

ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI

REFLECTION

St. Francis of Assisi, “The little beggar” is perhaps the most popular saint in history. St. Francis preached and literally lived the gospel. Through his constant consideration of God’s voice and practice of it. St. Francis led and inspired numerous people to a life of holiness and repentance. He lived a life of self denial and gave more importance to the kingdom of God than the earthly kingdom and its pleasures and lived to serve the ‘master’ than the servant’. As the **patron saint of Jesus Youth**, there is lot that we can learn and draw inspiration from this great man of God. St. Francis was fervent in prayer, meditation of the Word of God, frequently received the sacraments, was a great evangelizer, built and led an ideal community, lived as a poor and served the poor.

HISTORY: Francis was born in 1182 in Assisi, Italy and his baptismal name was John, but his father renamed him Francesco, in honor of his love for France. The son of a wealthy merchant, Francis had time and money to host lavish banquets for young nobles who proclaimed him "King of Feasts." Parties and selling cloth left Francis little time for God. He dreamed of knighthood and longed for the adventurous life of chivalry. In pursuit of that dream, he joined in the war between Assisi and Perugia at the age of 20. In that war, Francis fought with youthful enthusiasm, but was wounded and taken prisoner. Spending the next year in a dungeon, he contracted malaria. Ransomed by his father, a more reflective Francis returned to Assisi. Sickness overtook him and in that languishing experience he heard the first stirrings of a vocation to peace and justice. The military victories of Count Walter of Brienne revived Francis' desire for knighthood. Under Brienne's command, he hoped to win his





favor and become a knight. On his way to join Brienne, Francis stopped in Spoleto and heard the shocking news of his death. Overcome by depression, his malaria returned.

One night a mysterious voice asked him, "Who do you think can best reward you, the Master or the servant?" Francis Answered, "The Master." The voice continued, "Why do you leave the Master for the servant?" Francis realized the servant was Count Walter. He left Spoleto convinced God had spoken to him. From that moment on, Francis who once led a lavish life began to care for the sick and the poor, especially the lepers whom he once hated to see even from a distance convinced that this was what God had called him to do. It was his faith in the word of God that transformed his life and gave him the grace and courage to conquer himself to be able to love Christ more. A further call came in 1205, when, in a moment of prayer in the abandoned Church of San Damiano, Francis heard a voice coming from the crucifix which challenged him to rebuild the church. At first he thought it meant that he should rebuild San Damiano, so he sold some of his father's cloth to raise money to build the Church at San Damiano. His father, who was already upset about the life he was leading, took him to court, where Francis was ordered to pay back the money. Francis complied, renouncing his inheritance and handing his expensive clothing to him as well. Dressed only in a workman's smock, he left town and spent the next two years as a hermit, taking a vow of poverty and dedicating his life his life to God.

Francis lived the Gospel values literally, he possessed absolutely nothing and begged for his food, he served and worked for others without expecting anything in return. He relied completely on God's providence and used nothing more than what was required for his survival. He loved every creation of God and preached the Gospel to all creation, more by his life than by his words. Out of humility Francis never accepted the priesthood but remained a deacon all his life. He had a great love for animals. His ardent love of God merited him the name Seraphic. Francis died at the age of 44 on October 4, 1226 at Portiuncula, Italy. He was canonized by Pope Gregory IX less than two years later.

WEEK-I (1st- 9th)

Quote of St. Francis of Assisi

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

Prayer

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command. Amen.





WEEK- II (10th -16th)

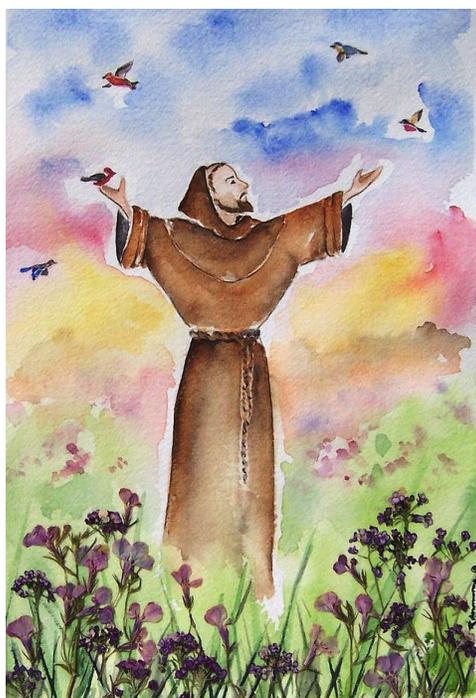
Quote of St. Francis of Assisi

“Sanctify yourself and you will sanctify society.”

Prayer

Almighty, eternal, just, and merciful God, grant us in our misery the grace to do for You alone, what we know You want us to do, and always to desire what pleases you. Thus, inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened, and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, May we be able to follow in the footsteps of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And, by Your grace alone, may we make our way to You, Most High, Who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity, And are glorified God all-powerful forever and ever. Amen.





WEEK- III (17th -23rd)

Quote of St. Francis of Assisi

“When you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart.”

Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon.
 Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope.
 Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy.
 O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
 to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
 and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
 Amen.

WEEK-IV (24th – 28th)

Quote of St. Francis of Assisi

“Preach the gospel always, use words if necessary”

Prayer

Make us worthy Lord to serve our fellow men throughout the world, who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them through our hands, this day, their daily bread and by our understanding love give peace and joy. Amen

