of the tours and events in Assisi will be recorded live also. We will post them on the [Retreat Touch Point](#). Also include these in the early part of your retreat.
- The yoga instruction will also be live, recorded, and then posted for you to include each day to support your sensing capacity, back muscles, and spine.
- Plan in time to prepare your food. (As we have said before, try to shop in advance.)
- We will be doing meditation, Lectio Divina, and emergent dialogue as practices. You’ll find them on the schedule. You will learn more about these practices later in this guide.
- Think about time to spend in nature—walk outside at least once a day.

Fourth, create your daily schedule. You can use the chart on the next page to help you. Creating a schedule really helps you to be able to sink into the retreat and not get lost in the details every day.

My Retreat Schedule

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
8am								
9am								
10am								
11am								
12pm								
1pm								
2pm								
3pm								
4pm								
5pm								
6pm								
7pm								
8pm								



9pm								
10pm								
11pm								
12am								

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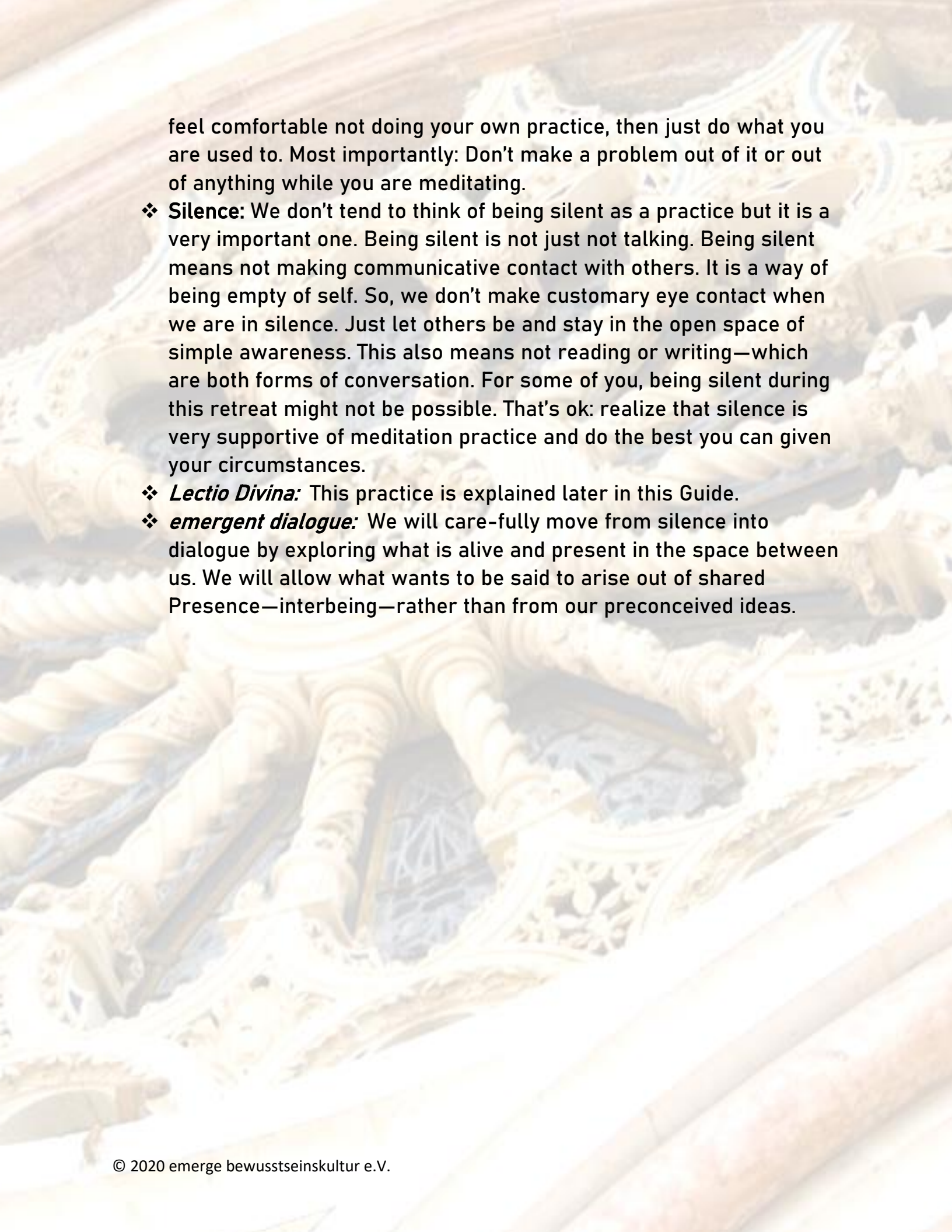
The Retreat Practices

Our aim is to bring a palpable living field of depth into awareness between all of us on this retreat. Those of us who are on location in Italy will anchor the retreat, and *every single person* who is joining the retreat out of love and commitment will contribute to creating this global mandala of focused consciousness and shared human presence.

The retreat has a certain logic and movement. We start in Assisi, not as tourists, but as pilgrims who are traveling into depth in an encounter with the life of a truly remarkable human being, St. Francis of Assisi. Touching the spirit of this place that has been cultivated over 800 years, we connect with it and each other—we hope to radiate this presence across the span of the Earth that we share. Then, we begin meditation and silence so that we can ground ever more deeply. Working with texts from different spiritual and religious traditions, we find different pathways to Source. Next, we begin to give breath and language to our experience of the nonseparate Life that we share by engaging in the practice of *Lectio Divina*, which means “divine reading.” And finally, we explore the potential that emerges from the space between us, discovering diversity in unity, enlivened and transformed by the shared Living Presence that we have been cultivating together. So, we move from the surface to never-ending depth, from casual speech to silence to dialogic communion. And in the process, we develop a radiant resonance out of the beauty of Assisi that spans our Earth in its diversity and wholeness.

We will explain each step of the process during the retreat. Here, though, is some helpful further information about the different practices:

- ❖ **Meditation:** The meditation “chant” (which means just reading aloud together) that we use contains the instructions for meditating that we suggest to follow. It is an open awareness meditation—which means we don’t focus on anything like the breath or a word or prayer. We focus on everything-at-once (or nothing at all). We simply let go of everything. Meditating in this way supports the opening of a field of awareness between and through us. If you have another meditation practice, you might try this approach. If you don’t



feel comfortable not doing your own practice, then just do what you are used to. Most importantly: Don't make a problem out of it or out of anything while you are meditating.

- ❖ **Silence:** We don't tend to think of being silent as a practice but it is a very important one. Being silent is not just not talking. Being silent means not making communicative contact with others. It is a way of being empty of self. So, we don't make customary eye contact when we are in silence. Just let others be and stay in the open space of simple awareness. This also means not reading or writing—which are both forms of conversation. For some of you, being silent during this retreat might not be possible. That's ok: realize that silence is very supportive of meditation practice and do the best you can given your circumstances.
- ❖ ***Lectio Divina:*** This practice is explained later in this Guide.
- ❖ ***emergent dialogue:*** We will care-fully move from silence into dialogue by exploring what is alive and present in the space between us. We will allow what wants to be said to arise out of shared Presence—interbeing—rather than from our preconceived ideas.

Meditation Chants

We will speak these chants together before and after the first meditation on the schedule, and also in the first hour in the third 3-hour meditation set.

Chant Before Meditation, 3x

Allow yourself

To let silence overtake you.

Allow yourself

To let go of mind, body, and sensation.

Allow yourself

To discover ever-present wakefulness.

Let everything be. Let everything go.

Let everything be. Let everything go.

Chant After Meditation, 1x

Where nothing has ever happened, meditation begins.

In the ever-new presence of every moment, consciousness awakes.

Through simply letting everything be as it is, over and over and over again, the potential of life reveals itself—before thought: the creative impulse, the boundless love from which the whole universe shines forth.

Guidelines for Group Lectio Divina

Adapted from a text from the Collegeville Institute

Lectio divina, or “sacred reading,” is an ancient practice from the Christian tradition, dating from the early medieval era when they studied scripture in monasteries. Lectio divina is a slow, quiet, and thoughtful encounter with spiritual texts. Reading and responding to such a beautiful text *three times* provides time and space for a deeper reality to move from our lips and into our minds and hearts.

Based on the image of Jacob's ladder, a twelfth-century Carthusian monk named Guigo II described four steps of lectio divina: *lectio* (reading), *meditatio* (meditation), *oratio* (prayer), and *contemplatio* (contemplation). Through these four steps, the inspired words sink ever deeper into our embodied consciousness and the field of presence that lives within and between us.

- ❖ Make yourself comfortable as you settle in for a time of silence. Breathe deeply to settle your body and your mind, becoming aware of the living field of consciousness that we are sharing together.
- ❖ Listen to the first person read the lectio divina text aloud. Stay a few minutes in silence
- ❖ Listen to the second person read the lectio divina text aloud, Reflect in silence and listen for a word or phrase that speaks to you in a deep way.
- ❖ Share aloud the word or phrase that spoke to your heart. It is perfectly fine if someone else has already spoken that word or phrase before you. It is also fine if you don't want to speak.
- ❖ Listen to the third person read the lectio divina text aloud. Stay in meditation for the rest of the hour.

*“Listen with the ear of your heart.”
—Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue 1*

Supportive Context

About St. Francis of Assisi

Francis was born in Assisi in 1182, the son of a wealthy cloth merchant, Pietro Bernardone, and his wife, Pica. He was baptized Giovanni (John) but soon gained the nickname Francesco, because of his father's close trading links with France.

Francis' early years were not especially religious. He was a leader among the young men of Assisi, enjoying a good social life, singing and partying. His first biographer, Thomas of Celano, describes him as quite short, with black eyes, hair and beard; he had a long face, with a straight nose and small, upright ears. His arms were short, but his hands and fingers slender and long. He had a strong, clear, sweet voice. Francis didn't want to follow his father into the cloth trade; he wanted to be a knight. So at the age of twenty he joined the forces of Assisi in a minor skirmish with the neighbouring city of Perugia. He was captured and spent a year in a Perugian jail, until his father ransomed him. This became the first of a series of experiences through which God called Francis to the life which he finally embraced.

One of these experiences, at San Damiano, led to a rift with his father. Francis, in response to a voice from the crucifix in this tiny ruined church, began to rebuild churches; when he ran out of money he took cloth from his father's shop and sold it. His father disowned him before the bishop of Assisi, and Francis in his turn stripped off his clothes, returning to his father everything he had received from him, and promising that in future he would call only God his Father.

Francis first wrote a very brief Rule for his brothers in 1209, and this was approved by the Church. It was superseded in 1223 by a fuller Rule, which has continued to shape the lives of Franciscan brothers over the centuries. Francis spent most of his life on the move, though he interspersed his preaching with periods of withdrawal for prayer. It was during one of these times of retreat that he received the Stigmata – the marks of the crucified Christ in his own body. For the final two years of his

life he suffered constant pain. He died in 1226, and as he died blessed his beloved city of Assisi. He was buried in what became the great Basilica of St Francis, and declared a saint by the church in 1228.

Canticle of the Creatures

This is perhaps the best known of St Francis' writings, and one of the best loved and most used. It has a particular resonance today when people are seeking to forge a new relationship with creation. It was written towards the end of Francis' life; the first part when he was seriously ill, probably in 1225; the second part in an attempt to make peace between the Mayor and Bishop of Assisi, who had quarrelled, and the final verse on his deathbed.



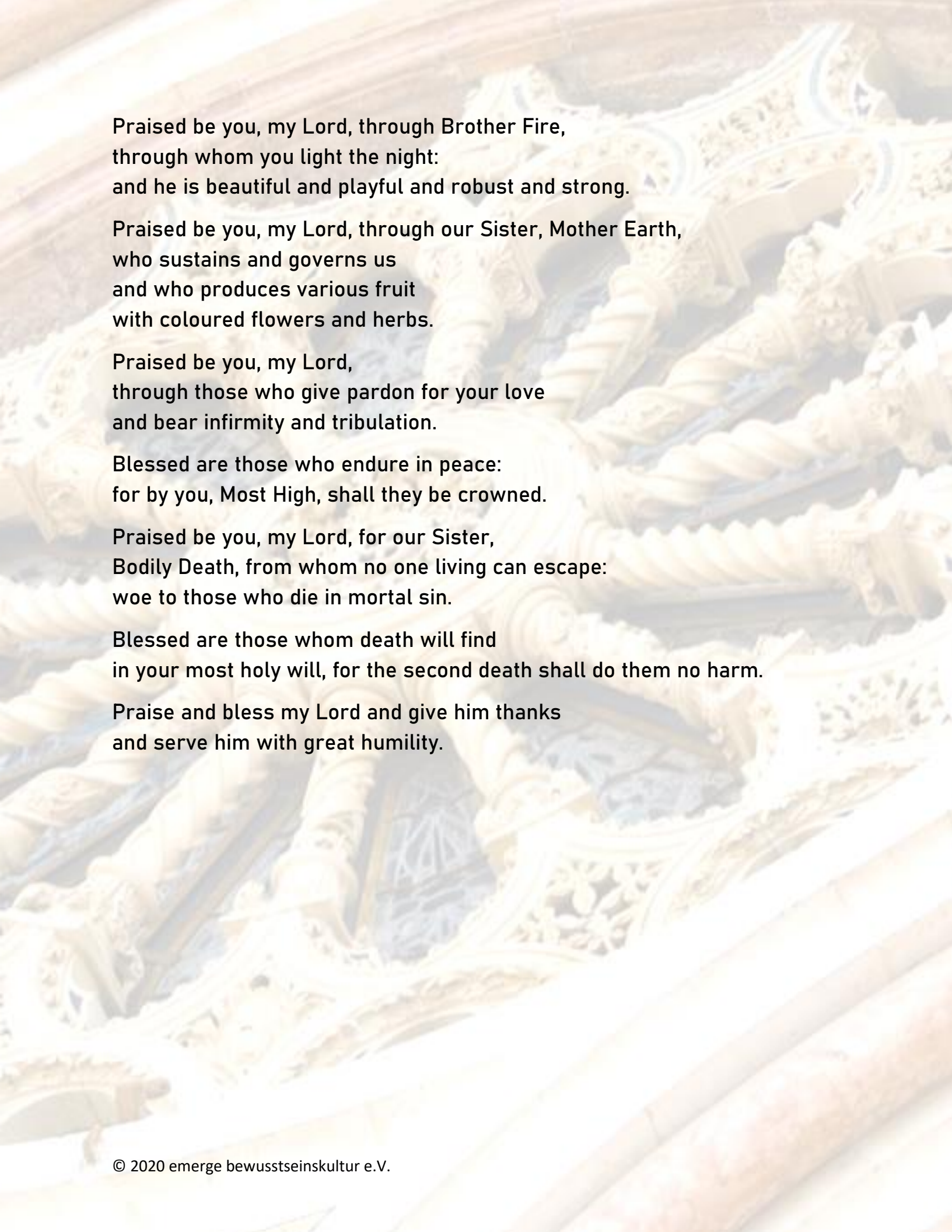
Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
yours are the praises, the glory, the honour
and all blessing. To you alone, Most High, do they belong
and no human is worthy to mention your name.

Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
who is the day and through whom you give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour;
and bears a likeness of you, Most High One.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars:
in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind;
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,
through which you give sustenance to your creatures.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.



Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night:
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us
and who produces various fruit
with coloured flowers and herbs.

Praised be you, my Lord,
through those who give pardon for your love
and bear infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed are those who endure in peace:
for by you, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be you, my Lord, for our Sister,
Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape:
woe to those who die in mortal sin.

Blessed are those whom death will find
in your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord and give him thanks
and serve him with great humility.

About St. Clare: The first Franciscan woman


Clare was born in 1193 or 1194, the daughter of a nobleman in Assisi. When Francis began to preach in the squares of Assisi in 1210 she was 16 years old, 11 years younger than him. She had always been a serious child, and used to share her food with the poor and needy people of the town. She had already refused several offers of marriage. Now she was captivated by Francis' preaching of a simple gospel life, and especially his emphasis on poverty. She had several secret meetings with him, accompanied only by a friend, Bona, and made up her mind to join him.



On Palm Sunday 1212 she left her parents' house secretly. She had already sold her dowry and given the money to the poor. At the little church of St Mary of the Angels, just below Assisi, she met Francis and a few of his brothers. She changed her dress for a simple habit, and took off her jewelry. Francis cut her hair, and she made a vow of obedience to him. At first she lived with a Benedictine community of nuns, doing simple menial tasks. Her family was appalled at her choice and sent armed men to bring her back. But they were unsuccessful. When Clare's younger sister, Catherine, followed her only a fortnight later, the family made even more violent attempts to force her to return home. They were in fact

carrying her off physically, but Clare prayed, and Catherine became so heavy that they could not lift her. Defeated, they returned home.

Francis received Catherine too as a sister, and gave her the name Agnes. Then Clare and Agnes moved to San Damiano, the church where Francis had heard the crucifix speak to him. Here the first community of Poor



Claras came into being. It grew rapidly, and in 1215, very much against her will, Clare was made Abbess. She held this position until her death in 1253. Two years after she was declared a saint by the church.

In the early days of the Franciscan life, Francis visited Clare often, but as his own community grew his visits decreased and she had to find within herself the inspiration she had received from him. Their relationship grew more equal, and Francis would consult her on important decisions. In his last illness he came to San Damiano and Clare cared for him. Although she called herself 'the little plant of Francis' she was in fact a powerful and innovative woman, the first woman to write a Rule for a religious community. She struggled with the church for most of her life, as Popes and Cardinals sought to draw her away from the poverty which was at the heart of her following Jesus, but she remained firm and her Rule was finally approved just a few days before her death. By that time there were more than 150 communities which followed her way of life, mainly in Italy, southern France and Spain, but spreading as far east as Prague, and as far west as Bruges.

Places in Assisi Special to Francis & Clare

San Damiano

In front of the Sanctuary: a place where God revealed Himself. Its only name throughout the centuries has been San Damiano, a doctor and martyr from Syria, whose cult – together with that of his brother Cosma – spread through the West in the fifth century. The original church – dating back four or five centuries before St. Francis – is marked by the medieval restoration he himself completed. It went from Roman cemetery and rural Romanesque chapel, (9th/10th century) with hospice and priest's house (10th/12th century) to a convent for St. Clare with convent church and later a friary. (1211-1257)

The church is the heart of the sanctuary, the church of the conversion of St. Francis. Constructed at different times, the oldest part is that at the bottom with its off-centre apse and sixteenth century choir situated under the low vault.

The Basilica of Santa Chiara

The idea of erecting a church in honor of St. Clare was conceived shortly after her burial on 12 August 1253, the day after her death, in the church of St. George, the place already chosen for the first burial of St. Francis. The new church was consecrated on 6 September 1265 by Pope Clement IV. Beyond the body of the Saint, the Basilica preserves the Crucifix of St. Damian, which spoke to St. Francis.

The Basilica of St. Francis

The World Heritage Committee included on its list the Basilica and other sites important to the Franciscan Order, due to the fact that they represent an amalgamation of masterpieces stemming from creative human genius – aside from being a fundamental reference in European and international art history. In particular, the **Basilica of St. Francis** has been defined as an

extraordinary example of an architectonic complex that has heavily influenced the development of art and architecture.

The celebration for St. Francis as Patron Saint of Italy occurs every October 4; he cultivated a humble and poor style of life, which is probably why he is Italy's most beloved saint. In this Umbrian city, the Basilica dedicated to his name and life preserves the remains of the "mendicant of Assisi," thus making it a destination for thousands upon thousands of religious pilgrims.

Having been the birthplace of the Franciscan Order since the Middle Ages, Assisi has been the center of the Franciscan Cult and the movement's diffusion throughout the world, focusing on a message of peace and tolerance, especially in regard to other religions.

Francis died at the age of 44, and only two years later, he was canonized in an official Church ceremony in Assisi, on July 16, 1228. On that same day, Pope George IX laid the first stone of the future Basilica, destined to become the "mother house" for the Franciscan Order.

However, the initial intention of those who planned it is not one-hundred percent clear. Even today, the critics have not been able to interpret the stylistic discrepancies between the **Upper and Lower churches**.

It has been proposed that the Sanctuary was conceived as a two-level church, with the Lower level (created to hold the Saint's remains) to be a commemorative church, and the Upper to hold official Church liturgies: in fact the apse contains a papal throne, meaning the Pope himself is Bishop of this church.

The Lower Church functions as a typical crypt or mausoleum, erected on the tomb of St. Francis (using ancient paleo-Christian practices as a model).

The Sanctuary of Assisi is one of the oldest existing Gothic churches in Italy, and its walls are decorated with frescoes by **Cimabue, Giotto, Simone Martini and Pietro Lorenzetti**. In this regard, no other church can compete with the Basilica at Assisi.

Source: <http://www.franciscans.org.uk/about-francis-and-clare/about-francis>

The Sanctuary of Eremo delle Carceri

Ancient Franciscan site on Mount Subasio, 4 km distant from Assisi, at an altitude of 800 m, in the heart of a wood with century-old holm-oaks - here is one of the Franciscan Sanctuaries guarded by the Friars Minor of St. Francis of the Seraphic Province of St. Francis of Assisi. The term "Carcere" does not mean "prison", but its origin is the Latin "carcer" meaning remote, solitary, suitable for a life of prayer. Here came Francis with his companions, and after them many friars, to spend a limited period of prayer.

History of the Hermitage

The natural caves of this big rock were used by the Friars as cells. You may visit the small Oratory where they gathered for common prayer, Eucharistic Celebrations and sharing experience of God along their days marked by prayer. Towards the 14th Century, the Friars started to live here in very poor shelters. At the beginning of 1400, with Saint Bernardine of Siena, a small Church was built, the Choir, the Refectory and a Dormitory against the rocks with small cells for the Friars. More buildings followed in later centuries as needed at the time. Throughout the centuries, many Friars known for their sanctity lived here, such as Beato Antonio da Stroncone, Beato Francesco da Pavia and San Giacomo della Marca.

The holm-oak, the wood and the valley

A bridge connects the Eremo with the other side of the wood, where the caves of Friar Leo and other companions of the Saint can still be seen. Our look falls on the century-old holm-oak, so that we can almost hear again the Saint's preaching to the birds, full of love:

«My brother birds, you should greatly praise your Creator, and love Him always. He gave you feathers to wear, wings to fly, and whatever you need. God made you noble among His creatures and gave you a home in the purity of the air, so that, though you neither *sow nor reap*, He nevertheless protects and governs you without your least care». He

himself, and those brothers who were with him, used to say that, at these words, the birds rejoiced in a wonderful way according to their nature. They stretched their necks, spread their wings, opened their beaks and looked at him... Then he blessed them, and having made the sign of the cross, gave them permission to fly off to another place.»

The mountain's gorge is not closed, but opens up in two huge ribs towards the Umbrian plain. Their wideness seems to embrace the world like two vigorous arms, as did Francesco and his brothers when they went down to the valley, strong in spirit, to announce to everybody the Lord's love, tenderness and mercy.

The Cave of Saint Francis

When Francis first came here, he only found natural caves in the heart of this thick wood. They impressed their taste and architecture to the buildings, that were respected with veneration in the centuries.

A steep passage leads down to the cave of the Saint!

Indeed Francis had put his nest in the rocks, and almost like a prisoner among these stones, he merged more and more profoundly into meditation.

At night he stretched out his fragile body exhausted from penitence and fasting on the nude stone.

The small Cloister

The Hermitage in the rocks leads us in a very special way to the discovery of Creation, Nature, and the works of the Lord, thus revealing his Love. Francis vibrated with joy when contemplating nature, his eyes lost in the green and his mind in God. In the incredible tenderness of the Umbrian landscape, he contemplated the marvels of the Lord; he spoke with love to the larks and to all animals.

Source: <https://santuarioeremodellecarceri.org/en/home.html>