



St. Clare's Radical Choice: Fleeing to Follow Christ

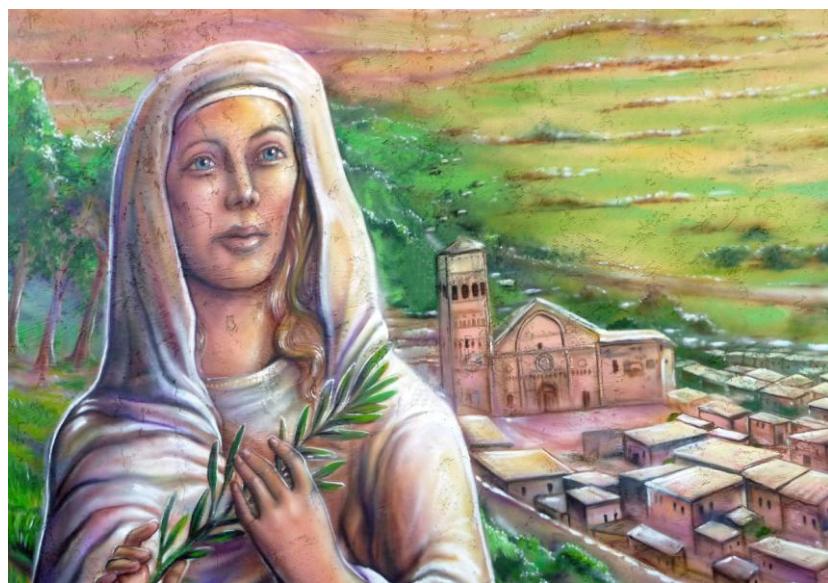
The story:

When Clare, a young noble woman with a reputation for goodness in Assisi, was 18 she heard St. Francis preach. Moved by his radical embrace of the Gospel, she secretly fled her wealthy family's home at night, leaving behind her noble status, her inheritance, and a planned marriage. At the small church of Porziuncola, Francis cut her hair and gave her a rough habit to wear, marking her total consecration to Christ.

Her family tried to drag her home, but she clung to the altar, refusing to go back. Eventually, her sister Agnes joined her, then other women did too. This was the birth of the Poor Clares — women living in radical poverty, prayer, and sisterhood.

Reflection:

- Clare shows us the courage to be countercultural — to choose simplicity and Gospel poverty in a world that pushes wealth and status. *How do we make decisions that push back on wealth and status - and act in a way that may be inconsistent with the larger American culture?*
- Clare challenges us to discern: *What do I need to let go of in my life or as a ministry to more fully embody our Franciscan purpose?*



St Clare mural at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale by Hector Rios.