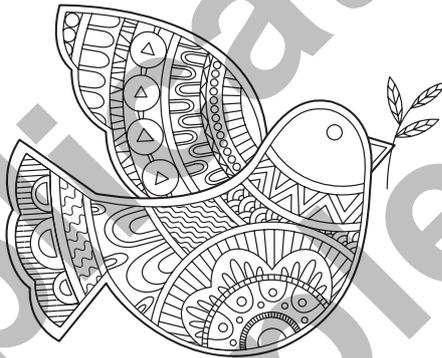


Praising God with Saint Francis

A COLORING BOOK FOR PRAYER AND MEDITATION



The reflections were written by Trish Sullivan Vanni
The illustrations are by Claire Péron.
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Published in North America by Twenty-Third Publications,
a division of Bayard, Inc.
One Montauk Avenue,
New London, CT 06320.
860-437-3012 or 800-321-0411
www.23rdpublications.com.

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ISBN: 978-1-62785-166-4
Printed in China.

INVITATION

Coloring as Meditation

When thinking about meditation, we might picture a serene monk seated in stillness, his or her mind emptied of all thought. In fact, meditation takes many forms. Some types involve sitting, and others involve walking. Some encourage the use of a prayer word or mantra that is repeated over and over, and others involve letting go of all words and being attentive to each breath. Meditations can be guided and filled with imagery. Or they can be restful, centered in familiar prayers, such as the practice of praying the Rosary.

Any time we allow ourselves to quiet down and open up space for God to be present is, in

its own way, an act of meditation. Our quiet, focus, and calm provide room for the Spirit of God to enter. We, in turn, can then relax into the companionship of the Holy Spirit and drink deeply from the grace she always brings.

We hope you enjoy spending time with this meditative coloring book. Through images, words, and prayers, it is designed to provide a space for you to pause and let go for a while. It is a support for embracing this moment in all its richness and being present to God. May the spiritual texts and images nourish your soul, and may the colors that flow through you be a magnificently rich prayer of contemplation.

LAUDATO SI:

The Canticle of the Sun *of St. Francis of Assisi*

It is believed that St. Francis wrote the Canticle of the Sun, also known as the Canticle of the Creatures, in 1224 while recuperating from serious illness in a small cottage in San Damiano, Italy. He expanded the simple prayer over the years. Tradition holds that Francis and his brothers sang the full canticle together for the first time as Francis lay dying in October 1226.

"Even though Francis could no longer see or enjoy the beauty of creation, could no longer see other creatures, even though his eyes were so diseased that they couldn't even be exposed to the light of a fire let alone the glorious light of the sun, he was still able to express his innermost joy through material things, through the sun, the moon, and the stars, through the wind and air, the water and fire, through the flowers and herbs and all of

earth, and he could do so only because all of nature was being illuminated from within.

"For Francis, the sacred had electrified the cosmos, and the cosmos was manifested within him. For Francis, there could never be a separation between the Creator and the creation. His deep experience of God in creation enabled the saint to enter into communion with all of creation, including the lonely and lost souls struggling for survival and self-worth on the margins of the social life of Assisi.

"In Christ, Francis saw God's humility and willingness to become lowly. Francis' interior life and external life slowly became a synthesis of love. The Canticle is both his praise of the cosmos and a hymn to his inner depths."

Gerald Straub, *The Loneliness and Longing of St. Francis*

Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
yours are the praises, the glory, the honor,
and all blessing.

The marvels of your creative power surround me at every
moment, Lord, but unlike St. Francis,
I don't begin my prayers by extolling your greatness.
I prefer "please..." and "would you..." and "if only..."

Seeing what you have created—the fertile earth and all that shares
in its abundance, and the universe vast beyond imagining
—I am reminded that every time we speak,
I should greet you with gratitude and praise.

*Lord, I bless and honor you for the movement
of your creative Spirit, which turned a formless void
into a wondrous living array.*



To you alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no one is worthy to mention your name.

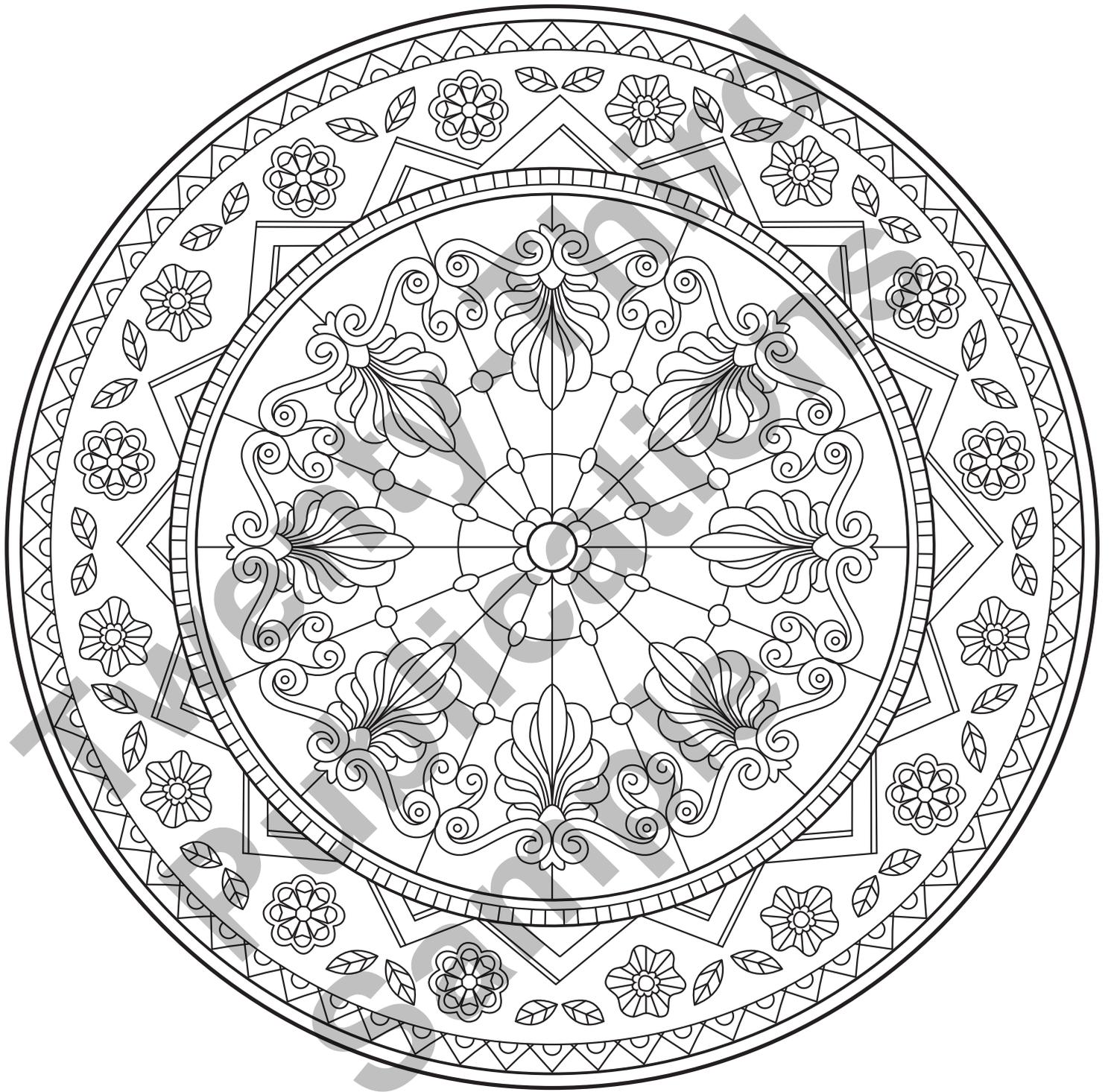
“Lord, I am not worthy...”

I have prayed these words my entire life at Mass.
But I often think, “No! I am worthy!” What is this resistance, Lord?
Recognizing your greatness, the ancients would not write
or speak your name.

Their silence was an act of great humility.
Am I better, somehow, than they, or better than the desperate
centurion who implored you for help?

I am limited, I am broken, Most High.
I need your presence and power in my life.

*Help me remember that when I say I am not worthy, I am simply
remembering that you are God, Most High, and I am not.*



Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and you give light through him.

The entirety of your creation joins in song to greet you
each morning, Lord. The birds at the feeder a chorus of chirps,
the children at the bus noisily teasing, the commuter traffic
humming as each new day's busyness begins.
Spilling over it all is Brother Sun, whose radiance announces to all,
"Time to get in motion! Embrace the new day!"

*As I walk in the glow of Brother Sun,
help me remember that like all your creation,
I was made to praise you.*

