

# St. Francis of Assisi

Born in Italy, Giovanni Francesco di Bernardone; and nicknamed Francis by his father who loved France, St. Francis grew up in a wealthy home. In his youth he enjoyed all the privileges of wealth as the son of a wealthy linen merchant. The end of the twelfth century was a time of political turmoil, and as Francis grew to manhood he began to embrace the ideals of medieval chivalry as in the troubadours' songs, influencing him to seek a military career as a knight. He was captured and imprisoned after his first battle, and returned home a year later, very ill. When he recovered, he was determined to enlist again, this time fighting for the pope in the Crusades. The Crusades brought Francis to the Middle East, and there are accounts that St. Francis was in contact with Rumi's master, Shams, while Francis was in Damascus. Francis had many visions in his life, and it was around this time that one of these visions made him realize a military career was not for him. He returned home and began a new life, on fire with love for God. He began to devote himself to helping the impoverished and the afflicted. It is said that he embraced and kissed a leper, and experienced a baptism of joy and triumph over fear.

There are many wonderful accounts of St. Francis. When he was about twenty-five, he would often pray in secluded spots. Once while in an old country chapel, he had a vision in which, the painted figure of Christ on the crucifix spoke to him, saying, "Francis, go and repair my house, which, as you see, is falling completely to ruin." Francis then took on the challenge of repairing "The Church".

Sometimes when Francis was traveling with his brother monks he would pick up a stick and pretend it was a violin bow and his arm a violin, he would start playing the violin and singing French songs that his mother taught him as a child. Francis would leap about and dance and become ecstatic. It is said of Francis that his love for God at times made him so wild that few understood him.

Francis's visit to Egypt and attempted rapprochement with the Muslim world had far-reaching consequences, long past his own death, since after the fall of the Crusader Kingdom it would be the Franciscans, of all Catholics, who would be allowed to stay on in the Holy Land and be recognized as "Custodians of the Holy Land" on behalf of Christianity.

## Lenten Evening Prayer

*Liturgical Texts & Prayers from the writings of*

## St Francis of Assisi

1182-1226



**St. Francis of Assisi** - is perhaps the most beloved saint of the Western world. His love for nature and his hymns to the sun, moon, earth, and birds have captured the hearts of millions. Francis emphasized life's goal as divine union with God. It has been argued that no one in history was as dedicated as Francis to imitate the life, and carry out the work, of Christ in Christ's own way. This is important in understanding Francis' character and his affinity for the Eucharist and respect for the priests who carried out the sacrament. He and his followers celebrated and even venerated poverty. Poverty was so central to his character that in his last written work, the Testament, he said that absolute personal and corporate poverty was the essential lifestyle for the members of his order. He believed that nature itself was the mirror of God. He called all creatures his "brothers" and "sisters".

# Lenten Evening Prayer

*As you enter,  
please take a moment to remind yourself of your Baptism.  
Using water from the Font trace the sign of the cross  
on your forehead to remind yourself that,  
“In Baptism you are marked with the cross of Christ forever.”*

## GOD WOULD KNEEL DOWN

I think God might be a little prejudiced.  
For once God asked me to join God on a walk  
through this world,

and we gazed into every heart on this earth,  
and I noticed God lingered a bit longer  
before any face that was  
weeping,

and before any eyes that were  
laughing.

And sometimes when we passed  
a soul in worship

God too would kneel  
down.

I have Come to learn: God  
adores God’s  
creation.

*St. Francis of Assisi from “Love Poems from God”*

*Please begin your worship in quiet contemplation  
of all that God has made.*

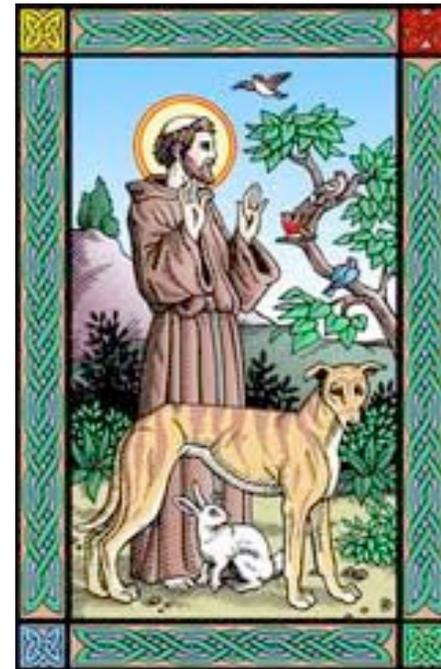
Benediction:

P: "Preach the Gospel at all times!  
If necessary use words." **Amen**

*(St. Francis of Assisi)*

Peace:

*receive the peace of Christ  
and share Christ’s peace as you depart.*



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

*St. Francis*

Hymn: ***Make Me a Channel of Your Peace***  
*printed on the insert - Text: St. Francis of Assisi*

Prayers of the Body

We will begin our prayers by singing # 751 three times;  
please change the singular pronouns to plural:

**#751 O Lord, Hear Our Prayers  
When We Call Answer Us**

**Prayer petitions will be punctuated by silence.**

Following the Amen, please sing the alternate verse of #751  
"The Lord is our song"

Abba Prayer

P: As Jesus taught us, we pray:

**Heavenly Mother, Heavenly Father  
Holy and blessed is your true name.  
We pray for your reign of peace to come.  
We pray that your good will be done.  
Let heaven and earth become one.  
Give us this day the bread we need.  
Give it to those who have none.  
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us  
From each one to each one to each one.  
Lead us to holy innocence  
Beyond the evil of our days:  
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.  
For yours is the power  
And the mercy, and the glory.  
Forever your name is all one. Amen.**

Hymn: ***#563 O Light Whose Splendor Thrills***

Invocation:

P: "If all the tenderness in this world could reflect from my eyes, would you accept that love?  
If all the forgiveness the heavens have known could be offered from one face, would you accept that pardon?"

**C: In God's sublime sanity--every moment God offers that to us: anything that might comfort."**

*(St. Francis of Assisi)*

Evening Hymn: ***#561 Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory***

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: No one lives outside the walls of this sacred place, existence. The holy water, we need it upon our eyes: it is you dear, you--each form. What mother would lose her infant--and we are that to You O God, never lost for Your gaze are we? Every cry of the heart is attended by light's own arms. We cannot wander anywhere that will not aid You. Anything we can touch--You brought it into the classroom of our mind. We have just peeled the skin from the potato and you are still contemplating its worth, Sweetheart; indeed there are wonderful nutrients in all, for You O God made everything. With that wisdom we praise you. **C: Amen.**

*(St. Francis of Assisi)*

Psalmody: ***#232 Let My Prayer Rise Up***  
*the piano side is Group 1 and the north side Group 2*

***Silence for reflection***

Litany:

P: Dear God, please reveal to us your sublime beauty that is everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, so that we will never again feel frightened.

**C: My Divine LOVE, my LOVE, please let me touch your face.**

P: I hear you singing, Dear, inviting me to your limb.  
I am coming, for all that we do is a preparation for love.

C: **We hear you singing, O God, inviting us to your throne.**

**We are coming, Dear, for all the toil you have blessed us with is a preparation to know and hold the sacred.**

**We hear you singing, our souls, but how can it be that God's voice has now become our own?**

P: Our BELOVED said, "That is just a wedding gift for our Divine Union."

*(St. Francis of Assisi)*

### *Silence for reflection*

Hymn: **#740 God of the Sparrow**

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:12-17

Readings from St. Francis of Assisi:

### **OUR NEED FOR THEE**

In our ever present need for thee: Beloved, let us know your peace.  
Let us be your instruments that break every shackle,  
for do not the caged ones weep?

And give us our inheritance of divine love so that we can forgive like you. And let us be wise, so that we do not wed another's madness and then make them in debt to us for the deep gash their helpless raging lance will cause.

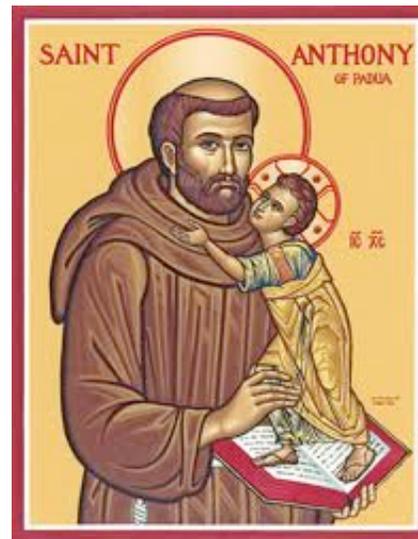
Darkness is an unlit wick; it just needs your touch, Beloved, to become a sacred flame. And what sadness in this world could endure if it looked into your eyes?

God is like a honeybee, God doesn't mind me calling God that; for when you are kind--sweet--God hears, and can draw you into Godself.

What is there to understand of each other: if a wand turned the sun into a moon would not the moon mourn the ecstatic effulgence it once was. We are all in mourning for the experience of our essence we knew and now miss. Light is the cure, all else a placebo.

Yes, I will console any creature before me that is not laughing or full of passion for their art or life; for laughing and passion--beauty and joy--is our heart's truth, all else is labour and foreign to the soul.

I have stood in God's rain and now fill granaries as do the fertile plains: giving is as natural to love as sound from the mouth. There is a courageous dying, it is called effacement. That holy death unfurls our spirit's wings and allows us to embrace God even as we stand on the earth.



### **IN A VISION**

I asked for the most intimate experience with the Christ.

No one would believe what happened in a vision more true than this world:

the  
sacred chord  
pulsated light throughout the  
universe  
as I nursed my own  
Christ at my  
breasts.

# Make Me A Channel of Your Peace

D Dmaj7  $\frac{G}{D}$  Dmaj7 D Dmaj7  $\frac{Bm}{D}$

1. Make me a chan-nel of your peace: where there is hat-red,  
 2. Make me a chan-nel of your peace: where there's des-pair in

G Em Em Gmaj7  
 D A A7 A A7 Em E A7 G

let me bring your love; where there is in-ju-ry, your heal-ing  
 life let me bring hope; where there is dark-ness, - - on-ly

A7Em7 A7Em7  $\frac{Em7}{A}$  A7 Gmaj7  $\frac{D}{A}$   $\frac{D}{A}$   $\frac{D}{A}$  G | Dmaj7 G

pow'r. and where there's doubt, true faith in you.  
 light, and where there's sad-ness, ev-er joy.

2 | D D7 G G Em7 G G Dmaj7 D A7

3. O Spir-it, grant that I may nev-er seek so much

D D7 G G  $\frac{D6}{G}$

to be con-soled as to con-sole, to be un-der-stood

G Dmaj7 D Bm E7

as to un-der-stand, to be loved as to love with

A7 *DC. al. fine.*

all my soul - -

4. Make me a channel of your peace.  
 It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
 in giving to all that we receive,  
 and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Words: St. Francis  
 Music: Sebastian Temple; arr. Betty Pulkingham (Franciscan Comm. Centre)  
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**IN ALL THINGS**  
 It was easy to love God in all that was beautiful.  
 The lessons of deeper knowledge, though, instructed me to embrace God in all things.