

## The Cross at San Damiano

You were drawn to small, neglected churches  
just as you were to lepers and the poor.  
God met you in the lowliest of places  
and hid in a small task your greater call.

Your sense of God was sensory. You saw  
and touched this dusty icon, heard this Christ  
who, crucified, no longer hangs but stands,  
wide-eyed and radiant, wondrously alive.

His eyes, serene and steadfast, fix their gaze  
upon his Father. In that interchange  
of loving sight all creatures are in view.  
His wounds attest his love, his arms invite.

Below his feet are figures now obscured  
by hundreds who, like you, have touched and kissed.  
Among those obscure faces was your own,  
gazing and weeping, waiting for a word.

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This poem is about the occasion when Francis, praying in front of the icon of the crucified Christ in the little church of San Damiano, heard the words: "Repair my church." His immediate response was to repair the crumbling building he was in. The icon can be seen at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San\\_Damiano\\_cross#/media/File:Krui\\_s\\_san\\_damiano.gif](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Damiano_cross#/media/File:Krui_s_san_damiano.gif) and elsewhere on the Internet.