

A Blessing on the First Anniversary of Pope Francis

By Fr. Brendan McGuire

One year on, the road still bears your footprints,
shepherd of the peripheries,
who walked among us
smelling of the sheep,
who knelt to wash
what others would not touch.

You taught us the Emmaus way:
to fall into step beside the disappointed,
to listen all the way to the end
before opening the Scripture,
to break the bread
before pronouncing the word.

You gave your last blessing
on Easter morning, frail and luminous,
then slipped quietly into the Resurrection
you had spent your life proclaiming.

May the Risen Christ,
who still walks unrecognized
on every dusty road of grief,
keep the doors you opened open,
the windows you flung wide,
and our feet, Holy Father,
forever turning toward
the ones still walking away.

Amen.