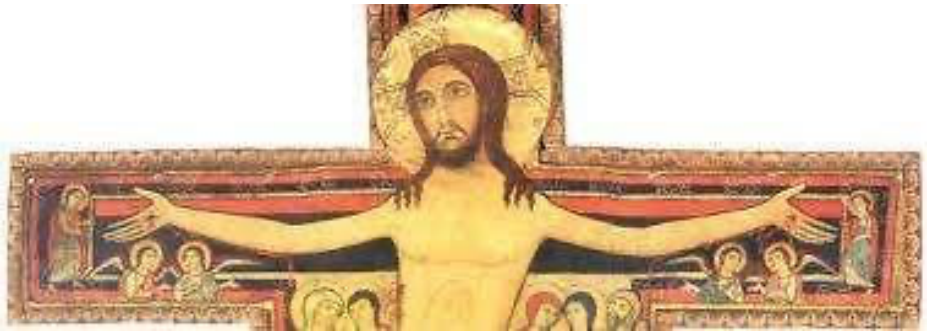

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit… AMEN

READER 1:

For on a certain day, when he had gone forth to meditate in the fields, he was walking nigh the church of Saint Damian, which from its exceeding great age was threatening to fall, and, at the prompting of the Spirit, went within to pray. Prostrating himself before an Image of the Crucified, he was filled with no small consolation of spirit as he prayed. And as with eyes full of tears he gazed upon the Lord's Cross, he heard with his bodily ears a Voice proceeding from that Cross, saying thrice, "Francis, go and repair My House, which, as you see, is falling utterly into ruin." Francis trembled, being alone in the church, and was astonished at the sound of such a wondrous Voice, and, perceiving in his heart the might of the divine speech, was carried out of himself in ecstasy. When at length he came to himself again, he prepared to obey, and devoted himself wholly to the behest to repair the material church.

ALL:

Most High, glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me
true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity,
sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out
Your holy and true command.

(SONG)

READER 1: ***MOST HIGH, GLORIOUS GOD...***

(instrumental music)

READER 2:

By the time Francis recited this prayer, everything had become problematic for him. He needed to clarify his own situation, his relationship with his father, his personal future. However, and even if he was immersed in such circumstances, Francis does not look at himself, but beholds the Most High. How many times are we focused on discords and discrepancies, problems and tasks to be solved? We close in on ourselves, in our fragile human securities, in the circle of loved ones, in our reassuring routine.

When this happens, we are unable to look forward, we remain fixed at the point where we are. In this case it can be helpful to look up and pray slowly: Most High. Whoever prays in this way recognises: there is someone greater than me; I am the smallest, the little brother, the little sister. I want to turn to the Greatest, to root myself in Him.

(instrumental music)

READER 1: ***...ENLIGHTEN THE DARKNESS OF MY HEART...***

(instrumental music)

READER 3:

Look closely for a few moments at the Crucifix of Saint Damian, that is, let yourself be seen by the Glorified Crucified One. What is He saying to you? Present your fears, your doubts, your anxieties... Furthermore, present your projects to him, put them in his hands...

Why am I afraid, why do I have doubts? If nothing is impossible for You.

(SONG)

READER 1: ***...GIVE ME TRUE FAITH, CERTAIN HOPE, AND PERFECT CHARITY...***

(instrumental music)

READER 2:

Before the light-filled Crucifix in the little chapel of Saint Damian, Francis became aware of the darkness in his heart. They consist, deep inside, of not being able to free oneself and give oneself up as the Crucified One gave himself up. That therefore calls for attitudes that are an adequate response to the Lord's self-giving on the cross. He asks for three virtues: faith, hope, and charity. In faith, the human being surrenders himself, like Abraham, to the other... In hope, I look beyond myself... In charity, I give my deepest self and give a personal response to the You. What the human being seeks is love; the human grows and perfects oneself when he loves and is loved. He reaches his perfection in giving himself to others

(instrumental music)

READER 3:

Before the Crucifix of Saint Damian, do you feel loved by God?

If you knew how much I love you, if you knew how much I seek you, if you knew how much I dream of you... you would think much more of Me, God tells us.

(SONG)

READER 1: ***...SENSE AND KNOWLEDGE, LORD...***

(instrumental music)

READER 2:

Firstly, Francis asked for the basic virtues, the 'theological' virtues. What he asks for next concerns more his capacities and inner strength. Thus, with the words sense and knowledge, he refers to the whole human being, encompassing both the bodily and the spiritual dimensions. The human being is called to fulfil God's commandment with heart and mind, with body and soul, with all their strength. Yet on our own, we are we are incapable of this. Francis recognises the poverty of the human condition, our dependence on God. That is why he exclaims: Lord. Right sense and true knowledge can come only from God. Even when it comes to the virtues, the effort to do good, the human being is a beggar before God, but a beggar who can confidently stretch out his hands and ask for: the enlightenment of the heart; for faith, hope, and charity; for sense and knowledge.

(instrumental music)

READER 3:

Before the crucifix of Saint Damian, as Francis of Assisi, ask him for: enlightenment of the heart, faith, hope and charity; for sense and knowledge.

If your strengths fail, if your soul, your body falter, ask the Lord…

(SONG)

READER 1: ...THAT I MAY CARRY OUT YOUR HOLY AND TRUE COMMAND.
(instrumental music)

READER 2:

Our father Saint Francis, forgetting himself and his own person, abandoned himself completely into the arms of the Father, becoming in Him one single person, one single being. And he recognised his greatness knowing that there was only a You, a You that led him to see himself as the most insignificant of all beings, and yet he entrusted himself entirely to God, because he knew that everything came from Him.

(instrumental music)

FINAL PRAYER: (ALL)

To conclude this moment of prayer, and following the example of our father Francis, let say with him the praises to the Most High God.

You are holy, Lord, the only God,
and Your deeds are wonderful.
You are strong.
You are great.
You are the Most High.
You are Almighty.
You, Holy Father are King of heaven and earth.
You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good.
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good,

Lord God, living and true.
You are love.
You are wisdom.
You are humility.
You are endurance.
You are rest.
You are peace.
You are joy and gladness.
You are justice and moderation.
You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.
You are beauty.
You are gentleness.
You are our protector.
You are our guardian and defender.
You are our courage.
You are our haven and our hope.
You are our faith, our great consolation.
You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord,
God Almighty, Merciful Saviour.