

Happy to Plan
(Blessing of St Francis)
Last Pouch

I noticed, in preparing this programme today, that in the couple of weeks since I resumed these Midday Prayers, I've already mentioned St Francis of Assisi a few different times. Since tomorrow is his feast-day, I hope you won't mind my talking about him again, today, at rather greater length. He's such an attractive character; and his spirit and spirituality have so much to offer to people today. There is, I think, quite a strong Franciscan current in contemporary religious thought and life: and he has an appeal, in his joy and simplicity and service of God and man, to people of little or no religion at all, and to those of other faiths than his own. It's curious too how much of the modern popular-style religious songs ~~are~~^{get} their inspiration from him, directly (like the record I started with today) or indirectly. I feel he would be at home with, for instance, Jesus Christ Superstar (perhaps with some reservations though, about the libretto) or Godspell — after all, he himself was responsible for a similar kind of lively and joyful presentation of the Gospel message in his time. And I'm sure he would enjoy that other recent biblical musical, Joseph + the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat — which by the way you can hear some bits of, if you stay tuned after this programme to Aileen Bridgewater's 'Bits + Pieces': she's kindly asked me to stay on and talk with her today about that and other things. And then there's the movie "Prother Sun, Sister Moon", which for some reason we've never yet seen in HK. But on the other hand, though, there is and always has been a danger of taking Francis too much as a romantic, in the 19th century or modern usage of that word — he certainly...
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