

HOLY READINESS

THE FRANCISCAN CLAREAN GUIDE TO
SACRED PREPPING AND EVERYDAY CARRY



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Holy Readiness: The Franciscan Clarean Guide to Sacred Prepping and Everyday Carry

By Sister Abigail Hester, OFC

Introduction: *Preparing for a Different Kind of Storm*

In an age of climate collapse, political upheaval, economic instability, and personal vulnerability, the word *prepping* usually conjures up images of bunkers, bug-out bags, and solitary survivalists hoarding gear. But what if preparedness wasn't about fear, but about love? What if readiness looked more like shared bread than canned beans? What if the ones best prepared weren't those with the most weapons—but those who had already surrendered everything?

Enter St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi.

These two radical saints of the 13th century chose a path of voluntary poverty, but they were far from naïve. They lived during a time of corruption, crusades, famine, and plague. The world around them was just as uncertain as ours, and yet they walked into it barefoot—joyfully, prayerfully, and prepared. Not prepared with stockpiles and shelters, but with **trust in God, deep community, herbal knowledge, sacred rhythms, and radical simplicity.**

This book is not about panic. It is not about escaping the world. It is about **showing up for the world fully ready**—spiritually, emotionally, practically, and communally. Inspired by the lives of Francis and Clare, it is a guide for sacred prepping: a way of preparing for collapse without abandoning compassion, for hardship without hoarding, and for the future without fear.

This is not a prepper's manual. It's a pilgrim's pack.

Let us walk the Franciscan Clarean path together—lightly, lovingly, and ready.

Chapter One: *What Would Francis Carry? The Everyday Simplicity of a Saint*

"Let the brothers go confidently with their bowls and eat what is set before them."

—St. Francis of Assisi, *Rule of 1221*

Francis of Assisi renounced his wealthy inheritance and chose to walk the roads of Italy as a **pauper and pilgrim**. He didn't carry much—but what he did carry was intentional. His possessions were not tools of domination or control, but of **connection and care**. Every item was rooted in prayer, humility, and mission.

Let's imagine his *everyday carry*—not as an historical artifact, but as a spiritual practice.

♦ The Rope and the Robe

Francis wore a rough tunic, tied with a simple rope. This wasn't just clothing—it was **his vow made visible**. The three knots on the rope symbolized poverty, chastity, and obedience. Today, those could symbolize:

- **Poverty** → Simplicity and detachment from consumerism
 - **Chastity** → Sacred focus and whole-heartedness
 - **Obedience** → Listening to the Spirit and serving others
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♦ The Wooden Bowl

His bowl was his plate, his cup, his symbol of interdependence. It reminded him to:

- Receive what is given with gratitude
- Never take more than he needed
- Eat simply and always be ready to share

In today's terms, Francis's bowl might be your **reusable cup**, your **foraged tin**, your **pocket spoon**—but more deeply, it's a call to live with **radical sufficiency**.

♦ Psalms and Prayer Beads

Francis carried **Scripture close to his heart**—especially the Psalms. Many friars wore simple prayer cords or beads.

Your Franciscan EDC might include:

- A pocket New Testament or printed psalms
- A homemade rosary or prayer stone

- A favorite quote from St. Francis or Jesus tucked into your wallet

These are **tools of the soul**, anchoring us in peace when the world trembles.

♦ Healing Herbs

Francis was a **lover of creation and a healer of the sick**. Though not formally trained, he recognized the gifts of “Sister Earth” and “Brother Plantain.” He used herbal remedies, learned from peasant wisdom.

In your bag today, a Franciscan prepper might carry:

- Cayenne, garlic, or comfrey salve
- Lavender or chamomile sachets for anxiety
- A booklet of herbal remedies or foraging tips
- A handkerchief or strip of cloth for bandaging

These simple items reflect the spirit of **care without consumption**.

♦ The Tau Cross

Francis signed his letters with a tau—like a “T”—symbolizing salvation and humility. He may have worn one as a token of devotion.

Your modern equivalent might be:

- A tau cross on your keychain
 - A cloth patch with a peace symbol
 - A mantra or blessing you whisper when touching it: *“Peace and all good.”*
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♦ Trust and Lightness

Above all, Francis carried **lightness of spirit**. He didn’t over-prepare. He didn’t fear the journey. He trusted that God—and community—would provide.

He didn’t say, “What if I don’t have enough?”

He said, *“I will go with nothing—and be given everything I truly need.”*



Practice: Packing Light, Living Full

This week, take time to consider your own “spiritual EDC”:

- What weighs you down? What can you release?
 - What do you carry every day, physically and spiritually?
 - What one item reminds you of your vows, values, or vision?
 - Create a small pouch, kit, or pocket altar of sacred simplicity.
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Closing Blessing

May you walk this world with your heart unburdened and your spirit awake.

May your haversack be light, but your love be overflowing.

And may every step you take be a step of holy readiness—

Not for fear, but for faith. Not to escape, but to embrace.

In the spirit of Francis and Clare, may you carry what matters most.



Chapter Two: *What Would Clare Carry? Sacred Simplicity, Hidden Strength*

“Place your mind before the mirror of eternity, place your soul in the brightness of glory.”

—St. Clare of Assisi, *The Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague*

While Francis walked barefoot into the world, Clare created a world within—the sanctuary of San Damiano. Her “prepping” was not external, but **internal, relational, and relentlessly rooted in God**. If Francis was the pilgrim, Clare was the anchor. If Francis carried a bowl, Clare carried a candle.

Clare didn’t roam the countryside like her male counterpart, but she lived a **life of fierce intentionality**—ready to respond to crisis, care for her community, and hold fast to divine light in the darkest nights. Her *everyday carry* was not for travel—it was for **sustained resistance, nurturing, and spiritual warfare**.

♦ The Monastic Habit and Veil

Clare’s habit was handmade, rough, and humble. But it was also a **shield of purpose**—her declaration of belonging to Christ and to poverty.

The veil she wore wasn't submission—it was **strength cloaked in mystery**.

Your modern Clarean equivalents:

- An apron in the kitchen of community
- A shawl worn with prayer
- A visible symbol of your vocation (a pin, a patch, a ribbon of resistance)

These are signs that **our bodies, too, preach**.

♦ **A Candle and a Key**

Clare held the **keys to the monastery**—not just literally, but spiritually. She opened the door to a new way of living for women, and she held the light through the long vigil of faith.

Imagine her EDC:

- A candle stub or oil lamp (symbol of vigil and hope)
- The key to the sanctuary (symbol of responsibility and readiness)
- A small icon or relic of Francis or Mary

Your equivalents might be:

- A tealight in your altar pouch
 - A key on your chain reminding you of sacred trust
 - A prayer card or picture of a beloved saint
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♦ **A Linen Cloth and Bandages**

Clare **cared for the sick**, wrapped wounds, and offered comfort to the sisters. Her prepping was **communal caregiving**—meeting bodily need as holy duty.

Her pack may have included:

- Strips of linen
- Natural salves or poultices
- Scented cloths for comfort
- Water from the well of San Damiano

A Clarean kit today might have:

- Herbal compresses
- Clean bandages

- A soft cloth to comfort or cry into
- A vial of rose or lavender oil

To care is to prepare.

♦ Her Rule and Letters

Clare was one of the first women to write a monastic Rule approved by the Church. Her writings were **weapons of love**—a testimony of spiritual sovereignty in a world that tried to silence her.

What might you carry?

- A copy of your own rule of life
- A prayer you wrote for strength
- A letter from someone who believes in you
- A laminated quote from Clare: *“Love Him totally who gave Himself totally for your love.”*

Let your bag hold **words that restore your strength**.



Practice: Create a Clarean Care Pouch

Clare's prepping was sacred caregiving. Make your own:

- Add a small candle, prayer cloth, bandage, or handwritten psalm
 - Bless it. Carry it. Share it.
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Clare's Blessing for You

Go forward securely, joyfully, and swiftly on the path of prudent happiness.

Let nothing disturb you.

May your soul be adorned with sacred strength, and may your heart be a monastery of peace.



Chapter Three: *Packing for the Pilgrimage: The Spiritual Art of EDC*

“We are strangers and pilgrims in this world.”

—St. Francis of Assisi, *Earlier Rule*

Every prepper knows the question: *What would I take if I had to go now?*

Franciscans ask the same—but not just for emergencies. For them, life itself was a pilgrimage. Whether walking to a nearby village or preparing for death, **readiness was a way of life**. Francis and Clare lived with their hearts packed: ready to forgive, ready to move, ready to love.

What Is Spiritual EDC?

EDC = Everyday Carry

For most people, it's keys, wallet, phone, multitool, etc.

But for Franciscan Clareans, it's more than survival gear. It's the **spiritual and practical items we carry to stay rooted in love and light**.

It's your:

- Pocket prayer
- Healing salve
- Scripture scrap
- Crushed rose petal from your last vigil
- Patch sewn by a friend

It's not about *having everything*—it's about carrying what **matters most**.

✨ The Five Franciscan Essentials

Whether physical or symbolic, these five essentials form the core of Franciscan Clarean EDC:

1. **Scripture or Song** – To sing in the dark, to remember who you are
 2. **Tool of Mercy** – A spoon, bandage, or balm to serve others
 3. **Token of the Spirit** – A cross, prayer stone, or symbol of peace
 4. **Bit of Beauty** – A flower petal, a feather, a spark of joy
 5. **The Empty Space** – A pouch left open for what is given along the way
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Modern Franciscan EDC Kit Ideas

A simple bag or pouch might include:

- A pocket psalter or prayer cards
- A homemade salve or small herbal vial
- A compact sewing kit or multitool
- A piece of chocolate or small offering
- A Franciscan blessing to give away
- An extra pair of socks (because feet matter on pilgrimages)

This isn't about *gear*—it's about **grace**. About being ready to respond with love when the moment calls.

Practice: Bless Your Bag

Whatever you carry—whether it's a purse, backpack, diaper bag, or fanny pack—bless it:

*God of simplicity and sufficiency,
Make this bag a vessel of peace.
Let what I carry be useful, not excessive.
Let me never lack the means to show mercy.
Let me walk lightly, live generously, and love boldly. Amen.*

Closing Reflection

Prepping is often thought of as fear-based. But Francis and Clare show us a different way.

The question is not, “*Do I have enough?*”

The question is, “*Am I prepared to love?*”

Let your EDC be a portable altar, a pouch of mercy, a declaration of simplicity.

Chapter Four: *Building a Modern Franciscan Bug-Out Bag: Sacred Simplicity in Crisis*

“Carry nothing with you for the journey, neither gold nor silver, nor bag, nor extra tunic... for the laborer is worthy of their wages.”

—Luke 10:4, adapted

In the language of emergency preparedness, a “bug-out bag” (BOB) is a portable kit packed with essentials in case you need to evacuate quickly. It assumes disruption, disaster, displacement.

Franciscans were not strangers to those realities.

St. Francis faced war, plague, political unrest, and spiritual crisis. St. Clare defended her convent during sieges. The early friars and sisters lived in caves, barns, ruins, and makeshift shelters. They were **always ready to move—lightly, compassionately, and with complete trust in God’s care.**

In our own age of climate chaos, fascism, and economic collapse, it’s wise to prepare. But how do we do that without fear? How do we balance responsibility and simplicity?

This chapter will guide you in creating a **Franciscan Clarean Bug-Out Bag**: not just to survive, but to serve.

The Franciscan Philosophy of Prepping

Conventional prepping says:

“What if there’s not enough?”

Franciscan prepping says:

“How can I help someone else when everything collapses?”

This means:

- Light gear, but deep readiness
 - Simple tools, but sacred purpose
 - Room to share, not room to hoard
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Franciscan Bug-Out Bag Checklist

Below is a list based on practical prepping wisdom *and* Franciscan values of simplicity, mercy, and community. Adapt to your own needs, location, and abilities.

1. Spiritual Essentials

- Small Bible, Psalter, or favorite scripture pages
- Rosary, prayer beads, or a cross
- Printed prayers or Franciscan blessings
- Candle stub, tealight, or sacred match
- Journal and pen for reflection

2. Personal Care & Medicine

- Small herbal first-aid kit (cayenne, garlic, comfrey, lavender oil)
- Bandages and cloth strips
- Soap slivers, natural toothpaste or tooth powder
- Menstrual or incontinence supplies as needed
- Any essential medications

3. Food and Water

- A collapsible cup or bowl (in the spirit of Francis's wooden bowl)
- Dried fruit, trail mix, or hard bread (like Clare's holy loaves)
- Water purification tablets or a life straw
- A cloth napkin or beeswax wrap for food
- Salt and honey (both are healing and preserving)

4. Clothing and Shelter

- Extra pair of socks (Franciscans walked far)
- Lightweight rain poncho or emergency blanket
- Simple shawl or scarf for warmth and modesty
- Sewing kit (as Clare would've used)
- Head covering or hat

5. Tools of Mercy

- Spoon and pocketknife
- Small multitool or foldable scissors
- Needle and thread for mending others' clothes
- A small gift or blessing to share (coin, chocolate, holy card)

6. Tokens of Comfort and Resistance

- Feather, flower, or stone from sacred land
- Printed quote from Clare or Francis
- Picture of loved ones
- A key (literal or symbolic) to remind you of sacred responsibility

- Tau cross, badge of love, or peace ribbon
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Ritual: Blessing Your Bug-Out Bag

Before you pack it away, pray:

*God of pilgrims and prophets,
Bless this bag and all it may carry.
May it never become an idol.
May it never be used in fear.
May it always serve love.
Make me ready to walk, ready to give, ready to trust.
As Francis had his bowl and Clare her candle,
May I have what I need—and not a bit more.
Amen.*

Bonus: The Community Bag

Create a second, smaller “bug-out bag” with extra supplies you can give away in a disaster:

- Bandages and antiseptic
- A pair of socks
- A protein bar
- A prayer card and blessing
- A small candle
- A note that says: *You are not alone.*

Francis and Clare wouldn’t prep for themselves alone—they’d prep to help the poor and frightened first.

Closing Reflection

The world trains us to prep from fear.
Francis and Clare teach us to **prep from love**.

Their bug-out bag was not just for fleeing danger—it was for **carrying peace into it**.

What you carry reveals who you are.
Let your bag say: *I am a healer. I am a friend. I am ready for love.*



Chapter Five: *The Garden, the Fire, and the Well:* *Franciscan Tools for Resilience*

“Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water... Brother Fire... through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us.”

—St. Francis of Assisi, *Canticle of the Creatures*

In a time of systemic collapse, real preparedness is not just about what’s in your bag—but what’s in your **backyard, your body, and your community**. The Franciscan tradition is deeply embedded in the rhythms of Earth, and its tools for resilience are as old as creation.

This chapter explores three elemental tools that Francis and Clare used to live resiliently and reverently:

- The Garden (food and healing)
- The Fire (warmth and transformation)
- The Well (water and sacred renewal)

These were not just survival tools. They were sacred. They sustained body and spirit alike.



The Garden: Growing Gracefully

St. Clare tended to herbs and food at San Damiano. St. Francis preached to plants and knew each leaf by name. They understood what modern culture forgets: **your food is your medicine, and your medicine is your prayer.**

Franciscan Gardening Practices:

- **Grow what heals:** garlic, comfrey, calendula, mint, sage, plantain
- **Grow what nourishes:** beans, greens, squash, and herbs for teas
- **Grow what shares:** food for the hungry, herbs to gift, seeds to spread

Sacred Garden Tools:

- Trowel, watering can, compost pail
- Prayer bench or stone circle
- Cloth for blessing soil or marking sacred space

The garden is not a luxury. It is a *resistance act*. A sign of resurrection.

The Fire: Tending Transformation

Francis called fire his **brother**. Not an enemy, not a tool to dominate—but a companion.

Uses of Fire in the Franciscan Way:

- Cooking simple meals
- Sterilizing tools and water
- Warming the body and heart
- Holding vigil or ritual in the dark

Franciscan Fire Practices:

- Keep a sacred candle in your home
- Learn to make fire without fear or waste
- Use fire as a **symbol of purification**, not destruction
- Sit beside it and listen. Let the fire speak.

Every hearth can become an altar. Every fire, a holy flame.

The Well: Water as Wisdom

Clare relied on the well at San Damiano. Francis bathed in rivers. They praised “Sister Water” as **humble, precious, and pure**.

Franciscan Water Resilience:

- Collect rainwater (with gratitude)
- Use only what is needed
- Infuse your water with herbs and prayer
- Learn to filter water naturally (charcoal, cloth, sand)

Rituals of Water:

- Morning cleansing with intention
- Anointing the sick with herbal water
- Blessing water before use:

“Sister Water, we thank you. Cleanse us. Quench us. Flow through us.”

Practice: Bless Your Elements

Create a sacred space outdoors with:

- A bowl of water
- A candle or fire pit
- A planted herb or seedling

Pray:

Earth that nourishes, Fire that warms, Water that blesses—

May I live in rhythm with you, not in dominance.

May I draw from you with reverence.

Make me a steward, a lover, a student of your grace. Amen.

Closing Reflection

Francis and Clare didn't buy their resilience at a store.

They **grew it, tended it, and shared it.**

We can too.

To garden is to hope. To light fire is to stay. To draw water is to live.

In a collapsing world, these sacred acts say: *We are still here. We still bless. We still believe.*

Chapter Six: *Holy Mutual Aid: Prepping as Community Care*

"And the Lord gave me brothers..."

—St. Francis of Assisi

"Live together in the unity of mutual love."

—St. Clare of Assisi

The greatest myth of modern prepping is that survival is **individual**.

But Francis and Clare knew the truth: **No one survives alone.**

They lived not in isolation but in **radical interdependence**—a web of care, shared resources, and communal healing. In our time of fragmentation and hoarding, their way offers a holy alternative: **mutual aid as sacred resistance.**

What Is Mutual Aid?

Mutual aid is **solidarity, not charity**. It means:

- We prepare so that **no one is left behind**
- We **share what we have**, rather than stockpile
- We **organize circles of care**, not lines of authority

It's what early Franciscan communities did:

- Sharing food, tools, and medicine
- Caring for the sick
- Standing up to landlords and bishops
- Distributing what was given freely

Mutual aid says: *I won't just survive. I'll help others live.*

Building a Franciscan Mutual Aid Kit

For the Body:

- Extra bandages, food bars, and socks
- Herbal remedies to give away
- A directory of neighbors, elders, and those who need support
- A stash of clean water for distribution

For the Spirit:

- Printed blessings or small prayer cards
 - Pocket psalms to hand out
 - Little crosses or stones of comfort
 - Words like: *"You are not alone."*
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Start a Circle of Care

1. **Identify your community:** neighbors, friends, church, shelter, encampment
 2. **Map your gifts:** Who can grow food? Who can mend clothes? Who has a car?
 3. **Create check-in plans:** Especially for the sick, disabled, or elders
 4. **Hold a readiness ritual:** Light candles, break bread, bless supplies
 5. **Pledge together:** *No one is expendable. No one is left out.*
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Franciscan Mutual Aid is:

- Giving your cloak to someone cold
- Bringing broth to someone sick
- Watching the stars with a lonely soul
- Sharing a tool, a tune, a tenderness

You are prepping **not just for yourself—but for the Body of Christ in your midst.**

Practice: Create a “Blessing Bag”

Fill a small bag with items to give away:

- Granola bar
- Bandages
- A travel-size salve
- A prayer card
- A handwritten note: *“You are beloved.”*

Give it to someone unhoused, grieving, or wandering.

Let your prepping become a prayer.

Closing Reflection

Francis said: *“If a poor person needs what you carry, give it.”*

Prepping becomes holy when it becomes **hospitality**.

In this chapter, we learn the deepest readiness is not about escape—it’s about *embrace*.

Chapter Seven: Sacred Rhythms, Holy Readiness: Preparing the Soul

“Let us begin again, for up to now we have done nothing.”

—St. Francis of Assisi

“Place your soul in the brightness of God’s glory.”

—St. Clare of Assisi

There's a kind of readiness that goes deeper than gear. It lives not in your bag, but in your breath. Not in your shelter, but in your soul.

This is the kind of readiness that Francis and Clare practiced daily: the **rhythmic discipline of the spirit**—a holy preparedness rooted in prayer, presence, and peace. They prepared not just for disaster, but for death. Not just for hardship, but for *encounter with the Divine*.

Their lives were filled with sacred rhythm. Not rigid schedules, but flowing movements of waking, working, weeping, worshipping. They built their strength not on panic, but on **daily renewal**—anchored in stillness and stirred by love.

Daily Rhythms of the Saints

For Francis and Clare, each day was a sacred cycle:

1. **Waking with praise** – greeting Brother Sun with a psalm
2. **Working with purpose** – tending gardens, mending clothes, serving others
3. **Praying in pauses** – stopping to sing, bow, or bless
4. **Feasting simply** – eating bread and greens with gratitude
5. **Sleeping in peace** – surrendering the day to God

They didn't wait for collapse to pray. They didn't wait for disaster to love. Their spiritual rhythms were **already preparation**.

The Four Rhythms of Holy Readiness

You can begin preparing your soul each day through these four Clarean-Franciscan rhythms:

1. **Contemplation: Return to Stillness**

“Desire with all your being to imitate Christ, the poor and crucified.”

—St. Clare

Make space daily for silence or reflection. Light a candle. Gaze. Breathe.

You don't need to fix the world today. You just need to be present to it.

Practice: Five minutes of silent breathing before touching your phone.

Mantra: *God is here. I am here.*

2. 🧵 **Craft: The Work of Love**

Francis believed even sweeping the floor could be an act of praise. Clare made linens for the altar by hand.

Let your daily work be **spiritual prep**:

- Mending clothes becomes resistance to consumerism
- Making soup becomes Eucharist
- Organizing supplies becomes sacred offering

Practice: Do one daily task (cleaning, cooking, crafting) as a prayer.

Blessing: *Bless this work. May it become love made visible.*

3. 🤝 **Compassion: The Act of Presence**

The world teaches us to move fast. But holy readiness moves **with the slowness of compassion**.

Francis stopped to talk to lepers. Clare washed the feet of sisters.

You can prep your soul by showing up gently:

- Check in on a lonely neighbor
- Listen fully to someone grieving
- Bless someone anonymously

Practice: One act of presence each day—no matter how small.

Prayer: *Lord, make me an instrument of peace.*

4. 🌙 **Consecration: Ending with Intention**

Each night, Clare turned her gaze toward heaven. Francis called death his *sister* and prepared for her like a guest.

You can end your day by letting go:

- Name your fears. Release them.
- Give thanks for what was. Forgive what failed.
- Rest in holy unknowing.

Practice: Nightly examen (What was I grateful for? Where did I resist love?)

Benediction: *Into your hands, I entrust my spirit.*

Sacred Prepping is a Soul Practice

You can have the best bug-out bag in the world and still feel lost.

Or you can walk barefoot with your heart in rhythm—and be completely prepared.

Francis and Clare's rhythm was not about perfection. It was about **returning**—again and again—to grace.

Practice: A Franciscan Daily Rule of Readiness

Morning

- Light a candle. Breathe. Say: *"This is the day the Lord has made."*
- Ask: *How can I serve today? Who needs my mercy?*

Midday

- Pause. Drink water. Thank Sister Earth.
- Offer a short prayer or song of gratitude.

Evening

- Reflect: *Where did I see God today?*
- Rest: *Sister Death, I am not afraid.*

Let this be your Rule of Readiness—not just for crisis, but for Christ.

Closing Reflection

Francis and Clare didn't wait for the world to fall apart to find God.

They found God in **each moment**—by shaping their lives into a song of surrender, a dance of simplicity, a breath of bold compassion.

In doing so, they became the most prepared people in history.

Let your soul be your first survival kit.

Let your rhythm be your first resistance.

Chapter Eight: *Death, Dignity, and the Ultimate Preparation*

“Welcome, Sister Death.”

—St. Francis of Assisi

“Go in peace, for you have a good escort.”

—St. Clare of Assisi, on her deathbed

Modern prepping often avoids the one thing we all must face: **death**.

While we prepare for floods, power outages, and food shortages, many of us are spiritually unprepared for the ultimate transition. But St. Francis and St. Clare didn’t fear death. They befriended it.

Francis called death his “sister,” embracing it not as an enemy but as a **doorway to deeper union with God**. Clare met her death with peace, light in her eyes, and gratitude on her lips.

In a culture of denial and medicalized dying, the Franciscan Clarean Way offers a path of **dignity, simplicity, and sacred readiness** for the inevitable. This chapter invites you to prepare—not in fear, but in love.

The Art of Dying Well (Ars Moriendi)

In medieval Christianity, there was once a practice called *ars moriendi*, the “art of dying.” It wasn’t morbid—it was **holy preparation**.

To die well is to:

- Let go of unfinished business
- Forgive and be forgiven
- Bless others as you go
- Die with nothing but love in your heart

Francis and Clare lived *every day* as a preparation for that moment—not with dread, but with **joyful trust**.

St. Francis’s Death: Singing into the Silence

When Francis felt his death drawing near, he:

- Asked to be laid naked on the bare earth
- Sang the *Canticle of the Creatures*, including a verse praising “Sister Death”
- Blessed his brothers
- Died surrounded by song and soil

He didn’t die in a sterile hospital. He died **as he lived**: simply, gratefully, and surrendered to God.

St. Clare’s Death: The Luminous Letting Go

Clare’s last words were full of tenderness:

- She called her sisters “my dearest daughters”
- She thanked God for her vocation
- She gazed upward, whispering to her Beloved

She died not grasping, but **gifting**—leaving behind a legacy of courage and care.

Preparing the Franciscan Way: A Sacred Death Kit

Just as you might prepare a bug-out bag for emergencies, consider preparing your **sacred death kit**—for yourself, and for others. This isn’t about morbidity—it’s about living intentionally and loving well to the end.

Your Sacred Death Kit Might Include:

- A simple will or advance directive
- Letters to loved ones
- A chosen prayer, blessing, or hymn for your passing
- A small cross or token to hold
- A plan for a burial or ritual in alignment with your values

For the Dying:

- A hand to hold
 - Herbal comforts: lavender, chamomile, frankincense
 - Gentle music or psalms
 - A bowl of water to anoint
 - Words of peace: *“You are not alone. You are loved. You may go in peace.”*
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Death as a Daily Teacher

Francis believed **we should live each day as if it were our last—not in fear, but in faith.**

You can practice this by:

- Letting go of resentments
- Telling people you love them
- Being generous with your time
- Practicing gratitude for the now

To prepare for death is to truly live.

A Franciscan Death Ritual (For Yourself or Others)

1. **Prepare the space** with candlelight and a small bowl of water
2. **Read Psalm 23** or Psalm 27 aloud
3. **Touch the person's hand (or your own)** and say:

*"Beloved child of God, go forth from this world in peace.
May Sister Death welcome you gently.
May Francis and Clare walk you to the Light.
May Christ greet you with open arms. Amen."*

4. **Let silence be the final prayer.**
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Practice: Write Your Legacy Letter

Take 15–30 minutes to write a letter that expresses:

- What matters most to you
- What you hope for those you love
- Your prayer for the world
- How you wish to be remembered—not for your possessions, but for your love

Keep it with your sacred kit. Or give it now.

Closing Reflection

You do not need to fear the end.

Francis didn't. Clare didn't.

They lived lightly, loved deeply, and prepared well.

In a world obsessed with denial and youth, they embraced a **gentle, honest death**—and in doing so, they taught us how to live.

Let your prepping include this final gift: the peace of being ready to go home.

Chapter Nine: *Prepping for Joy — Delight as Resistance*

“Let them be joyful in the Lord, and cheerfully return all goods to the poor.”

—St. Francis of Assisi

“The soul is adorned with the flowers of virtue, and shines with the joy of heaven.”

—St. Clare of Assisi

When we think of prepping, joy rarely comes to mind. The world trains us to prepare from fear, to brace ourselves for disaster, to view the future with suspicion.

But Francis and Clare invite us into a **different kind of readiness**—one that embraces joy as an act of holy resistance.

To rejoice, especially in hard times, is a **deeply revolutionary act**. To laugh, sing, feast, and play amid uncertainty is to say: *Love is still alive. Hope is still possible. God is still good.*

This chapter invites you to include **joy in your everyday carry**, to make space for delight in your bug-out bag, and to reclaim celebration as a form of preparation.

Joy Was Francis's Signature

Francis was *not* a grim survivalist. He danced in fields, preached to birds, played music on a stick, and sang to the moon. He kissed lepers and found beauty in beggars. His very life proclaimed:

“Even in sorrow, the joy of the Lord is my strength.”

He didn’t deny suffering. He simply refused to let it have the final word.

Joy was not a privilege. It was **a choice**, a *discipline*, and a **public witness to the goodness of creation**.

Clare’s Joy Was Hidden Strength

Clare’s joy wasn’t loud—it was **luminous**. Her joy was found in the silence of midnight prayers, the touch of sunlight on a stone wall, the companionship of sisters sharing scraps of bread.

Her joy was rooted in intimacy with God. And from that joy flowed **resilience, courage, and clarity**.

When she stood at the convent gates with the Blessed Sacrament, defending her sisters from invading soldiers, she was not afraid. Her joy had made her strong.

Packing Joy in Your EDC

Just as you carry bandages or tools, you can carry **items of delight** that help you stay grounded in grace:

- A stone or shell that brings peace
- A photo of someone who makes you laugh
- A piece of dark chocolate or honey stick
- A poem or song lyrics tucked in your wallet
- A crayon, marble, sticker, or small toy (joy doesn't have to be "adult")

These are not frivolous. They are **soul armor**.

Practice: Create a Joy Pouch

1. Find a small bag, pouch, or pocket container
2. Fill it with 3–5 things that spark joy or peace
3. Bless it with this prayer:

God of giggles and galaxies, bless this joy pouch.

Let it remind me that delight is holy.

When despair knocks, let me open joy instead. Amen.

Carry it daily. Use it when the world grows heavy.

Joy as Justice

In a culture that tells queer people, disabled people, trans people, and poor people that we should shrink or disappear, **to rejoice is resistance**.

To be publicly joyful as a marginalized person is to say:

“I am alive, I am loved, and I will not disappear.”

Francis and Clare remind us: we are not machines. We are not burdens. We are sacred creatures, worthy of play, celebration, and song.

Practice: Feast Day Readiness Kit

Franciscans celebrated feast days with **joyful simplicity**. You can prep for feast days and hard days alike with:

- A candle to light in celebration
- A snack or treat to share
- A ribbon or cloth to decorate your table or bag
- A playlist of spiritual and silly songs
- A blessing to speak aloud: *“This is a holy day. This is a holy life.”*

Make it a ritual. Even in exile. Even in a blackout. Even in grief.

Daily Joy Rituals

Here are small ways to prep your heart for delight each day:

- Say a morning “thank you” before opening your eyes
- Watch clouds or stars for 10 minutes
- Write one absurd or playful thing in your journal
- Dance while you cook
- Place a sticker somewhere only you will see it

This is joy-prepping. And it matters.

Closing Reflection

Joy is not weakness.

It is **your inheritance**.

Francis and Clare chose joy—not because life was easy, but because God is good. Because beauty still exists. Because our souls need nourishment as much as our bodies.

Let your prepping include laughter.

Let your emergency kit include delight.

Let your soul remember: **joy is a survival strategy**.

Chapter Ten: *Living Light — A Minimalist Manifesto for Sacred Prepping*

“Carry no gold, silver, or copper in your belts—no bag for your journey, or extra tunic.”

—Matthew 10:9–10

“If you have possessions, you must have arms to protect them.”

—St. Francis of Assisi

Minimalism isn’t a trend for Francis and Clare—it’s a theology.

It is a spiritual resistance to excess. A commitment to carry only what serves love. A radical refusal to let possessions possess us.

In a world that equates preparedness with accumulation, the Franciscan Clarean path invites us to a different way: **live light. Trust deeply. Carry only what is sacred.**

This is not unpreparedness—it is **holy sufficiency**. It is packing like a pilgrim, not a survivalist.

Minimalism as Liberation

Francis stripped naked before the bishop and declared, *“From now on I will say, ‘Our Father’ instead of ‘my father.’”* That act was not shame—it was **freedom**.

Clare let go of her dowry, her family status, even shoes. She chose a life that was light, bare, and beautiful.

They both discovered something powerful: the less you carry, the **more you are carried**.

Minimalist Prepping Is Not Neglect

It's not about refusing to plan. It's about asking deeper questions:

- **Do I really need this?**
- **Can I share this with someone else?**
- **Does this help me love better?**
- **Is this a tool of fear or of service?**

Franciscan prepping is not about stuffing your bag. It's about making room—for grace, for others, for the Spirit.

Essentials of a Franciscan Clarean Minimalist Kit

The Rule: Carry less, but carry with intention.

Here are minimalist tools with maximum heart:

1. **The Bowl** – For eating, drinking, giving
2. **The Prayer** – One psalm, one phrase, one truth that travels
3. **The Cloth** – A handkerchief, bandage, or napkin that can serve multiple needs
4. **The Oil** – For healing and anointing
5. **The Symbol** – A cross, feather, or ribbon that reminds you of who you are

These aren't clutter. They're anchors.

Decluttering as Spiritual Practice

Francis didn't just declutter his home—he decluttered his heart.

Letting go of fear, pride, shame, and control.

You can practice minimalist prepping by regularly asking:

- What is weighing me down?
- What am I clinging to out of fear?
- What can I release to create space for the sacred?

Let go—not just of things, but of narratives, judgments, expectations.

The Freedom of Enough

The world says you are not safe unless you have more.

The Gospel says you are safe because **you belong to God**.

To live with enough—not too much, not too little—is the heart of sacred minimalism. It's about trusting that **abundance is found in community, creation, and the Spirit**, not in closets or storage containers.

Practice: A Franciscan Packing List for Any Journey

Ask yourself:

- What would I take if I had to walk for miles?
- What could I use to bless others along the way?
- What weighs me down, physically or spiritually?

Then pack:

- ✓ 1 item for body care (salve, soap, or socks)
- ✓ 1 item for spirit care (prayer, quote, or rosary)
- ✓ 1 item for service (spoon, bandage, or balm)
- ✓ 1 item for joy (chocolate, charm, or feather)
- ✓ 1 open hand—for whatever God gives next

That's it. That's the kit.

Ritual: The Blessing of the Empty Bag

Take a moment to hold your backpack, purse, or pouch and pray:

*God of enough,
Help me release what I don't need.
Teach me to carry light and love well.
May my bag never be too full to receive a gift,
And may my heart never be too heavy to say yes.
Amen.*



Closing Reflection

To live lightly is to live **liberated**.

Francis and Clare gave away almost everything—but in doing so, they discovered joy, purpose, community, and divine intimacy.

Let your prepping be a **pilgrimage of release**, not a prison of accumulation.

In a world burdened by excess, the soul that travels light is the one most ready to meet God on the road.



Chapter Eleven: *The Pilgrim's Shelter — Homes, Havens, and Hospitality in a Time of Collapse*

"Make your home wherever you are, for the whole world is your cloister."

—Inspired by the Rule of St. Clare

"The Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head."

—Matthew 8:20

When the world feels unstable—politically, economically, ecologically—we are all looking for **shelter**. Not just a roof, but a **refuge**. A space of safety, belonging, and warmth.

Francis and Clare knew what it was to live without permanent shelter. They were wanderers, cloistered mystics, and community builders. Francis slept in caves, fields, and borrowed corners of the world. Clare lived in a small convent made of crumbling stone. Neither feared simplicity—and both **created havens** of peace in a violent, crumbling society.

This chapter explores the meaning of home when everything is uncertain, and how **hospitality becomes holy prepping**.



Francis's Shelter: Wherever Christ Was

Francis was often unhoused by choice. His security was not in walls, but in **relationships and rhythm**.

Wherever he stayed became a sanctuary:

- A barn with straw became a chapel
- A ruined church became a monastery

- A tree's shade became a classroom

His true shelter was **trust in God's providence** and the hospitality of the poor.



Clare's Shelter: A Fortress of Prayer

Clare lived behind convent walls, but she was not isolated. San Damiano was:

- A **place of mutual aid**
- A **refuge for the sick and hungry**
- A **spiritual stronghold** against empire

Clare defended it not with weapons, but with the **presence of Christ** and the **power of her prayers**.

Her shelter was built not just of stone—but of steadfastness.



In Times of Collapse, Shelter Is a Sacred Act

Shelter isn't just a structure—it's a way of **being present**.

Franciscan Clarean shelter includes:

- A corner of the earth where people are safe
- A space where no one is turned away
- A threshold that blesses as you enter and as you go

In your prepping, consider not just *where* you will go—but *who* you will welcome.



Sacred Shelter Practices

1. Bless Your Dwelling

Whether a home, tent, room, or corner of the floor, pray:

Peace to this place.

May all who enter find rest.

May this be a house of healing and a station of the cross.

May angels watch the thresholds, and Christ dwell within.

2. Create a Haven Corner

Even if your space is small or impermanent:

- Light a candle
- Lay down a cloth or natural item (stone, flower, bowl of water)
- Keep a prayer or quote nearby
- Make it a daily touchpoint of peace

3. Practice “Open Door Prepping”

Think of how you might:

- Offer a spare blanket to someone outside
- Keep food or water on hand for a neighbor
- Learn names of those in your apartment complex or camp
- Organize a community fire pit, table, or supply closet

Francis would say: *Let no one be without a place to lay their head.*



Mobile Shelter: The Franciscan Tent

If collapse comes, you may need to move. But you can still carry **sacred shelter**:

- A tarp and rope to create shade or dryness
- A wool blanket or shawl to wrap someone in
- A foldable mat or cloth for prayer and rest
- A song to sing around a fire or in a storm

You are not shelter-less if **your heart is a sanctuary**.



Hospitality as Sacred Prepping

Clare opened the gates of San Damiano to the sick. Francis sat with lepers. They didn't prep only for themselves—they prepped to **receive Christ in the stranger**.

To practice Franciscan hospitality:

- Keep an extra portion ready
 - Practice eye contact, even when people are hurting
 - Welcome conversation as well as physical presence
 - Speak the words: *“I’m glad you’re here.”*
-

Practice: Create a Shelter Kit

Include:

- A lightweight tarp or emergency blanket
- A candle or tealight for warmth and prayer
- Herbal salve for comfort
- A quote or scripture card for courage
- A simple blessing to read aloud

Optional: Keep a second kit ready to give away.

Closing Reflection

You don't need walls to have a home.

You don't need wealth to offer sanctuary.

You just need **open hands, open eyes, and a faithful heart.**

Francis found shelter in the open sky. Clare found it in a crumbling convent.

You can find it too—in your spirit, in your people, and in the radical hospitality of love.

Your home is not just where you hide.

It's where you bless.

Chapter Twelve: *Final Preparations — Becoming a Light in the Dark*

“Go and light the world on fire with the love of God.”

—St. Ignatius of Loyola (a later saint, but a Franciscan spirit)

“While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.”

—John 12:36

“Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.”

—St. Francis of Assisi

In the end, prepping is not about hiding. It's about **shining**.

Francis and Clare were not obsessed with survival. They were obsessed with **love**—and they carried that love into caves, convents, forests, and famine. They didn't prepare for the end of the world. They lived every day as if **heaven was already breaking through**.

This final chapter invites you to complete your preparation not with panic, but with peace. Not with fear, but with **fire**—the fire of compassion, clarity, and courageous presence.

The world is dark in many places. Let us be light.

Becoming a Living Lamp

What makes a Franciscan Clarean ready?

Not a stockpile.

Not a fortress.

But a **heart on fire with love**—light enough to move, open enough to serve, brave enough to sing in the storm.

You become a light:

- When you bless your bag instead of clutching it
- When you smile at a stranger while sharing your last meal
- When you kneel by a dying friend with tears and a prayer
- When you choose joy when the world chooses despair

This is prepping for the Kingdom of God.

The Final Checklist

Before we part, here is your **Final Franciscan Readiness Checklist**:

- ✓ Do I know what matters most?
- ✓ Have I made peace with my death?
- ✓ Have I prepared something to give?
- ✓ Have I created rituals for stillness, gratitude, and joy?
- ✓ Is my bag packed with both practicality and prayer?
- ✓ Have I let go of excess so I can walk freely?
- ✓ Do I know who I'll check on when things fall apart?
- ✓ Can I be a place of shelter for someone else?
- ✓ Have I practiced trust more than fear?
- ✓ Am I ready not just to survive—but to **bless**?

If even a few of these are true, then you are more ready than you think.

Practice: Light Your Franciscan Lamp

Gather:

- A candle or lantern
- A written prayer or psalm
- A simple object from nature (stone, flower, leaf)

Create a quiet moment. Light the candle. Read aloud:

God of light,

You do not abandon Your people.

You enter our disasters. You walk our ruined roads.

Make me a flame of mercy in the darkness.

Let my hands be gentle. Let my heart be open.

Let me carry what matters, and leave behind what does not.

May I walk like Francis. May I pray like Clare.

And when the world trembles, may I shine.

Amen.

Let this be your final act of preparation—and your first act of hope.

Epilogue: The Gospel of Readiness

In the end, to prepare is to love.

To love God, to love your neighbor, to love yourself enough to live well, serve deeply, and die peacefully.

Francis and Clare never called themselves preppers.

But they were always ready:

- Ready to give
- Ready to go
- Ready to bless
- Ready to trust
- Ready to meet God, wherever God appeared—in lepers, in lightning, in loneliness, in love

You too are ready. You too are light.

Go now—not to hoard, but to help.
Not to flee, but to **stand with those in need**.
Not to disappear, but to **radiate Christ**.

Pack light. Walk gently. Burn brightly.

The world is waiting.

About the Author

Sister Abigail Hester, OFC, is a progressive Christian nun, writer, and spiritual caregiver rooted in the Franciscan and Clarean tradition. As the founder of the **Order of Franciscan Clareans**, she lives and teaches a spirituality of simplicity, mutual aid, radical love, and sacred resistance in the face of empire.

A passionate advocate for queer and trans inclusion, disability justice, ecological healing, and new monasticism, Sister Abigail weaves together ancient wisdom and contemporary urgency. Her work is shaped by the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, liberation theology, herbal healing, and her own journey of faith, survival, and sacred joy.

She is legally blind, diaper dependent, and lives with multiple chronic conditions—including major neurocognitive disorder—and sees these not as disqualifications but as sacred portals into deeper compassion and clarity.

Sister Abigail is also the author of numerous books on theology, memoir, disability, herbalism, and Franciscan spirituality. She offers pastoral care, workshops, and writings through her blog:

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