

Francis of Assisi, Friar (1226)

Today we celebrate Francis of Assisi, the thirteenth-century Italian whose greatest honour was to be known as il Poverello, “the little poor one of Christ.” He grew up in a very wealthy family and seemed to have not a care in the world until he was twenty years old, when a chance encounter with a leper left him appalled by his own uselessness.



Soon afterwards he heard Jesus speaking to him from a painting of the crucifixion over the altar of a local church. He threw away his wardrobe and renounced his father’s wealth in order to care for the poor and the crippled. In 1208 he heard the commission which the risen Lord gave to his apostles, “Go, make all nations my disciples,” and knew that it was also addressed to him. Francis began to train his followers for the task of making Jesus truly known and loved among the ordinary people of Italy. Out of this movement developed the Order of the Lesser Brethren, commonly called the Franciscans.

Francis cared deeply for his new Order, but he also grew restless as it became an established institution of the Church. He distanced himself from its day-to-day life and eventually went his own way as he strove to imitate Christ’s total obedience to God. Two years before his death he was granted a sign which manifested this desire. One September day in 1224, he had a vision of the Crucified borne on the wings of a seraph. As the vision withdrew, the wounds of Jesus appeared in Francis’s own flesh — the scars like nail-wounds on his hands and feet, and in his right side a scar like a spear-wound. These marks, called the stigmata, remained on Francis’s body until his death two years later.

(For All the Saints, 298)

St. Francis Compline

Friar, 1226, “Little Poor One of Christ”

May I never boast of anything
except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Grant us, Almighty God,
after the example of your holy servant Francis,
to do all that you ask of us,
and always to desire what is pleasing in your sight,
that cleansed by your love,
enlightened by your truth,
and kindled with the fire of your Holy Spirit,
we may follow in the footsteps of your beloved Son
and make our way to you, O God most High;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayer of St. Francis (responsively)

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;
It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

Apostles Creed

Let us confess the faith of our baptism as we say,

I believe in God,

**The Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again
to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Prayers

You call to us wherever we are. We ask that you would meet with us this night...

We lift up to you the people in our world and in our lives who are hurting and need your help...

You are the Good Shepherd, and you know what we need. We bring to you our burdens, fears, and challenges...

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

Prayer of John Chrysostom

Almighty God,

**you have given us grace at this time with one accord
to make our common supplications unto you;
and you have promised through your well-beloved Son
that when two or three are gathered together in his Name
you will be in the midst of them:**

**Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions
as may be best for us; granting us in this world
knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come
life everlasting. Amen.**

Glory to God,

**whose power, working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.**

**Glory to God from generation to generation,
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
forever and ever. Amen.**