

# THE PILGRIM'S COMPANION: SHARING THE FRANCISCAN JOURNEY

## CONGRATULATIONS!

### Celebrating 50 Years of Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs!

#### Remembering the Past, Celebrating the Present

November, 2022



#### Prayer of Gratitude

Generous God, thank you  
for the wondrous life  
you have given me.  
For even in the struggle,  
grace abounds.  
Even in the hard times,  
I see evidence  
of your hand.  
Thank you for my loved  
ones  
who bring my life  
joy and connection.  
Thank you for meaningful  
work  
through which I can serve  
others.  
Thank you for the home  
of this earth  
and the way it awes  
and comforts me.  
I revel in your goodness  
today.

Shannon K. Evans  
[Franciscan Media](#)



#### [Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs](#)



November is a wonderful month for gratitude and giving thanks. For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, we celebrate the abundance of harvest while, for our friends in the Southern Hemisphere, gratitude arises for the beauty springing forth from the earth. Whatever the season, it is marked in some way with our relationship to food and gratefulness for what the earth provides. Spring greens, fall fruits, and the fellowship of a shared meal are some of the simple and most special joys in life.

Gospel readings, and stories from the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare, abound with the fellowship found through shared meals. From Zacchaeus the diminutive tax collector climbing down from the tree to dine with Jesus, remembrance of a few fish shared amongst many, and the words at the Last Supper: "Do this in memory of me," to Franciscan stories of grapes shared with a starving friar and the meal shared by Francis and Clare lit with spiritual light, shared meals are signs and experiences of hospitality, community and love.



Take a moment to recall a favorite home gathering or one of the meals on pilgrimage. Place yourself at the table. Let your heart recall the people, place and feelings that arose. We can let our past shared meals be our teachers—for what and whom are we grateful? With whom would it be good to share?

This month, Ian and Dora Luxton share a reflection of their time with FPP. Ian and Dora were asked by Fr. John Cella, Director of Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs to be "faces" of pilgrimage for Australia — sharing their experience and connecting with pilgrims. They have retired from this role, and Anne Doherty, principal of Our Lady of Nativity and FPP pilgrimage leader, has transitioned into the role. Ian and Dora took the time to send a few words of gratitude.

This season, may a spirit of thanksgiving be in your homes and wherever you reach out to serve.

Mary Beth—

*Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs, AFCU Outreach*

***Do you know someone desiring personal or professional change? A new book, [Transform Yourself—Transform the World: A Franciscan View of the World](#), by Br. Gregory Cellini, OSF, offers insights and ideas from a Franciscan lens.***

On a 2013 Leadership Pilgrimage with AFCU schools and Franciscan organizations, I met Br. Greg, one of four pilgrims from St. Francis College, Brooklyn NY. As we walked through Assisi, he shared his conversion journey—from 30 years in an international pharmaceutical company, eventual life dissatisfaction, the discoveries found in the quiet of contemplative time in church, and his finally asking God to take over. Br. Greg spoke of how he left corporate life and entered the Franciscan order, and he spoke of a life dream of his— to teach a course in Franciscan transformation in the context of one's career journey.

After pilgrimage, we collaborated to write a syllabus for the very class of which he envisioned. It became a reality in 2017, and this year, Br. Greg authored a book based on the material (full disclosure—I have contributed some ideas and editing).

**[Transform Yourself—Transform the World: A Franciscan View of Career](#)**, is a book, Greg hopes, "will enlighten and, more importantly, inspire you to view your career in a Franciscan way. It will provide a heart-centered approach to seeing and sharing your Good. As you read this book, you will have the chance to define and embrace a wider view of your contribution, and move beyond personal success to actions that transform you and transform the world." Greg's book is a great offering for students and anyone considering their career path. Infused with Franciscan values, it offers time for reflection as well as provides practical steps. Enjoy the transformation journey!



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## Celebrating 50 years of Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs

### Our Franciscan Pilgrimage Journey by Ian and Dora Luxton



We have been associated with Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs since 2004 when Dora undertook her first pilgrimage to Assisi/Rome after being appointed Foundation Principal of Assisi Catholic College, Gold Coast, Australia.

Since that first, wonderful experience, we and numerous other Assisi College staff members, students, parents and community members, have undertaken a number of equally inspiring and memorable Assisi/Rome pilgrimages. In 2019, pre-pandemic, we were also blessed to participate in a life changing FPP pilgrimage to the Holy Land/Jordan.

While pilgrimage is deeply personal, the following two testimonials from Australian pilgrims provide some insights into how they were graced by their FPP pilgrimage experience.

*“From the moment we started our pilgrimage I felt in awe of those whom had walked before us, and those whom I had the opportunity to walk with. Pilgrimages are enriching and immersing because we are with like-minded people, all excited by the discoveries, the stories, the learnings of the past. It is because of the past and the sharing during our pilgrimage we can better understand our role as Franciscans and the importance to keep the stories alive around the world. I would highly recommend Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs.”*

*“The pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome was such an amazing opportunity and one for which I will be forever grateful. Having taught about the life of St. Francis and St. Clare for a number of years, it was special for me to visit some of the key places in their lives – making their stories more real for me. I enjoyed the opportunity to take time out of my busy life and spend time nurturing my own spirituality through prayer and reflection. There was an amazing balance between prayer, self-reflection, guided-reflection, historical visits and, of course, just ‘seeing’. Spending this journey with other like-minded people only added value to the way this pilgrimage has impacted me.*



We feel very blessed to have served as the Faces of FPP in Australia from 2016 to 2021 and would like to acknowledge and thank Fr John Cella for his encouragement and support in offering all Franciscan schools in Australia the opportunity to be part of an authentic, affordable ‘pilgrimage experience’ which have allowed leaders, staff and students of Franciscan schools across Australia to take up a variety of opportunities to strengthen their Franciscan charism through FPP pilgrimage experiences.

On a personal level, our pilgrimage experiences touched us so much, that in 2016, we decided to spend three months in a small town not far from Assisi. This enabled us to return time and again to walk the streets where Saints Francis and Clare walked and to visit the places they visited. Without a doubt, our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Franciscan vision were strengthened.

We are indebted to FPP for connecting us to all things Franciscan. The experiences of the pilgrimages to Assisi/Rome and the Holy Land/Jordan will live with us forever and we pray that our friendships will continue with Fr. John Cella, Sr. Annie Bremner, Sr. Nancy Celashi, Fr. Anthony Chircop and all of our Franciscan friends.



***Pax et bonum!*** Ian and Dora Luxton