

## Disciples on a Mission



**F**rancis understood that his personal mission was not his alone. In order to truly be about the hands and feet of Jesus, Francis and his followers had to be part of something bigger than themselves, something that would not only provide a solid foundation, but would join them to a universal movement that enlivened Jesus's teachings. Thus began Francis's pilgrimage from Assisi to Rome where, in 1209, he entered the Basilica of St. John Lateran to humbly request Pope Innocent III's blessing on his new religious order. Francis needed, and received, a formal connection to the church. So, too, our health care and education ministries. While they serve particular community needs in the name of the Franciscan Sisters, our hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and college are part of something larger. We act in communion with the church; providing education, healing, and comfort in a spirit of solidarity with others around the world who also find their identity and inspiration through the Catholic Church. This is why our Franciscan pilgrimages include time in Rome; not only to experience the places important to Francis, but also to gain a better understanding of the vital role our particular work plays in helping fulfill the larger mission of the church: to bring alive the Gospel message of love, healing, forgiveness, and salvation. †



### Early Writings

From *The Legend of The Three Companions*

[T]he man of God was presented...to the pope, to whom he revealed his entire holy proposal. The pope, a man of extraordinary discernment, in due fashion assented to Francis's request, and encouraged him and his brothers in many ways. He blessed them saying: "Go with the Lord, brothers, and as He will see fit to inspire you, preach penance to everyone. When almighty God increases you in number and grace, come back to us. We will grant you more, and entrust you with a greater charge."

Regis Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann  
& William Short, eds.

*Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Founder, Vol. II*  
(New York: New City Press, 2000), 96.

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, grant that we may approach our work each day as Francis and his followers approached theirs, with an understanding that it is part of a larger mission: bringing about the love, compassion, healing, and mercy of your beloved son to our communities and those in need. Help us always remember that we are the hands and feet of Christ.

### Ephesians 2:19

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

### Scripture



### Reflection Questions

○ In what ways does my work bring about the ministry of Jesus Christ to those in need?