



Essential Evangelization

St. Francis of Assisi

This patron saint of Italy (and animals) practiced environmentally friendly principles before it was politically correct to do so! Often pictured in nature or with birds on his shoulders, St. Francis astounded and inspired the Church by taking the Bible and living the Gospel literally. He did it all joyfully even through periods of serious illness. He was an avid admirer and protector of the earth and animal life viewing creation as just another manifestation of the greatness and beauty of God. It is said that he found in even the tiniest of insects, the sacredness of life. For a time he was even considered a religious fanatic, so great was his conversion from a life of folly and frolicking as a youth in the small town of Assisi in the late 1100s. His devotion and total loyalty to the Church during a time of religious upheaval and reform was also exemplary. After handing all that he owned over to the poor, he would go door to door to his neighbors and friends in search of sustenance and worthy souls.

From the cross in an old chapel in San Damiano, Jesus spoke to him, "Francis, go out and build up my house, for it is falling down." From that time on Francis became an obedient and humble servant of Christ. Although he was initially torn between a life of contemplative prayer or preaching, with this divine revelation, he took to a road of teaching and preaching. He also did great penance so that he would be totally submitted to, and very discerning of, the will of God for his life.

During the last years of his relatively short life (he died when he was only 44 years old), Francis was half blind and seriously ill, he also received the stigmata of Christ in his hands, feet and side. On his deathbed he asked his superior if he could be disrobed and laid naked on the earth, in complete submission to God and in imitation of the death of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Truly a great and inspirational saint of our Church, Francis' feast day is Sunday, October 4th.

"We adore you and bless you, Lord Jesus Christ, because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world."

From a Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi that has become one of our prayers of the Stations of the Cross.

*This is one of a series of articles on
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