

Wisdom of St. Francis of Assisi

“Above all the grace and the gifts that Christ gives to his beloved is that of over-coming self.”

“I have been all things unholy. If God can work through me, he can work through anyone.”

“If you have men who will exclude any of God’s creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men.”

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

“It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.”

“It is not fitting, when one is in God’s service, to have a gloomy face or a chilling look.”

“Start by doing what is necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”



Father, you helped St. Francis to reflect the image of Christ through a life of poverty and humility.

May we follow your Son by walking in the footsteps of Francis of Assisi, and by imitating his joyful love.

Amen



Resources for this pamphlet:

www.americancatholic.org

www.brainyquote.com

www.newadvent.org
(Catholic Encyclopedia)

Brother James McVeigh, OSF
Secretariat for the New Evangelization
P.O. Box 9023
Rockville Centre, NY 11571
Tel: (516) 678-5800
Fax: (516) 594-0064
email: jmcveigh@drcv.org

Evangelization and The Lives of the Saints

St. Francis of Assisi

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Office of New Evangelization
P.O. Box 9023
Rockville Centre, NY 11571
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Fax: (516) 594-0064

St. Francis of Assisi

Before anything else, the message of the life of Francis Bernardone is one of conversion. Before Francis could embrace all of creation, he embraced a leper whom he once could not stand to put his eyes on. It is only after his heart was touched by God that Francis was able to give his entire existence over to holiness and charity.

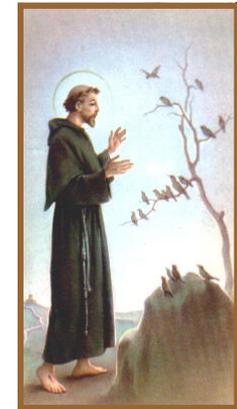
St. Francis of Assisi was converted as a young man, when he radically denounced his heritage and all his many possessions, enraging and embarrassing his father. When friends asked if he would marry, he answered, "I am about to take a wife of surpassing fairness": he was speaking of Lady Poverty, who did indeed become his bride. He worked with his hands and begged for his food, served the sick and preached in the streets. He had a special affinity for animals and a love of nature. Eventually his way of life attracted others, and the order of the Franciscans was born. Clare of Assisi became his close friend and follower, eventually founding the Poor Clares.

Francis was considerate about not hurting the feelings of anyone, yet strong in preaching the truth and teaching his brothers to live a life worthy of Christ. He had them eat at small, lowly tables so that: "if a beggar were to come to sit down near them he might believe that he was but with his equals and need not blush on account of his poverty."

St. Francis died at the young age of 44. His whole life was based on the words of Jesus: "Leave all and follow me."

- When God told him, "Francis, go out and repair my house", St. Francis literally put brick upon brick to rebuild a chapel. While we may not be required to build a church, we can build God's house on earth by every good deed we do, no matter how small. One of the most beautiful aspects of our faith is its supernatural quality: that our prayers and actions really do contribute to the Body of Christ in a meaningful way.
- St. Francis lived a life of poverty and simplicity. There are always ways in which we can streamline our own lives, "living simply, so others can simply live." Paring down our lives of too many possessions, donating them (even the ones we may love!) to the poor, frees us and leaves us open to accepting the true gifts God wants us to have.
- "In Francis everything started with God and returned to God. His '*Praises of God Most High*' reveal his constantly enraptured heart in conversation with the Trinity. His relationship with Christ found its most meaningful place in the Eucharist. Even his love for neighbor developed from his experience of God's love." (Pope Benedict XVI). How can we give more importance to God in our own daily lives? Why not start and end each day with quiet time and prayer, reading Scripture or perhaps a good spiritual book. Taking time to make God a real part of each day helps our ordinary activities take on the sacredness that God intends for our lives.

- In Francis' famous "*Canticle of the Sun*", he gives praise to God through Mother Earth, Brother Sun, Sister Moon, and other elements of nature. If we take a few moments to really look at the world around us, we will know we can trust the One who is the author of such Beauty.
- "It is not enough for people to admire Francis: through him they must be able to encounter Christ, to profess him and love him with true faith; certain hope; perfect love." With these words Pope Benedict XVI addressed the clergy and Religious during his visit to Assisi in June 2007. St. Francis of Assisi' is a spirituality that is still relevant today, and from which we can draw on to aid our own search for God.



"The Brothers are to love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, and with all their strength, and to love their neighbor as themselves. Let them glorify the Lord in all they do. For He sent them into the world that they might give witness by word and work to His voice and to make known that the Lord alone is God." (Rule IX:29)