

A FRANCISCAN ^T CLAREAN GUIDE

EVERYDAY CARRY

A DISCIPLE'S GUIDE TO PRACTICAL
PREPAREDNESS AND FAITHFUL LIVING



SPIRITUAL
READINESS



PRACTICAL
SKILLS



EVERYDAY
EQUIPMENT



COMPASSIONATE
SERVICE



FRANCISCAN
SIMPLICITY



EQUIPPED TO SERVE. CALLED TO LOVE.

Go lightly. Love boldly. Walk in peace.

*"Let us begin again,
for up to now we
have done nothing."*

— ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Preface

There is an old saying that the best time to repair your roof is before it rains.

The same is true of the Christian life.

Preparedness is often misunderstood. Some imagine fear-driven survivalism, stockpiles hidden away, or an obsession with disasters. Others dismiss all preparation as a lack of trust in God. I believe both extremes miss the heart of the Gospel.

This book offers a different vision.

Preparedness, understood through the lives of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare of Assisi, is not about living in fear of tomorrow. It is about living faithfully today. It is an expression of stewardship, compassion, hospitality, and love.

Francis and Clare embraced holy simplicity, not reckless neglect. They trusted God deeply while working diligently. They welcomed strangers, cared for the sick, shared what little they had, and walked lightly upon the earth. Their example reminds us that the disciple of Christ is called to be ready—not ready for violence, but ready for mercy; not ready to dominate, but ready to serve.

The Franciscan Clarean approach to preparedness asks different questions than the world often asks.

Instead of asking, "How can I protect myself?" we ask, "How can I become a blessing to others?"

Instead of asking, "How much can I accumulate?" we ask, "How simply can I live while remaining ready to help?"

Instead of asking, "What do I need to survive?" we ask, "What do I need to love well?"

Throughout these pages you will find practical guidance on everyday carry (EDC), emergency preparedness, travel, pilgrimage, first aid, street chaplaincy, and spiritual care. Yet every chapter returns to one central conviction: our equipment exists to support our vocation, not define it.

A flashlight becomes a symbol of hope.

A bottle of water becomes an act of mercy.

A first aid kit becomes an expression of compassion.

A haversack becomes a traveling ministry.

Even a simple Altoids tin can become a reminder that every place is holy ground because God is already there.

This is not a book for survivalists.

It is a book for disciples.

It is for pastors, chaplains, hikers, campers, pilgrims, missionaries, street ministers, parents, neighbors, and anyone who desires to walk through the world prepared to love.

You do not need expensive equipment.

You do not need the latest gadgets.

You do not need a large house or an overflowing pantry.

You simply need a willing heart, wise stewardship, and a commitment to carry what helps you serve others well.

My hope is that this book encourages you to simplify your life, deepen your faith, strengthen your practical skills, and discover that preparedness can become a spiritual discipline rooted in peace rather than fear.

May your hands always be ready to help.

May your heart always be ready to forgive.

May your feet always be willing to walk beside those who suffer.

And may every pocket, pouch, haversack, and backpack you carry become another opportunity to embody the love of Christ.

As St. Francis is often remembered as praying:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace."

May this book help you become just that.

Sister Abigail Hester, OFC

Founder, Order of Franciscan Clareans

Chapter 1

What Would St. Francis Carry?

When most people hear the words *everyday carry* (EDC), they imagine expensive pocket knives, tactical backpacks, flashlights with dozens of settings, and enough gear to survive a zombie apocalypse. While there is nothing inherently wrong with owning quality equipment, the Franciscan Clarean approach begins with a different question.

Instead of asking, **"What is the coolest gear?"** we ask, **"What helps me love God and my neighbor today?"**

That single question changes everything.

Simplicity Is Not Neglect

St. Francis of Assisi embraced Lady Poverty not because he believed suffering was good in itself, but because he wanted nothing to stand between himself and following Christ. He traveled with very little, not to prove his holiness, but to remain free—free to go wherever God called, free to help anyone in need, and free from the burden of unnecessary possessions.

Living simply is not the same as living carelessly.

A person who refuses to carry necessary medication because they think it looks more "spiritual" is not practicing simplicity. A person who neglects basic first aid, ignores weather warnings, or refuses to prepare for foreseeable emergencies is confusing faith with presumption.

Christian trust in God has never meant refusing to act wisely. Noah built the ark before the rain came. Joseph stored grain before the famine. The Good Samaritan carried oil and wine to care for wounds. Wisdom and faith walk together.

The Franciscan Clarean carries what is needed—not out of fear, but out of love.

Every Item Should Have a Purpose

Before placing something into your pocket, belt pouch, or haversack, ask three questions:

1. Does this help me care for myself?
2. Does this help me care for others?
3. Is this worth its weight?

If the answer to all three is yes, it probably belongs.

If the answer is no, it may simply be extra weight.

Every ounce we carry has a cost. Heavy gear slows us down, tires us out, and often distracts us from the people we are called to serve. Simplicity allows us to move lightly through the world, ready to respond when someone needs help.

Preparedness Is Hospitality

Franciscan spirituality has always emphasized hospitality. We welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, comfort the suffering, and make room for those whom society overlooks.

Preparedness extends that hospitality beyond the walls of our homes.

A bottle of water can become an act of mercy.

An extra pair of socks can restore someone's dignity.

A simple bandage can prevent an infection.

A flashlight can calm someone frightened in the dark.

A power bank can reconnect a person with family after an emergency.

None of these items are extraordinary. Yet each can become a tangible expression of Christ's compassion.

Preparedness is not about accumulating gadgets. It is about being equipped to practice mercy wherever life takes us.

Traveling Like a Pilgrim

Francis often walked long distances over rough roads with few possessions. Pilgrims throughout Christian history learned an important lesson: what you carry should support your journey, not become your burden.

Modern life presents different challenges than medieval Italy, but the principle remains the same.

Whether walking city streets, serving as a street chaplain, commuting to work, attending church, or hiking a forest trail, our equipment should help us remain mobile, adaptable, and available.

We are pilgrims, not pack mules.

The goal is not to own more gear. The goal is to carry the right gear.

The Spiritual Weight We Carry

Some burdens cannot be packed into a bag.

Resentment.

Fear.

Anger.

Pride.

Anxiety.

These weigh far more than any backpack ever could.

As we simplify our physical possessions, we are also invited to simplify our hearts. Every act of forgiveness lightens our load. Every prayer releases another burden into God's hands. Every choice to love instead of judge makes us freer to follow Christ.

The lightest traveler is often the one whose heart has learned to trust.

A Franciscan Clarean Rule for Everyday Carry

Before leaving home each day, remember these simple principles:

- Carry what you need, not what impresses others.
- Choose quality over quantity.
- Learn to use everything you carry.
- Maintain your equipment well.
- Share your supplies generously.
- Replace what you give away.
- Travel lightly enough to serve joyfully.
- Let every item remind you that you are called to be an instrument of God's peace.

A pocket full of expensive tools does not make us prepared. A heart ready to serve, paired with simple, practical equipment, does.

That is the Franciscan Clarean way.

Chapter 2

St. Clare and Holy Readiness

When people think of preparedness, they often picture someone standing alone, guarding supplies against the world. St. Clare of Assisi offers us a radically different vision. Her preparedness was never about protecting possessions—it was about protecting people. She built a community where prayer, hospitality, and mutual care were woven together into daily life.

Holy readiness begins not with stockpiling, but with love.

A Community That Was Ready

At San Damiano, Clare and her sisters lived simply. They did not possess great wealth or luxury, yet they cultivated habits that allowed their community to endure hardship with grace. Their days were shaped by prayer, work, shared meals, and service. They learned to make do with little, repair what they had, and depend on one another.

These are the foundations of true preparedness.

A community that knows how to share, cooperate, and encourage one another is often more resilient than one overflowing with supplies but lacking trust.

Preparedness is not merely about having resources. It is about building relationships that sustain us when resources are stretched.

Hospitality Is a Form of Preparedness

Throughout Scripture, hospitality is a sacred practice. Abraham welcomed strangers. Martha opened her home to Jesus. The early Christians shared what they had so that no one among them was in need.

Clare lived this tradition faithfully.

To be prepared is to be ready to welcome the unexpected guest, comfort the grieving neighbor, feed the hungry traveler, or shelter someone fleeing danger. Sometimes preparedness looks like an emergency kit. Sometimes it looks like an open chair at the table.

The Franciscan Clarean asks, "If Christ came to my door today disguised as someone in need, would I be ready to receive him?"

The Courage to Stand Firm

One of the most beloved stories about St. Clare tells of her praying before the Blessed Sacrament during a time of danger as hostile forces threatened San Damiano. Whether every detail of the story is historical or shaped by centuries of devotion, it reflects something undeniably true about Clare's character: she met fear with steadfast faith.

Preparation does not eliminate fear.

It teaches us how to act faithfully despite it.

When emergencies arise, panic rarely helps. Calm minds, practiced skills, and compassionate hearts become gifts to everyone nearby.

Prayer and preparation work together. Prayer steadies the heart, while preparation equips the hands.

Preparedness Begins Long Before the Emergency

We do not become compassionate only after disaster strikes. We practice compassion every day.

We do not suddenly learn first aid during an accident. We learn beforehand.

We do not discover generosity during a crisis. We cultivate generous habits throughout our lives.

Clare understood that holiness is formed through ordinary daily practices. In the same way, preparedness is not built in a single shopping trip. It grows through consistent habits:

- Rotating emergency supplies.
- Learning practical skills.
- Maintaining equipment.
- Checking on neighbors.
- Saving a little each month.
- Practicing gratitude instead of fear.

Small acts, repeated faithfully, prepare us for larger challenges.

The Prepared Home

Every Franciscan Clarean home, whether it is a house, apartment, monastery, shelter room, RV, or tent, can become a place of peace.

A prepared home does not need to be large or expensive. It simply needs to be intentional.

A few days of clean water.

Simple shelf-stable food.

Basic medical supplies.

Flashlights with fresh batteries.

Blankets for warmth.

Charged communication devices.

Important documents stored safely.

These ordinary preparations allow us not only to care for ourselves but also to assist others when hardship comes.

A Spirit of Generosity

The temptation in preparedness circles is to think, "How much can I gather for myself?"

The Franciscan Clarean asks a different question:

"How much can I share?"

Perhaps you carry an extra bottle of water.

An additional pair of gloves.

A second flashlight.

A few protein bars.

A blanket.

A hygiene kit.

These items may seem small until they become an answer to someone's prayer.

Preparedness becomes ministry when what we carry is offered freely.

Holy Readiness

Holy readiness is more than owning gear.

It is the discipline of becoming the kind of person others can depend upon.

The prepared disciple is calm in chaos, generous in scarcity, creative in difficulty, and hopeful in uncertainty.

St. Clare teaches us that readiness is not measured by the size of our storage closet or the weight of our backpack. It is measured by the depth of our trust in God and the breadth of our love for our neighbors.

Reflection

Before adding another item to your kit, ask yourself:

- Does this help me serve someone else?
- Am I learning the skills to use what I carry?
- Am I preparing from love or from fear?
- How can my home, my community, and my daily habits become places of welcome and peace?

When preparedness is rooted in compassion rather than anxiety, every packed bag becomes an expression of hope, and every prepared heart becomes a living witness to the Gospel.

Chapter 3

Preparedness as Stewardship

One of the greatest misunderstandings about preparedness is the belief that preparing for tomorrow somehow reveals a lack of faith in God. Scripture paints a different picture. Throughout the Bible, God's people are repeatedly called to exercise wisdom, foresight, and faithful stewardship.

Preparation is not the opposite of trust. It is often one expression of trust.

A parent keeps food in the pantry because they love their children. A church keeps first aid supplies because it cares for its congregation. A street chaplain carries water, socks, and bandages because people will inevitably need them. These are not acts of fear—they are acts of responsibility.

The Franciscan Clarean understands preparedness as stewardship: faithfully caring for the gifts God has entrusted to us so that we may serve others well.

Noah: Preparing Before the Storm

When God warned Noah of the coming flood, Noah did not simply pray and wait. He built the ark.

The ark was not a monument to fear. It was an act of faithful obedience.

For years Noah worked on something that others likely mocked and did not understand. Every board he shaped and every beam he raised was an act of trust in God's guidance.

Sometimes faithful preparation looks ordinary. Sometimes it looks unnecessary—until the storm arrives.

We may never know when a natural disaster, power outage, financial hardship, or personal crisis will come. We cannot prevent every storm, but we can prepare to weather them with wisdom and compassion.

Joseph: Planning for Times of Need

The story of Joseph in Egypt offers one of Scripture's clearest examples of preparedness.

After interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph advised storing grain during seven years of abundance so that Egypt would survive the seven years of famine that followed.

Joseph did not hoard resources for personal wealth. He organized them for the good of an entire nation.

This distinction matters.

Hoarding says, "I must have enough for myself."

Stewardship says, "I will wisely manage what I have so that many may benefit."

The Franciscan Clarean seeks the second path.

Proverbs and Practical Wisdom

The Book of Proverbs repeatedly praises wisdom, diligence, and foresight.

"The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it."

This is not a call to live anxiously. It is an invitation to pay attention.

Replacing weak batteries before hurricane season.

Keeping medications filled before they run out.

Learning CPR before someone collapses.

Maintaining your vehicle before it breaks down.

Backing up important documents.

Checking your emergency supplies twice a year.

These are ordinary acts of wisdom that can prevent extraordinary hardship.

Jesus and Wise Planning

Jesus often encouraged thoughtful planning.

He asked who would begin building a tower without first counting the cost. He spoke of kings considering their strategy before going into battle. In the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids, those who planned ahead were ready when the bridegroom arrived.

These teachings are not survival manuals, but they reveal an important principle: faithful discipleship includes thoughtful preparation.

Preparation is not merely about supplies. It is about readiness of heart, mind, and action.

Stewardship of Skills

Preparedness is about much more than equipment.

Knowledge weighs nothing, yet it may become your most valuable resource.

Learn first aid.

Learn how to purify water.

Learn how to cook simple meals.

Learn basic sewing.

Learn to repair your gear.

Learn to listen well.

Learn conflict de-escalation.

Learn to comfort those in grief.

These skills cost little to carry but become priceless when someone needs help.

A Franciscan Clarean invests as much in learning as in gear.

Stewardship of Creation

Francis of Assisi saw the natural world as a sacred gift, calling the sun, moon, wind, fire, and water his brothers and sisters.

Preparedness should reflect that same reverence.

Repair instead of replace whenever possible.

Buy durable items that will last for years.

Avoid needless waste.

Choose reusable equipment over disposable products when practical.

Respect the places where you camp, hike, serve, and live.

A prepared disciple is also a faithful caretaker of creation.

Stewardship of the Heart

The most important resource we manage is our own spirit.

Bitterness drains us.

Resentment consumes energy.

Fear clouds judgment.

Greed narrows compassion.

Hope, gratitude, patience, and generosity strengthen us for whatever lies ahead.

As we maintain our equipment, we should also maintain our souls through prayer, worship, study, silence, confession, forgiveness, and acts of mercy.

A neglected spirit can become just as dangerous as neglected gear.

The Franciscan Clarean Steward

To live as a steward means recognizing that everything ultimately belongs to God.

Our homes.

Our tools.

Our food.

Our time.

Our abilities.

Even our lives.

We are caretakers, not owners.

When we remember this, preparedness becomes an act of faithful stewardship rather than fearful accumulation. We prepare because we have been entrusted with gifts that are meant to bless others. We carry wisely because we hope to serve generously. We plan ahead because love thinks beyond today.

Reflection

Ask yourself these questions:

- Am I preparing out of trust or anxiety?
- Do my possessions help me serve others?
- What practical skill could I learn this year?
- How can I better care for God's creation through the choices I make?
- If everything I own belongs to God, how should I use it?

Preparedness rooted in stewardship transforms every stocked pantry, every packed haversack, every practiced skill, and every generous act into an offering of gratitude. In the Franciscan Clarean way, being prepared is not about expecting disaster—it is about being ready to become God's hands of mercy whenever the need arises.

Chapter 4

Fear Is Heavy, Peace Travels Light

Walk into many preparedness stores or browse enough survival websites, and you will quickly notice a common theme: fear.

Fear of economic collapse.

Fear of war.

Fear of crime.

Fear of strangers.

Fear of neighbors.

Fear of tomorrow.

Fear can be a powerful motivator. It can persuade people to spend enormous amounts of money, isolate themselves from others, and begin seeing every person as a potential threat.

The Gospel calls us to a different way.

The Franciscan Clarean prepares not because we believe the world is hopeless, but because we believe love should always be ready.

The Weight of Fear

Fear weighs far more than a backpack.

A fearful person is always looking over their shoulder.

Always expecting disaster.

Always suspicious.

Always exhausted.

Fear narrows our vision until survival becomes our only concern.

But Jesus continually called his followers away from fear.

"Do not be afraid."

Again and again, those words echo throughout Scripture—not because danger is imaginary, but because fear must never become our master.

Preparedness should reduce fear, not feed it.

When we know we have clean water stored, a flashlight ready, medications organized, and basic emergency skills, we are often less anxious, not more. Wise preparation creates space for peace.

Peace Is a Discipline

Peace does not happen by accident.

Like prayer, it is practiced.

Like compassion, it is cultivated.

Like preparedness, it is built through small, faithful habits.

The calm person in an emergency is rarely calm by chance. They have learned to pause, assess the situation, pray, and respond thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively.

Francis of Assisi became known as a peacemaker because he carried peace within himself long before he carried it into the world.

We are called to do the same.

The Difference Between Readiness and Paranoia

There is a significant difference between being prepared and becoming consumed by preparation.

Preparedness asks:

- "What is reasonably likely?"
- "How can I help others?"
- "What skills should I develop?"
- "What supplies make sense for my situation?"

Paranoia asks:

- "What if absolutely everything goes wrong?"
- "Who can I trust?"
- "How can I protect only myself?"

The first produces wisdom.

The second often produces isolation.

Franciscan Clareans choose readiness without paranoia.

Love Is the Best Survival Skill

Gear is useful.

Knowledge is valuable.

Training is important.

But none of these replace compassion.

Imagine two people arriving at the scene of an accident.

One has an expensive medical kit but refuses to help because they fear getting involved.

The other has only a pair of gloves, a small first aid pouch, and a willing heart.

Which one reflects Christ?

Preparedness without compassion becomes self-preservation.

Preparedness with compassion becomes ministry.

Our greatest tool is not the one clipped to our pocket—it is the love we carry in our hearts.

Traveling Light

Francis walked lightly through the world because his security was not found in possessions.

That does not mean he ignored practical needs.

Rather, he refused to let possessions possess him.

Every Franciscan Clarean should occasionally examine their gear.

Ask yourself:

- Have I added items I never use?
- Am I carrying duplicates without reason?
- Is this equipment helping me serve?
- Could someone else benefit more from this item?

Sometimes the holiest thing we can do is remove unnecessary weight.

A lighter bag often leads to a freer spirit.

Trusting God While Preparing Wisely

Some people say, "If you trust God, you don't need emergency supplies."

Others act as though survival depends entirely upon their own efforts.

The Franciscan Clarean rejects both extremes.

We pray.

We prepare.

We trust.

When a storm approaches, we charge our devices, fill water containers, gather flashlights, and check on our neighbors.

Then we pray.

Preparation and prayer are partners, not rivals.

God often works through ordinary wisdom.

Becoming a Non-Anxious Presence

One of the greatest gifts you can offer during a crisis is your presence.

People remember the calm voice.

The reassuring smile.

The steady hands.

The patient listener.

The gentle prayer.

Long after they forget what gear you carried, they will remember how you made them feel.

Our goal is not simply to survive emergencies.

Our goal is to become people whose presence brings peace into emergencies.

The Peaceful Pack

Imagine opening your haversack.

Inside are practical tools: water, food, a flashlight, first aid supplies, a notebook, a rain poncho, and a prayer book.

But invisible among those items are even greater treasures:

Hope.

Patience.

Mercy.

Kindness.

Humility.

Joy.

Faith.

These cannot be purchased in a store, yet they may save more lives than any piece of equipment.

The Franciscan Clarean carries both.

Reflection

Before you add another item to your everyday carry, pause and ask:

- Does this help me become more peaceful or more fearful?
- Does it equip me to love my neighbor?
- Am I preparing wisely, or simply collecting more things?
- If everything I carried disappeared tomorrow, would I still trust God?

The answer to preparedness is never found in the size of our backpack or the contents of our storage shelves. It is found in a heart anchored in Christ, hands ready to serve, and a life shaped by wisdom rather than fear.

When peace travels with us, every journey becomes lighter, and every encounter becomes another opportunity to be an instrument of God's love in a world that desperately needs hope.

Chapter 5

Building a Franciscan Clarean Everyday Carry

Now that we have explored the spiritual foundations of preparedness, it is time to answer a practical question:

What should a Franciscan Clarean actually carry every day?

The answer will differ depending on your vocation, your health, your environment, and your daily routine. A street chaplain will carry differently than an office worker. A parent will carry differently than a college student. Someone living in a tent will have different needs than someone living in a monastery.

Yet the guiding principle remains the same:

Carry what helps you love God, care for yourself, and serve your neighbor.

An Everyday Carry (EDC) is not a fashion statement. It is not a competition. It is not about having the newest or most expensive equipment.

It is a thoughtfully chosen collection of tools that helps you meet ordinary needs and respond to unexpected situations.

The Five Principles of Franciscan Clarean EDC

Every item you carry should reflect these five principles.

1. Simplicity

Do not carry ten tools when one will do.

Avoid clutter.

A lighter load is easier to manage and encourages thoughtful choices rather than excess.

2. Utility

Every item should earn its place.

If you never use it, reconsider carrying it.

Your EDC should solve real problems, not imaginary ones.

3. Durability

Cheap equipment often fails when it is needed most.

Buy the best quality you can reasonably afford, then care for it well.

Good stewardship means maintaining what you own instead of constantly replacing it.

4. Accessibility

The best tool is useless if you cannot find it.

Everything should have a designated place.

Develop the habit of returning each item to the same location after every use.

Organization reduces stress and saves valuable time.

5. Compassion

This is the defining characteristic of a Franciscan Clarean EDC.

Ask not only, "How does this help me?"

Also ask,

"How can this help someone else?"

That single question transforms ordinary equipment into instruments of mercy.

Pocket Essentials

Many people can carry these items comfortably every day.

- Wallet or identification
- Cell phone
- Charging cable
- Small power bank
- Keys
- Pen
- Small notebook
- Handkerchief or bandana
- Lip balm
- Medication
- Small flashlight
- Reusable water bottle

These simple items solve dozens of everyday problems.

Spiritual Essentials

Our spiritual tools are just as important as our practical ones.

Consider carrying:

- A Tau Cross
- A rosary or prayer rope
- A pocket Bible or New Testament
- A small prayer card
- A short Rule of Life
- A list of people to pray for

These items remind us that every day is an opportunity for ministry.

Health Essentials

Your health is part of your stewardship.

Do not neglect it.

Depending on your needs, consider carrying:

- Prescription medications
- Spare eyeglasses if needed
- Low-vision aids
- Hearing aid batteries
- Glucose tablets
- Inhaler
- Medical identification
- Hand sanitizer
- Tissues

There is no shame in carrying what helps you remain healthy and able to serve.

Comfort Essentials

Small comforts can make difficult days much easier.

Examples include:

- Protein bar or trail mix
- Gum or mints
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Rain poncho
- Lightweight gloves
- Cooling towel in hot climates
- Warm knit cap in winter

These items may seem insignificant until you suddenly need them.

Mercy Essentials

This is where Franciscan Clarean EDC becomes unique.

Whenever possible, carry something that is intended for someone else.

Examples include:

- An extra bottle of water
- Granola bars
- Clean socks
- A hygiene kit
- Bandages
- Resource cards for shelters and community services
- Encouraging Scripture cards
- Small blessing cards
- A few dollars in small bills for emergencies

Not every person in need wants money.

Sometimes what they truly need is water, a clean pair of socks, a listening ear, or someone who treats them with dignity.

Seasonal Adjustments

Preparedness is not static.

Review your EDC throughout the year.

In summer you may carry:

- Extra water
- Sunscreen
- Electrolyte packets
- Cooling towel

In winter you may add:

- Gloves
- Knit cap
- Hand warmers
- Lip balm
- Emergency blanket

Adapt your gear to your environment.

The EDC Check

Before leaving home each day, ask yourself:

Do I have what I need to care for myself?

Do I have what I need to help someone else?

Am I carrying anything unnecessary?

This simple habit takes less than a minute and helps ensure your EDC remains practical rather than excessive.

Your Everyday Ministry

Every pocket...

Every pouch...

Every haversack...

Every backpack...

Every tool...

Each one can become part of your ministry.

The flashlight may help someone safely walk home.

The notebook may record a prayer request.

The water bottle may quench someone's thirst.

The first aid supplies may prevent suffering.

The prayer rope may remind you to pause and pray.

The phone may connect someone with family.

The power bank may restore hope by reconnecting someone with the outside world.

None of these items proclaim the Gospel by themselves.

But when carried by hands shaped by compassion, they become quiet witnesses to the love of Christ.

Preparedness is not about carrying more.

It is about carrying mercy.

And that is the heart of the Franciscan Clarean Everyday Carry.

Chapter 6

The Belt Pouch: A Ministry on Your Hip

Long before backpacks and tactical bags became common, travelers, pilgrims, tradespeople, and friars carried small pouches on their belts. These pouches held the essentials needed throughout the day—items that had to be close at hand and ready at a moment's notice.

For the Franciscan Clarean, the belt pouch serves the same purpose.

It is not about carrying everything.

It is about carrying the **most important things** where they are immediately accessible.

Your haversack may hold your supplies. Your backpack may carry your larger equipment. But your belt pouch contains the items you hope you never need yet may be grateful to have within seconds.

Why a Belt Pouch?

In an emergency, you may become separated from your backpack.

You may set your haversack down while serving a meal.

You may leave your larger bag in a vehicle, church office, or campsite.

Your belt pouch stays with you.

Think of it as your "always-on-you" emergency and ministry kit.

Principles for Packing

The Franciscan Clarean belt pouch should be:

- Lightweight.
- Well organized.
- Quiet (nothing rattling).
- Durable.
- Easy to open with one hand.
- Easy to inspect and restock.

Avoid stuffing every available space. Leave enough room to find what you need quickly.

A neatly organized pouch is far more useful than an overfilled one.

Suggested Layout

While every pouch will differ, organizing by purpose makes it easier to locate items under stress.

Medical Pocket

Carry enough supplies to handle minor injuries until additional care is available.

Suggested contents include:

- Adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Sterile gauze pads
- Medical tape
- Antiseptic wipes
- Antibiotic ointment
- Blister treatment
- Nitrile gloves
- Tweezers
- Small scissors (where appropriate)
- Personal medications
- Pain reliever, if appropriate for your needs

Inspect these supplies regularly and replace expired items.

Light

Darkness can turn a simple inconvenience into a dangerous situation.

Carry:

- A small flashlight
- Spare battery or rechargeable backup, if needed

A reliable light can help with navigation, first aid, reading, or simply reassuring someone who is frightened.

Fire

Where legal and appropriate, consider carrying a simple means of creating fire.

Examples include:

- A lighter
- Waterproof matches

For many people, this will primarily be useful for camping, outdoor ministry, or emergency warmth.

Always use fire responsibly and in accordance with local laws.

Navigation and Communication

Modern technology is wonderful, but batteries eventually run low.

Consider including:

- A small notebook
- Pen or pencil
- Emergency contact information
- Important medical information
- A local map if traveling in unfamiliar areas

Sometimes paper is more dependable than electronics.

Personal Care

Small hygiene items can make a tremendous difference.

Suggestions include:

- Hand sanitizer
- Lip balm
- Tissues
- A few wet wipes

These lightweight items improve comfort and support ministry with dignity.

Spiritual Care

Do not overlook the spiritual tools of your vocation.

Your pouch might include:

- A small wooden Tau Cross
- A pocket prayer card
- A short printed blessing
- A few Scripture verses that bring comfort
- A tiny prayer rope or finger rosary

These occupy very little space but can offer great encouragement during difficult moments.

Mercy Pocket

Reserve one section of your pouch for helping others.

Possible contents include:

- A protein bar
- A small packet of tissues
- Bandages
- Resource cards for shelters, food pantries, or crisis services
- A handwritten card that simply says:

"You are loved. You are not forgotten. Peace be with you."

Sometimes the smallest gift becomes the greatest ministry.

Maintaining Your Pouch

Your belt pouch deserves regular attention.

Every week:

- Replace used items.
- Check expiration dates.
- Recharge electronics.
- Remove unnecessary clutter.
- Clean the pouch.

Preparedness is not a one-time event.

It is an ongoing practice of stewardship.

Avoid the "Just in Case" Trap

One of the easiest mistakes is adding item after item because "I might need this someday."

Eventually, the pouch becomes heavy and disorganized.

Instead, ask:

- Is this likely to solve a real problem?
- Have I used this before?

- Does it support my ministry?
- Could another item perform the same task?

If not, leave it at home.

A lighter pouch is often a better pouch.

Carrying Peace

When someone sees your belt pouch, they may assume it contains tools.

They are correct.

But its most important contents cannot be seen.

Compassion.

Patience.

Wisdom.

Prayer.

Hope.

Every zipper you open should be an opportunity to serve.

Every bandage should remind you of Christ the healer.

Every flashlight should remind you that we are called to be light in the darkness.

Every notebook should remind you to remember the names and stories of those you meet.

The belt pouch is not merely a container of equipment.

It is a portable expression of your vocation.

Carried faithfully, it becomes a small ministry resting quietly at your side—ready whenever love calls.

Chapter 7

The Haversack: The Franciscan Clarean Mobile Ministry

If the belt pouch is the heart of your everyday carry, the haversack is its hands.

For centuries, pilgrims, monks, soldiers, travelers, and missionaries have relied on a simple shoulder bag to carry what they needed for the journey. Unlike a large backpack designed for heavy loads, a haversack is meant to hold the essentials for a day's work while remaining comfortable and accessible.

For the Franciscan Clarean, the haversack is more than a bag.

It is a **mobile ministry**.

Everything inside should help you care for yourself, care for others, and continue your mission wherever the road leads.

Why a Haversack?

The haversack strikes a balance between simplicity and preparedness.

It is large enough to carry meaningful supplies but small enough to encourage restraint.

When packed thoughtfully, it supports:

- Street chaplaincy
- Hospital visitation
- Homeless outreach
- Day hikes
- Pilgrimages
- Disaster response
- Travel
- Daily life

It is not designed to carry everything you own.

It is designed to carry everything you are likely to need for today's journey.

Packing with Purpose

Before placing anything into your haversack, ask:

Does this serve a purpose?

Can I use it confidently?

Does it help me love my neighbor?

If the answer is yes, it probably belongs.

If not, reconsider whether it is simply extra weight.

Water: The Gift of Life

Water is one of the most valuable things you can carry.

Your haversack should include:

- A reusable water bottle
- Additional water if space allows
- A compact water filter or purification tablets when traveling or hiking

Offering someone clean water is one of the simplest and most profound acts of mercy.

Food for the Journey

Carry food that is nutritious, lightweight, and stores well.

Examples include:

- Granola bars
- Trail mix
- Dried fruit
- Jerky (if appropriate to your diet)
- Peanut butter packets
- Crackers

Keep one portion reserved for someone else whenever possible.

Hospitality often begins with sharing a meal.

Weather Protection

Weather changes quickly.

Simple items can prevent discomfort and even injury.

Recommended items include:

- Lightweight rain poncho
- Emergency blanket
- Knit cap during cold weather
- Lightweight gloves
- Sun hat
- Cooling towel during hot weather

Being prepared for changing weather allows you to remain available for ministry instead of becoming a casualty of the environment yourself.

Hygiene Supplies

Small hygiene items preserve dignity.

Suggested contents:

- Wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Soap leaves or travel soap
- Small towel
- Feminine hygiene products when appropriate
- Disposable bags for waste

These items are useful not only for yourself but also for someone experiencing homelessness or unexpected hardship.

A Larger First Aid Kit

Your belt pouch carries immediate medical essentials.

Your haversack can expand upon them.

Include items such as:

- Additional bandages
- Roller gauze
- Elastic wrap
- Burn dressing
- Instant cold pack
- CPR face shield
- Trauma shears
- Medical tape
- Additional gloves

Seek appropriate training so you know how to use what you carry safely and effectively.

Ministry Resources

The haversack is a wonderful place for resources that support your calling.

You might carry:

- Small New Testaments
- Prayer cards
- Blessing cards
- Resource lists for shelters, food banks, and community services
- Notebook for prayer requests
- Pens
- Business cards for your ministry

Remember that listening is often more valuable than speaking.

Carry tools that support conversation, not just instruction.

The Portable Altar

One of the most distinctive features of the Franciscan Clarean haversack is a compact travel altar.

A simple Altoids tin or similarly sized container can hold:

- A small cross
- Tiny prayer cards
- A miniature cloth
- A few printed Psalms
- A finger rosary
- A tiny vial of anointing oil, if appropriate to your tradition and practice

This is not intended to replace the gathered worship of the Church.

Rather, it serves as a reminder that prayer can accompany us wherever we go.

A park bench, a hospital waiting room, a campsite, or a quiet corner of a city street can all become places of encounter with God.

Repair Kit

Preparedness also means caring for your equipment.

Carry a small repair kit that may include:

- Needle and thread
- Safety pins
- A few zip ties
- Strong cord
- Small roll of repair tape

These simple items can repair clothing, bags, or gear and sometimes solve unexpected problems for others as well.

Keeping It Organized

Use small pouches or zippered organizers to separate categories.

For example:

- Blue pouch: Medical
- Green pouch: Hygiene
- Yellow pouch: Food
- Red pouch: Emergency supplies
- Brown pouch: Spiritual resources

Choose a system that makes sense to you and use it consistently.

Good organization is part of good stewardship.

A Bag That Tells a Story

Over time, your haversack will become worn.

The straps may soften.

The fabric may fade.

There may be a patch sewn over a tear.

Each mark tells a story.

A rainy day when someone needed shelter.

A long pilgrimage.

A hospital visit.

A shared meal.

A prayer beside a park bench.

These signs of use are not flaws.

They are reminders that your gear exists to serve.

Francis himself would likely have smiled at a well-used bag that had helped countless people along the road.

The Traveling Companion

Your haversack should never become a burden.

It should become a trusted companion.

Not because of the equipment inside, but because every item has been chosen with intention, maintained with care, and used with compassion.

When you sling it over your shoulder each morning, remember that you are not merely carrying supplies.

You are carrying opportunities.

Opportunities to comfort.

To encourage.

To feed.

To pray.

To listen.

To heal.

To serve.

In this way, the haversack becomes far more than a shoulder bag.

It becomes a visible sign that you have chosen to walk through the world prepared—not to conquer it, but to love it.

Chapter 8

Backpack or Haversack? Choosing the Right Bag for the Mission

One of the most common questions in preparedness is:

"Which bag should I carry?"

For the Franciscan Clarean, the answer is simple:

Carry the bag that best serves your mission today.

There is no "perfect" bag.

A bag is a tool.

Just as a carpenter chooses different tools for different jobs, we choose different bags for different ministries. Wisdom lies not in owning the biggest pack or the newest design but in selecting what fits the task before us.

The Franciscan Principle

St. Francis traveled lightly.

He did not burden himself with possessions that distracted from his calling.

This principle should guide our choice of bags.

Never carry a larger bag simply because you can.

Carry only what the day's mission requires.

A smaller, lighter load often leaves more energy for serving others.

The Haversack

The haversack is the traditional companion of the pilgrim.

Its strengths include:

- Lightweight and comfortable
- Easy access while walking
- Encourages simplicity
- Less intimidating in public settings

- Ideal for ministry in cities and neighborhoods
- Easy to carry into hospitals, churches, shelters, and cafés

A haversack reminds us that we are pilgrims traveling through the world with open hands.

It is often the best choice for everyday ministry because it carries enough without encouraging excess.

The Backpack

A backpack distributes weight across both shoulders and is designed for larger loads.

Its strengths include:

- Greater carrying capacity
- Better weight distribution
- Comfortable for long hikes
- Suitable for camping
- Excellent for disaster response
- Better for extended travel

A backpack is appropriate when your mission requires additional equipment.

Examples include:

- Overnight trips
- Multi-day pilgrimages
- Camping
- Disaster relief work
- Carrying extra clothing
- Transporting larger medical supplies

The backpack is a servant, not a status symbol.

When to Choose the Haversack

Consider carrying a haversack when you are:

- Walking through town
- Visiting hospitals
- Serving as a street chaplain
- Attending worship
- Running errands
- Going to work
- Taking a day hike

- Traveling light

In these situations, simplicity and accessibility matter more than maximum capacity.

When to Choose the Backpack

Choose a backpack when you expect to need:

- More food
- Additional water
- Sleeping gear
- Shelter equipment
- Larger first aid supplies
- Extra clothing
- Cooking equipment
- Cold-weather gear

The backpack is designed for longer journeys and greater self-sufficiency.

When to Carry Both

There are times when using both a backpack and a haversack makes excellent sense.

For example:

The backpack carries your larger supplies:

- Shelter
- Clothing
- Food
- Cooking equipment
- Water
- Sleep system

The haversack carries:

- First aid
- Prayer materials
- Water bottle
- Notebook
- Snacks
- Hygiene items
- Ministry resources

If you establish a campsite or temporary base, you can leave the backpack while continuing your ministry with only the haversack.

This layered system combines preparedness with mobility.

The Belt Pouch Never Leaves

Regardless of which bag you choose, your belt pouch should remain with you.

It contains your immediate essentials.

Even if you must set down your haversack or backpack, your belt pouch stays close.

Think of it as your last line of preparedness.

Organizing Your Carry System

Many Franciscan Clareans find it helpful to think in layers.

Layer One: On Your Person

- Clothing
- Identification
- Wallet
- Phone
- Medication
- Belt pouch

These remain with you at all times.

Layer Two: Haversack

- Water
- Food
- Hygiene
- Prayer kit
- Ministry supplies
- Rain gear
- Larger first aid kit

This supports your daily ministry.

Layer Three: Backpack

- Shelter
- Sleep system
- Extra clothing
- Cooking gear
- Additional food
- Larger emergency supplies

This supports extended travel or overnight needs.

Each layer builds upon the one before it.

Avoid the Packing Trap

One of the greatest temptations is filling every available space simply because it exists.

An empty pocket invites another gadget.

An unused compartment suggests another purchase.

Before long, you are carrying equipment you neither need nor use.

Resist this temptation.

Every added item should justify its weight.

Ask yourself:

- Have I used this within the past year?
- Does it solve a real problem?
- Does it support my vocation?
- Could another item perform the same task?

If not, leave it behind.

Simplicity is freedom.

Your Bag Is Not Your Identity

It is easy to become attached to equipment.

We begin comparing brands, debating features, and believing that better gear will somehow make us better disciples.

It will not.

Your bag does not define your vocation.

Your compassion does.

A worn canvas haversack carried with love is far more beautiful than an expensive pack that never leaves the closet.

The value of your equipment is measured not by its price, but by the mercy it enables.

Walking the Franciscan Way

Whether you choose a haversack, a backpack, or both, remember why you carry them.

Not to impress.

Not to prepare for imaginary battles.

Not to collect gadgets.

You carry them because the road is long.

Because someone may be thirsty.

Because someone may need a bandage.

Because someone may ask for prayer.

Because someone may simply need another human being to walk beside them for a while.

Your bag is not a burden.

It is a promise.

A promise that, by God's grace, you will be as ready as you can be to serve wherever the journey leads.

And that is the heart of Franciscan Clarean preparedness.

Chapter 9

Helping Others Before Yourself

Preparedness for Street Chaplaincy

When Jesus sent the disciples into the towns and villages, he did not send them to build comfortable lives for themselves. He sent them to proclaim good news, heal the sick, comfort the brokenhearted, and announce that the reign of God had drawn near.

Street chaplaincy continues that mission.

Whether serving people experiencing homelessness, walking with those struggling with addiction, visiting those living on the margins, or simply offering a listening ear in a public park, the Franciscan Clarean street chaplain enters the world not as a rescuer, but as a companion.

Preparedness is one way we honor that calling.

Seeing Christ on the Street

Francis embraced people whom society rejected. Clare welcomed those who had nowhere else to go. Jesus identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, and the imprisoned.

Every encounter is holy.

The person asking for water is not a project.

The person sleeping under a bridge is not a problem to solve.

The person struggling with mental illness is not an interruption.

Each person bears the image of God.

Preparedness begins with seeing people through the eyes of Christ.

Ministry Before Equipment

Before discussing what to carry, we must remember something essential:

The most valuable thing you bring is yourself.

Your willingness to listen.

Your patience.

Your kindness.

Your ability to remain calm.

Your respect.

Many people living on the streets have experienced trauma, rejection, abuse, or neglect. They may have been ignored countless times.

Sometimes the first act of ministry is simply sitting beside someone and saying,

"Good morning. How are you doing today?"

No piece of equipment can replace genuine human presence.

A Street Chaplain's Haversack

The Franciscan Clarean street chaplain carries supplies not only for personal needs but also to serve others.

A practical ministry kit might include:

Basic Care

- Bottled water
- Electrolyte packets
- Granola bars
- Peanut butter crackers
- Shelf-stable snacks

Hygiene

- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Soap
- Wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Tissues
- Feminine hygiene products
- Comb
- Lip balm

Clothing

- New socks
- Gloves during winter
- Knit hats
- Rain ponchos

Few gifts are appreciated more than a clean, dry pair of socks.

First Aid

Carry supplies for minor injuries, including:

- Adhesive bandages
- Gauze
- Medical tape
- Antiseptic wipes
- Gloves
- Antibiotic ointment
- Blister care

Know your limits.

Offer basic care when appropriate, but seek emergency medical assistance whenever a situation exceeds your training or resources.

Resource Information

One of the most powerful tools you can carry weighs almost nothing.

A list of community resources.

Include information for:

- Emergency shelters
- Food pantries
- Community kitchens
- Medical clinics
- Mental health services
- Substance use treatment programs
- Domestic violence resources
- Veterans' services
- Crisis hotlines
- Transportation assistance

Hope often begins with knowing where to turn next.

Spiritual Care

Not everyone you meet will want prayer.

Respect that.

Never force a conversation about faith.

Instead, ask gently,

"Would it be okay if I prayed with you?"

If they decline, continue serving with kindness.

Love is never wasted.

Carry simple spiritual resources such as:

- Pocket New Testaments
- Prayer cards
- Small crosses
- Blessing cards
- A notebook for prayer requests

Remember that listening is often the greatest prayer you can offer.

Trauma-Informed Ministry

Many people you encounter carry invisible wounds.

Trauma changes how people respond to stress, authority, and relationships.

Approach everyone with gentleness.

Offer choices whenever possible.

Respect personal space.

Do not make promises you cannot keep.

Do not assume you know someone's story.

Compassion grows through curiosity rather than judgment.

Safety for Everyone

Street ministry requires wisdom.

Whenever possible:

- Serve with a partner.
- Let someone know your location.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Respect boundaries.
- Trust your instincts.
- Call emergency services when necessary.

Preparedness includes protecting yourself so that you can continue serving others.

Dignity Matters

One of the greatest gifts we can offer is dignity.

Use people's names when you know them.

Ask before giving advice.

Sit instead of standing over someone when appropriate.

Listen more than you speak.

Treat every person as someone from whom you can learn.

The goal is not to "fix" people.

The goal is to walk beside them.

Becoming a Ministry of Presence

Eventually, people may forget what supplies you distributed.

They may forget the snack.

They may forget the blanket.

They may even forget your name.

But they will often remember how you treated them.

Whether you looked them in the eye.

Whether you smiled.

Whether you listened.

Whether you believed their life mattered.

This is the true work of a Franciscan Clarean street chaplain.

A Prayer Before Going Out

Lord Jesus,

Walk with me today.

Open my eyes to those who are hurting.

Open my ears to stories that need to be heard.

Open my hands to share what I carry.

Open my heart so that no one I meet is treated as invisible.

Give me wisdom to know when to speak, courage to know when to act, and humility to know when simply being present is enough.

May every step I take proclaim your peace.

May every act of kindness reflect your love.

Make me an instrument of your compassion.

Amen.

Preparedness for street chaplaincy is not measured by the number of items in your haversack.

It is measured by your readiness to recognize Christ in every person you meet.

When our bags are packed with mercy and our hearts are filled with grace, we become living signs of the Gospel on the streets, where hope is needed most.

Chapter 10

Preparedness During Disaster

Becoming a Calm Presence in the Storm

Disasters have a way of revealing what matters most.

A power outage reminds us how much we depend on electricity.

A flood reminds us that nature is powerful.

A wildfire reminds us that life can change in a moment.

A pandemic reminds us that we belong to one another.

The Franciscan Clarean does not prepare because disaster is certain every day. We prepare because hardship is part of life, and we want to be ready to respond with wisdom, compassion, and hope.

Our goal is not merely to survive a disaster.

Our goal is to become a source of stability for others during one.

The First Rule: Stay Calm

In every emergency, your greatest tool is not your flashlight or your first aid kit.

It is your ability to remain calm.

Panic spreads quickly.

So does peace.

When people see someone who speaks gently, thinks clearly, and acts deliberately, fear begins to lose its grip.

Prayer can help cultivate this calm.

A slow breath.

A brief Psalm.

The Lord's Prayer.

A moment of silence.

These simple practices can steady your heart before you take your next step.

Prepare Before the Emergency

The best time to prepare is before anything goes wrong.

Consider keeping supplies that can sustain you for several days, including:

- Drinking water
- Shelf-stable food
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries
- A battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- Power banks for charging phones
- Prescription medications
- Basic first aid supplies
- Hygiene items
- Blankets
- Copies of important documents

You do not need to buy everything at once.

Build your emergency supplies gradually, adding a few items each month as your budget allows.

Know the Risks Where You Live

Preparedness is local.

Someone living in a hurricane-prone area has different needs than someone living where wildfires are common.

Learn about the hazards in your community.

Ask yourself:

- Is flooding possible?
- Do winter storms occur?
- Are tornadoes common?
- Is extreme heat a concern?
- Could wildfires threaten my area?

Understanding local risks helps you prepare wisely rather than generally.

Communication Matters

Emergencies often separate families and friends.

Have a communication plan.

Know whom you will contact.

Keep important phone numbers written on paper as well as stored in your phone.

If cellular networks become overloaded, text messages may go through even when voice calls do not.

Preparation includes staying connected.

Caring for Vulnerable Neighbors

Franciscan Clareans never prepare only for themselves.

Think about those who may need additional help:

- Older adults
- Children
- People with disabilities
- People who are blind or have low vision
- Individuals with chronic illnesses
- Those without transportation
- People experiencing homelessness
- Families with limited resources

A simple phone call or visit after a storm may mean more than any supply you own.

Preparedness is an act of solidarity.

Your Disaster Kit

In addition to your everyday carry, consider keeping a ready-to-go emergency kit.

It might include:

- Water
- Food
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Radio
- Multi-tool (where legal)
- Medications
- Hygiene supplies
- Warm clothing
- Rain gear
- Copies of important documents
- Cash in small bills
- Chargers and cables

Store your kit where it can be reached quickly if evacuation becomes necessary.

Emotional and Spiritual Care

Not every disaster leaves visible wounds.

People may experience fear, grief, confusion, or trauma.

Sometimes they simply need someone who will listen without rushing them.

Offer:

- A calm presence.
- A listening ear.
- Gentle encouragement.
- Prayer, if welcomed.
- Practical assistance.

Healing often begins with knowing we are not alone.

After the Disaster

The work is not finished when the danger passes.

Recovery may take weeks, months, or even years.

Continue checking on neighbors.

Help with cleanup if you are able.

Share supplies.

Volunteer with trusted community organizations.

Support local recovery efforts.

Discipleship continues long after the headlines disappear.

Learning from Every Experience

After each emergency, take time to reflect.

Ask yourself:

- What worked well?

- What did I wish I had?
- What skills need improvement?
- What supplies should be replaced?
- How did I respond emotionally and spiritually?

Preparedness is a lifelong practice of learning and growing.

Hope Is Contagious

Fear spreads quickly.

But hope spreads too.

When you share water with a thirsty family...

When you help clear a fallen tree...

When you charge someone's phone...

When you comfort a frightened child...

When you pray beside a hospital bed...

You proclaim something powerful:

Love is stronger than disaster.

The Franciscan Clarean does not deny the reality of suffering.

Instead, we choose to meet suffering with courage, preparation, and compassion.

That is our witness.

That is our ministry.

That is our calling.

A Prayer in Times of Disaster

God of refuge and strength,

Be with all who are afraid, all who are grieving, and all who are working to protect and care for others.

Give wisdom to first responders, endurance to volunteers, comfort to those who have lost so much, and courage to your people.

Help us to share what we have, to welcome those in need, and to become instruments of your peace even in the darkest moments.

May our preparation be guided by love, our actions by compassion, and our hope by your abiding presence.

Amen.

Disaster preparedness is not about expecting the end of the world.

It is about being ready to embody the love of Christ when someone else's world has been turned upside down.

Chapter 11

Preparing the Home

A House of Peace, Hospitality, and Readiness

A prepared home is not defined by the size of its pantry or the number of shelves in its basement.

A prepared home is a place where people find peace.

Whether your home is a monastery, a suburban house, an apartment, a tiny home, an RV, a tent, or a single rented room, it can become a place of refuge. Franciscan Clarean preparedness is not measured in square feet. It is measured in faithful stewardship.

Our homes should be places where fear is quieted, needs are met, and hospitality is practiced.

Begin with What You Have

Many people delay preparedness because they think they cannot afford to begin.

The truth is that preparedness is built one step at a time.

Purchase one or two extra cans of food during a grocery trip.

Set aside a gallon of water.

Buy an extra flashlight.

Replace worn batteries.

Little by little, your preparations grow.

Like the mustard seed in Jesus' parable, small beginnings often produce remarkable results.

Water Comes First

Water is life's most essential resource.

A good goal is to keep enough drinking water on hand for everyone in your household for several days, along with additional water for cooking and basic hygiene when practical.

Store water in clean, food-safe containers.

Rotate stored water periodically so it remains fresh.

If possible, also keep a simple method of purifying water, such as a quality filter or purification tablets, for situations where your regular supply is interrupted.

Build a Simple Pantry

A Franciscan pantry is practical rather than extravagant.

Choose foods that your household already enjoys and knows how to prepare.

Examples include:

- Beans
- Rice
- Oats
- Pasta
- Canned vegetables
- Canned fruit
- Soups
- Peanut butter
- Shelf-stable milk
- Crackers
- Nuts and seeds
- Dried fruit

Rotate these foods into your regular meals and replace them as you use them.

Food stored and forgotten eventually becomes food wasted.

Light in the Darkness

Power outages remind us how dependent we have become on electricity.

Keep simple lighting available:

- Flashlights
- Headlamps
- Lanterns
- Extra batteries
- Rechargeable lights with charged power banks

Place lights where they can be found easily in the dark.

Avoid relying solely on candles, especially in homes with children, pets, or anyone at increased risk of falls or fire.

Caring for Health

Every home should include a well-maintained first aid kit.

It should also contain:

- Prescription medications
- Spare eyeglasses, if needed
- Medical supplies unique to your household
- Thermometer
- Gloves
- Basic hygiene supplies

Review expiration dates regularly and replace items as needed.

Your health is part of your stewardship.

Important Documents

Some of the most valuable items in your home are sheets of paper.

Keep copies of important documents in a waterproof container or protective folder.

These may include:

- Identification
- Insurance information
- Medical information

- Emergency contacts
- Legal documents
- Financial records

When appropriate, keep secure digital backups as well.

Preparing Spiritually

A Franciscan Clarean home is not only stocked with supplies.

It is filled with prayer.

Consider creating a small prayer corner with:

- A Bible
- A cross or Tau
- A candle or battery-powered light
- A journal
- A Rule of Life
- Prayer beads or a rosary

This sacred space reminds everyone in the home that preparedness includes caring for the soul.

Hospitality in Practice

Ask yourself:

"If someone unexpectedly arrived at my door hungry, could I feed them?"

"If a neighbor lost power, could I offer them warmth?"

"If a family needed shelter for one night, could I welcome them?"

Hospitality does not require wealth.

It requires willingness.

Sometimes hospitality is sharing a meal.

Sometimes it is lending a phone charger.

Sometimes it is making coffee while someone waits for difficult news.

Preparedness makes these acts of kindness easier.

Household Skills Matter

Supplies alone are not enough.

Learn practical household skills:

- Basic cooking
- Simple sewing
- Minor home repairs
- Safe food storage
- Fire extinguisher use
- Emergency shutoff locations for utilities
- Basic first aid

Skills reduce dependence and increase confidence.

A Home That Breathes Peace

People notice the atmosphere of a home before they notice its emergency supplies.

Does your home welcome others?

Is it orderly enough to function well?

Does it reflect gratitude rather than anxiety?

Does it encourage rest?

Preparedness should never turn our homes into warehouses of fear.

Instead, let them become sanctuaries of hope—places where practical wisdom and deep faith live together.

The Franciscan Clarean Household Rule

A prepared home seeks to:

- Welcome the stranger.
- Feed the hungry.
- Comfort the weary.
- Care for creation.
- Share generously.
- Waste little.
- Pray often.

- Live simply.
- Trust God.
- Love boldly.

These principles matter far more than the number of items on our shelves.

A House Built on Love

Jesus spoke of the wise builder who built upon rock.

The strength of that house was not found in its appearance but in its foundation.

The same is true of our homes.

Food may eventually be eaten.

Batteries will wear out.

Water will need replacing.

Equipment will age.

But a household built upon love, generosity, wisdom, and faith will remain a refuge long after supplies have been used.

May every Franciscan Clarean home—no matter how humble—become a place where Christ is welcomed, neighbors are cared for, and peace dwells in abundance.

Chapter 12

Preparedness for Tent Life and Pilgrimage

Living Lightly, Walking Faithfully

From Abraham's tents to Israel's wilderness journey, from Elijah beneath the broom tree to Jesus, who said he had "nowhere to lay his head," Scripture reminds us that God's people have often encountered the Holy while living on the move.

St. Francis embraced life as a pilgrim. He traveled dusty roads, slept wherever hospitality was offered, and discovered that freedom often comes from needing less.

Tent life is not for everyone. Some choose it for adventure, others from necessity, and still others as an intentional spiritual practice. Whatever the reason, the Franciscan Clarean approaches tent living with dignity, wisdom, and hope.

A tent is not merely a shelter.

It can become a small monastery beneath the open sky.

Home Is More Than a Building

Society often measures success by the size of a home.

Francis measured life differently.

A home is wherever love is practiced.

A tent can become a place of prayer.

A campsite can become holy ground.

A simple meal shared around a camp stove can become an act of Eucharistic hospitality, pointing us toward God's abundant grace.

Never believe that your dignity depends upon your address.

Your worth comes from being created and loved by God.

Choosing Simplicity

Living with limited space teaches an important lesson.

Every item must justify its presence.

Ask yourself:

- Do I use this regularly?
- Does it improve safety?
- Does it help me serve others?
- Is there a lighter or simpler alternative?

Simplicity is not deprivation.

It is freedom from unnecessary burdens.

Shelter

Your shelter protects not only your body but also your spirit.

Choose equipment that is dependable, easy to repair, and appropriate for your climate.

Remember to care for your shelter by:

- Drying it before storage whenever possible.
- Inspecting it for tears.
- Repairing small damage promptly.
- Keeping the interior clean.
- Protecting the floor from sharp objects.

A well-maintained tent often lasts far longer than a neglected one.

Sleeping Well

Rest is part of discipleship.

Fatigue affects judgment, patience, and emotional well-being.

A simple sleep system might include:

- Sleeping bag suited to the season.
- Sleeping pad or cot for insulation and comfort.
- Pillow or stuff sack filled with clothing.
- Extra dry socks reserved for sleeping.

Protecting your sleep is part of caring for the body God has entrusted to you.

Water and Food

Plan for safe drinking water every day.

When traveling or camping, carry both water and a reliable way to purify additional water if needed.

Keep meals simple.

Choose foods that are:

- Nutritious.
- Easy to prepare.
- Easy to store.
- Appropriate for the weather.

Simple meals free time and energy for prayer, service, and fellowship.

Keeping Clean

Cleanliness supports both health and dignity.

Even with limited facilities, simple habits make a great difference.

Carry:

- Biodegradable soap when appropriate.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Wet wipes.
- Toothbrush and toothpaste.
- Small towel.
- Toilet paper in a waterproof bag.
- Waste bags.

Leave every campsite cleaner than you found it.

Care for creation through your actions.

Organizing Your Space

A small shelter can become chaotic quickly.

Give every item a home.

Store similar items together.

Keep frequently used items within easy reach.

Pack equipment in the same place every time.

Order reduces stress.

Good organization is an act of stewardship.

Safety on the Journey

Preparedness includes awareness.

Pay attention to:

- Weather forecasts.

- Safe campsites.
- Local regulations.
- Fire safety.
- Wildlife precautions.
- Personal security.

Wisdom is not fear.

Wisdom helps us avoid unnecessary danger so that we may continue serving others.

Hospitality on the Trail

Pilgrims have long relied upon the kindness of strangers.

Whenever possible, become that stranger's kindness for someone else.

Offer:

- A cup of water.
- Directions.
- Encouragement.
- A shared meal.
- Help carrying a burden.
- Prayer when requested.

The road becomes sacred when travelers care for one another.

The Outdoor Chapel

Creation has always been one of God's first sanctuaries.

The rustling leaves become hymns.

The flowing stream becomes a sermon.

The stars become reminders of God's promise to Abraham.

Whether you pray beneath towering pines, beside a quiet lake, or under the vast desert sky, remember that the whole earth is filled with God's presence.

Carry your portable altar if you wish, but never forget that the greatest cathedral is often the one without walls.

Pilgrimage as a Way of Life

Not every pilgrimage involves walking hundreds of miles.

Sometimes pilgrimage is choosing compassion over convenience.

Sometimes it is leaving behind resentment.

Sometimes it is taking the next faithful step, even when the destination is unclear.

Every Franciscan Clarean is called to become a pilgrim of peace.

We travel lightly.

We welcome strangers.

We care for creation.

We trust God's provision.

We remain ready to serve wherever the path leads.

A Pilgrim's Prayer

God of the open road,

Walk beside me as I journey.

Keep my heart humble, my hands generous, and my eyes open to those in need.

Bless my shelter, strengthen my body, guide my steps, and remind me that wherever I travel, I never walk alone.

May every campsite become a place of gratitude, every trail an opportunity for kindness, and every mile draw me closer to you.

Through Christ, the companion of every pilgrim. Amen.

Whether our home is permanent or temporary, spacious or small, the Franciscan Clarean vocation remains unchanged: to live simply, love boldly, care wisely, and walk through the world as pilgrims of peace, carrying only what we need and always making room for mercy.

Chapter 13

Carrying Christ Daily

Your Spiritual Everyday Carry

Every Franciscan Clarean carries two kinds of equipment.

The first is visible.

A flashlight.

A first aid kit.

A water bottle.

A notebook.

A haversack.

These tools prepare us to meet the practical needs of daily life.

The second kind of equipment cannot be seen.

Faith.

Hope.

Love.

Mercy.

Joy.

Patience.

These are the tools of the soul.

If our bags are full but our hearts are empty, we are only carrying weight.

If our hearts are full of Christ, even the smallest bag becomes an instrument of God's grace.

Your First Piece of Equipment: Prayer

Before you reach for your gear each morning, reach for God.

Prayer is not merely preparation for ministry.

Prayer is ministry.

It reminds us that we are not the Savior.

Christ already holds that role.

We are simply invited to participate in his work.

Begin each day with a simple prayer:

Lord,

Guide my thoughts.

Direct my steps.

Open my eyes to those who need compassion.

May everything I carry today become a tool of your peace.

Amen.

Prayer aligns our hearts before we begin our work.

Carry the Scriptures

A Franciscan Clarean should carry God's Word—not merely in a book, but in memory and in practice.

You may carry a pocket Bible, a New Testament, or a Bible app on your phone.

More importantly, carry verses that have become part of your life.

Words such as:

"Blessed are the peacemakers."

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

"Perfect love casts out fear."

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these...you did for me."

These verses become companions during long days and difficult moments.

Carry Compassion

Compassion notices.

It notices the lonely cashier.

The exhausted nurse.

The frightened child.

The grieving widow.

The anxious teenager.

The veteran sitting quietly in the park.

Preparedness trains us to notice physical needs.

The Gospel trains us to notice human hearts.

Carry compassion everywhere.

Carry Forgiveness

Resentment is one of the heaviest things anyone can carry.

It consumes energy that could be used for love.

Forgiveness does not deny that harm occurred.

Nor does it excuse injustice.

Rather, forgiveness refuses to let bitterness define the future.

Travel light.

Leave vengeance behind.

Carry Hope

Hope is not pretending everything is fine.

Hope looks honestly at suffering while refusing to believe suffering has the final word.

Street chaplains carry hope.

Hospital chaplains carry hope.

Parents carry hope.

Teachers carry hope.

Neighbors carry hope.

The Christian carries hope because resurrection follows crucifixion.

Hope is our quiet confidence that God continues to bring life out of brokenness.

Carry Courage

Sometimes ministry requires courage more than comfort.

The courage to speak against injustice.

The courage to defend the vulnerable.

The courage to admit mistakes.

The courage to ask for help.

The courage to keep serving when results are invisible.

Francis kissed the leper because love was stronger than fear.

Clare remained faithful through hardship because trust was stronger than uncertainty.

Their courage can inspire ours.

Carry Joy

Joy is different from happiness.

Happiness depends upon circumstances.

Joy springs from knowing that God is with us.

Joy smiles in hospital rooms.

Joy laughs around campfires.

Joy shares meals.

Joy sings while working.

Joy notices beauty in ordinary moments.

The Franciscan tradition has always celebrated holy joy.

Carry it generously.

Carry Humility

No matter how much you know...

No matter how many certifications you earn...

No matter how experienced you become...

Remain teachable.

Every person you meet knows something you do not.

Every encounter can become a lesson.

Humility keeps our hearts open.

Carry Presence

One of the greatest gifts you can give another person is your full attention.

Put the phone away.

Listen without interrupting.

Look people in the eye when appropriate.

Remember names.

Honor stories.

Presence is becoming increasingly rare.

That makes it increasingly valuable.

The Invisible Pack

Imagine opening your haversack.

Inside you see water, food, first aid supplies, prayer cards, and a flashlight.

Now imagine opening your heart.

Inside should be:

Faith that trusts.

Hope that perseveres.

Love that serves.

Mercy that forgives.

Peace that steadies.

Joy that strengthens.

Humility that listens.

Compassion that acts.

These invisible tools never wear out.

The more we use them, the stronger they become.

Daily Spiritual Equipment Check

Before leaving home each morning, ask yourself:

Have I prayed?

Have I forgiven?

Am I carrying unnecessary bitterness?

Am I ready to notice those who suffer?

Will my words build others up today?

Am I trusting God with what I cannot control?

If the answer is yes, then you are prepared for the most important journey of the day.

The Greatest Thing We Carry

At the end of our lives, people are unlikely to remember the brand of our backpack.

They probably will not remember the flashlight we carried.

They may not even remember the contents of our haversack.

But they will remember whether we loved.

Whether we listened.

Whether we showed mercy.

Whether we walked beside them when life became difficult.

That is our true everyday carry.

Everything else is simply equipment.

The Franciscan Clarean carries Christ into the world—not in a pocket, not in a pouch, not in a haversack, but in a heart transformed by grace.

And wherever Christ is carried, hope follows.

Chapter 14

The Altoids Tin Chapel

Carrying Sacred Space Wherever You Go

One of the beautiful truths of the Christian faith is that God cannot be confined to a building.

Churches are holy because God's people gather there.

But God is just as present beside a hospital bed, under a bridge, in a prison visiting room, around a campfire, or on a quiet forest trail.

The Franciscan Clarean understands that every place can become holy ground.

Sometimes, however, our hearts benefit from tangible reminders of God's presence.

That is the purpose of a portable chapel.

It is not magic.

It is not a good-luck charm.

It is not a replacement for worship with the gathered Church.

It is simply a small collection of meaningful items that helps us pause, pray, and remember that Christ walks with us wherever we go.

Why an Altoids Tin?

An empty Altoids tin is surprisingly practical.

It is:

- Small enough to fit in a haversack or pocket.
- Durable enough for travel.
- Easy to organize.
- Inexpensive and widely available.
- Simple to personalize.

Its small size also reflects a Franciscan lesson:

Sacredness does not depend on grandeur.

Even the smallest space can become a place of encounter with God.

What to Include

Your portable chapel should remain simple.

Choose items that help you pray rather than impress others.

Consider including:

- A small wooden Tau Cross.
- A miniature icon of Christ, St. Francis, or St. Clare.
- A folded prayer cloth.
- A tiny finger rosary or prayer rope.
- A few favorite Scripture passages.
- A small card with the Lord's Prayer or the Prayer of St. Francis.
- A list of names of people for whom you are praying.
- A tiny pencil and folded paper for prayer requests.

Each item should invite your heart toward God.

A Ministry Tool

Your portable chapel is not only for personal devotion.

It can also serve others.

Imagine meeting someone in a hospital waiting room who asks for prayer.

A traveler overwhelmed by grief.

A neighbor facing frightening medical news.

A person experiencing homelessness who simply wants someone to pray with them.

Opening your little chapel gently and respectfully can create a moment of peace.

The tin itself has no spiritual power.

The love shared through prayer does.

Creating Sacred Moments

You do not need an altar to pray.

Yet simple rituals help us become attentive.

When using your portable chapel, you might:

- Find a quiet place.
- Open the tin slowly.
- Place the prayer cloth on a nearby surface if appropriate.
- Set the cross or icon upon it.
- Read a Psalm.
- Sit quietly for a few moments.
- Offer prayers of thanksgiving, confession, intercession, and hope.
- Close with the Lord's Prayer or another familiar prayer.

Even five minutes of intentional prayer can renew the spirit.

Praying in Creation

St. Francis often found God in forests, fields, and mountains.

Your portable chapel can accompany you outdoors.

A tree stump becomes an altar.

A smooth stone becomes a prayer bench.

Birdsong becomes the choir.

The wind becomes a reminder of the Holy Spirit.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and all creation joins in worship.

Respecting Different Traditions

As Franciscan Clareans, we recognize that Christians express their faith in many ways.

Some may include icons.

Others may prefer only Scripture.

Some may carry prayer beads.

Others may carry a simple wooden cross.

Still others may keep nothing more than a handwritten prayer.

The goal is not uniformity.

The goal is cultivating a heart that turns toward God.

Caring for Your Chapel

Treat your portable chapel with respect.

Keep it clean.

Replace worn prayer cards when needed.

Update your prayer list regularly.

Repair rather than replace whenever possible.

The tin may become scratched and weathered over the years.

Those marks tell the story of a life spent praying in many places.

The Greatest Chapel

As beautiful as a portable chapel may be, remember that it points beyond itself.

Scripture teaches that we ourselves are temples of the Holy Spirit.

The most important sanctuary is not the tin in your pocket.

It is the heart within your chest.

Carry the chapel.

But even more importantly, become the chapel.

Let your words become hymns.

Let your kindness become incense.

Let your acts of mercy become living prayers.

A Blessing Before the Journey

Before leaving home, you might pray:

Christ before me.

Christ behind me.

Christ beside me.

Christ within me.

Christ beneath me.

Christ above me.

May every road become a path of peace.

Every stranger become my neighbor.

Every burden become an opportunity for love.

And every place I pause become holy ground.

Amen.

Carrying Sacred Space

An Altoids tin is made to hold mints.

A Franciscan Clarean transforms it into a reminder that God is always near.

Not because God fits inside a small metal box.

But because even the smallest object can point us toward the infinite love of Christ.

When you slip that little chapel into your haversack, you are carrying more than a few devotional items.

You are carrying a gentle invitation to stop, breathe, pray, and remember that wherever your journey leads, Emmanuel—God with us—is already there, waiting to meet you.

Chapter 15

Emergency Spiritual Care

Being Christ's Presence in Moments of Crisis

Emergencies rarely announce themselves.

A phone rings in the middle of the night.

A neighbor knocks on the door asking for help.

A stranger collapses in a grocery store.

A family waits anxiously in an emergency room.

A storm leaves an entire community without power.

In moments like these, people often need more than food, water, or first aid.

They need hope.

Emergency spiritual care is the ministry of offering compassionate presence during times of crisis. It is not about having all the answers. It is about accompanying people through fear, grief, confusion, and uncertainty with humility and love.

The Franciscan Clarean does not arrive to fix every problem.

We arrive to bear witness to God's compassion.

The Ministry of Presence

One of the greatest temptations is believing we must always say something profound.

Often, the holiest response is simply to be present.

Sit beside the grieving.

Stand quietly with the frightened.

Hold a hand, if welcomed.

Listen without rushing to fill the silence.

The Book of Job reminds us that Job's friends were at their best when they sat with him in silence. Their trouble began when they assumed they understood why he suffered.

Presence is often more healing than explanation.

Listen Before You Speak

In a crisis, people may need to tell their story several times.

Allow them to do so.

Practice active listening:

- Give your full attention.
- Avoid interrupting.
- Reflect back what you hear.
- Resist the urge to offer quick solutions.
- Accept tears without trying to stop them.

Listening communicates dignity.

It tells someone, "Your story matters."

Respect Every Person's Journey

Not everyone shares the same beliefs.

Some are lifelong Christians.

Others belong to different faith traditions.

Some have been wounded by religion.

Some are unsure what they believe.

Emergency spiritual care begins with respect.

Never assume.

Instead, ask gentle questions:

- "How are you holding up?"
- "What is giving you strength right now?"
- "Would prayer be comforting, or would you prefer quiet company?"

The goal is not to win an argument.

The goal is to love your neighbor.

Praying with Others

Prayer can be a profound gift when it is offered with permission and sensitivity.

Keep prayers simple.

Focus on God's love, comfort, wisdom, and peace.

Avoid suggesting that suffering is God's punishment or that tragedy is part of a secret divine plan.

Instead, pray honestly.

For example:

Loving God,

Be near to us in this difficult moment.

Give strength to those who are afraid, comfort to those who grieve, wisdom to those providing care, and hope to everyone gathered here.

Help us to know that we are never alone.

Amen.

Simple prayers often touch hearts more deeply than elaborate speeches.

Supporting Families

Families experiencing crisis may be overwhelmed.

Small acts of kindness matter.

Offer to:

- Bring water.
- Find a quiet place to sit.
- Contact another family member if requested.
- Help locate needed information.
- Sit with someone who does not want to be alone.

Practical care is spiritual care.

Walking with the Dying

Few experiences are more sacred than accompanying someone near the end of life.

Do not fear silence.

Speak gently.

Read familiar Psalms if welcomed.

Pray if invited.

Remind the person that they are loved.

Offer reassurance rather than certainty about matters you cannot know.

Sometimes your calm presence is the greatest gift you can give.

Caring for Yourself

Those who care for others must also care for themselves.

After responding to a crisis:

Pray.

Rest.

Talk with trusted companions.

Reflect on what you experienced.

Seek support when needed.

Compassion fatigue is real.

Even Jesus withdrew to quiet places to pray and rest.

Following his example is an act of wisdom, not weakness.

The Franciscan Clarean Response

In every emergency, remember these simple principles:

- Be calm.
- Be kind.
- Be honest.
- Be respectful.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Pray when invited.
- Offer practical help.
- Protect human dignity.
- Know your limits.
- Leave people with hope.

These principles require no expensive equipment.

Only a willing heart.

The Face of Christ

When we care for someone in crisis, we encounter Christ.

When we comfort the grieving, we comfort Christ.

When we visit the sick, we visit Christ.

When we stand beside the frightened, Christ stands beside us.

This is the mystery of the Gospel.

The One we seek is often found in the very people who need our compassion.

A Prayer for Caregivers

Lord Jesus,

You walked among those who were sick, grieving, frightened, and alone.

Teach me to do the same.

Give me gentle words, patient ears, steady hands, and a compassionate heart.

Help me to recognize your face in every person I meet.

Protect me from pride, from despair, and from the temptation to believe I must carry burdens that belong to you alone.

Make me an instrument of your peace, a bearer of hope, and a faithful companion to those who suffer.

Amen.

Emergency spiritual care is not measured by eloquent prayers or impressive credentials.

It is measured by faithful presence.

Sometimes the greatest ministry is simply refusing to let another human being suffer alone.

And in those quiet moments of shared humanity, the love of Christ becomes visible—not through extraordinary miracles, but through ordinary people who choose to stay, listen, and love.

Chapter 16

The Prepared Disciple

Living Ready to Love

We have spent this journey talking about water bottles and haversacks, first aid kits and portable chapels, backpacks and belt pouches.

Yet none of these things are the true subject of this book.

This book has never really been about gear.

It has always been about discipleship.

Preparedness is simply one way of living the Gospel.

Every item we carry, every skill we learn, every emergency plan we make, and every mile we walk becomes another opportunity to love God and our neighbor more faithfully.

That is the Franciscan Clarean vision.

Always Ready

The prepared disciple is ready.

Ready to forgive.

Ready to encourage.

Ready to share.

Ready to comfort.

Ready to learn.

Ready to apologize.

Ready to serve.

Ready to rejoice.

Ready to grieve with those who grieve.

Ready to celebrate with those who celebrate.

Readiness is not merely about responding to disasters.

It is about responding to people.

A Rule for the Road

As you continue your journey, remember these guiding principles:

Travel Lightly

Carry only what helps you fulfill your vocation.

Do not allow possessions to become burdens.

Care Deeply

See Christ in every person you meet.

Treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Prepare Wisely

Learn practical skills.

Maintain your equipment.

Plan thoughtfully.

Avoid fear and excess.

Share Generously

What you carry is not only for you.

Look for opportunities to bless others.

Walk Humbly

Remain teachable.

Accept help when you need it.

Give thanks for those who help you.

Pray Constantly

Every journey begins and ends with God.

Let prayer shape your thoughts before your equipment shapes your actions.

Your Everyday Commission

When you leave your home each morning, imagine Christ saying:

"Today I am sending you into the world.

Carry peace.

Carry hope.

Carry wisdom.

Carry mercy.

Carry enough to care for yourself.

Carry enough to care for someone else.

And wherever you go, remember that I go before you."

This is the calling of every prepared disciple.

The Franciscan Clarean Blessing of the Bag

Before beginning a journey, you may wish to pray this blessing:

Loving God,

Bless this bag and everything it contains.

May these simple tools become instruments of your mercy.

May this water refresh the thirsty.

May this food strengthen the hungry.

May these medical supplies bring comfort to the injured.

May this light shine in places of darkness.

May these prayers bring hope to weary hearts.

Protect all who travel.

Guide my steps.

Keep me humble.

Help me to carry only what I need and to share freely what I have.

Above all, help me to carry Christ wherever I go.

Amen.

The Greatest Everyday Carry

Imagine standing before St. Francis and St. Clare.

Perhaps they would smile at your well-used haversack.

Perhaps they would admire the patches sewn onto your bag after years of faithful service.

But I suspect they would ask only one question:

"Did you love well?"

Did you feed the hungry?

Did you welcome the stranger?

Did you visit the sick?

Did you comfort the lonely?

Did you protect creation?

Did you forgive those who hurt you?

Did you walk humbly with God?

If the answer is yes, then you carried everything that truly mattered.

The Journey Continues

No book can prepare you for every circumstance.

No checklist can anticipate every challenge.

No piece of equipment can replace wisdom.

Preparedness is not a destination.

It is a lifelong practice.

Continue learning.

Continue simplifying.

Continue serving.

Continue praying.

Continue growing.

Allow your haversack to become worn from acts of mercy.

Allow your boots to become dusty from walking alongside others.

Allow your heart to become soft through compassion.

These are the marks of a Franciscan Clarean disciple.

A Final Word

The world does not need more people who are merely prepared to survive.

The world needs people who are prepared to love.

People who carry water because someone will be thirsty.

People who carry food because someone will be hungry.

People who carry first aid because someone will be injured.

People who carry hope because someone will be discouraged.

People who carry Christ because the world longs for grace.

May your pockets remind you to be generous.

May your belt pouch remind you to be ready.

May your haversack remind you to be a pilgrim.

May your backpack remind you to be a faithful steward.

May your portable chapel remind you that God walks with you.

And may your life become the greatest everyday carry of all—a living witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, lived in the joyful spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare.

Go lightly.

Go wisely.

Go courageously.

Go joyfully.

And wherever the road leads, be prepared—not simply to survive, but to become an instrument of God's peace.

The journey begins again every morning.

May you walk it well.

About the Author

Sister Abigail Hester, OFC is the founder and servant-leader of the **Order of Franciscan Clareans (OFC)**, a contemporary Franciscan community dedicated to living the Gospel through simplicity, compassion, justice, and radical hospitality. Drawing inspiration from St. Francis of

Assisi and St. Clare of Assisi, she writes to encourage Christians to follow Christ with both contemplative hearts and practical hands.

A nun, teacher, street chaplain, and author, Sister Abigail is passionate about helping people integrate faith into everyday life. Her work explores Franciscan spirituality, preparedness, biblical studies, pastoral care, Christian discipleship, natural health, and inclusive theology. Whether writing about everyday carry, the teachings of Jesus, or caring for neighbors in times of crisis, her focus remains the same: to equip ordinary people to become extraordinary instruments of God's peace.

In *St. Francis & St. Clare on Preparedness and EDC*, she invites readers to rediscover preparedness as an act of stewardship rather than fear, and everyday carry as a ministry of compassion rather than self-preservation.

When she is not writing, Sister Abigail continues to develop resources for the Franciscan Clareans, train chaplains, and encourage others to live simply, love boldly, and walk humbly with Christ.

For more books, articles, Bible studies, and resources, visit:

<https://sisterabigailhester.com>

There you will find information about the Order of Franciscan Clareans, free ministry resources, online studies, and ways to join the growing Franciscan Clarean community.

"Go lightly. Love boldly. Walk in peace."