

Jubilee Reflection 2023
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In the name of the 2023 Jubilarians, thank you, our dear sisters and associates. The Franciscan vision of God is that of an artist. Creating abundance out of nothing. All Creation is made of generosity and passion.

Jubilee is a creation time, a God time. The bible tells us during Jubilee, slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts forgiven, mercies flowed into the people. Jubilee makes us new by forgiving the past. Jubilee is not a culmination but a beginning.

Toward the end of his life, Francis, a musician, composed the hymn of creation, a Jubilee song, a beginning song. Who was this dying Francis? A young man by our standards, 44 years old. His body was shattered by leprosy, blindness, and viruses gained in the Crusades. Yet he celebrated. He accepted being broken as the start of something new and more precious. He embraced the present and future with joyful anticipation.

During my travels, 800 years after Francis, I have visited diverse communities of intention like Hindu ashrams, Buddhist monasteries, New Age communities, hippie communes, and communities of various Catholic traditions. In all these places, I encountered a revered statue of Francis. His Jubilee did mark the beginning of his unique creative expression.

The Japanese have an artform of *kintsugi*. The *kintsugi* artist gathers brokenness of a ceramic vessel, then binds it together with gold or platinum. The more broken the ceramic, the more precious it becomes. Just as the *kintsugi* artist recognizes the value in the mended object's history and imperfections, Francis's own brokenness and challenges have shaped him into a precious being. He is a universal sign of resilience, personal growth, and transformation.

What about us here? I know I, as Jubilarian, have digested the past. It has made me strong. It has brought me skills and happiness. Yet, I am not about to start composing a celebration song. I have a mixture of contentment and a yearning to make a difference, to help the larger challenges present in the world.

What we do here in celebrating Jubilee is practicing our skill as *Kintsugi* artists. We have held a community together that shatters and is re-bound with the gold of commitment, the platinum of our hearts. We practice the humility that is called poverty. We mend our brokenness with the precious courage that has us let go of perfection. Age makes us so vulnerable we know we need help; we need each other. We let go of certainty. We struggle to believe we are worthy of love and belonging. We speak of our pain and loss with dignity. How do we move our artistry into the Universe?

We speak the loving spirit of our union. It exudes acceptance and love for each individual. This is the precious metal that holds not only us together, but it spills out into the world, the

zeitgeist, the noosphere, whatever you want to call it. We no longer seek to speak truth to power. We just speak truth to whomever. It doesn't matter how we do it – we write it in our journals, think it out loud, enjoy conversations of recreational thinking. We will expand the consciousness of our lives in every way the spirit leads us.

Let us now enter the liturgy ,which forms us into an even more precious expression of our artist God.

