



St. Francis

- Occupation: Catholic Friar
- Born: 1182 in Assisi, Italy
- Died: 1226 in Assisi, Italy

Best known for: Founding the Franciscan Order

- Saint Francis of Assisi was a Catholic friar who gave up a life of wealth to live a life of poverty. He established the Franciscan Order of friars and the women's Order of the Poor Ladies.



Early Life

- He grew up as the son of a wealthy cloth merchant.
- Francis loved to learn and sing songs as a boy. His father wanted him to become a businessman and taught him about the French culture.
- As a young man he loved parties and good times. He was handsome and rich, so he bought himself the finest clothes and spent money freely.
- Francis had no wish to study or to learn his father's business, as he was having too much fun. One day he refused to give alms to a poor beggar but as the man was leaving, he felt sorry for what he had done and ran after him with some money.

Going to Battle

- About the age of nineteen Francis went to battle against the nearby town of Perugia. Francis was captured and taken prisoner. He was held prisoner in a dungeon for a year before his father paid the ransom and he was set free.

Visions from God



- Over the next few years Francis began to see visions from God that changed his life. When praying in a church, Francis heard God tell him to "repair my church, which is falling in ruins."
- Francis gave all his money to the church. His father became very angry with him. Francis then left his father's home and took a vow of poverty.

The change in Francis

- While riding his horse one day he saw a leper and quickly turned his horse to ride away. He changed his mind, kissed the horrible-looking leper, and gave him money.
- Often he gave his clothes and money to the poor. He served the sick in hospitals. Still he felt he must do more. He fasted and began to go around in rags to humble himself.

No home



- When his father took everything from him in disgust, Francis put all his trust in his Father in heaven. He said that he was married to "Lady Poverty" and he began to live as a beggar.
- He had no shelter. His food was what kind people gave him. Everywhere he went, he begged people to stop sinning and return to God. Many men began to see how close to God this poor man really was, and they became his followers.

The Franciscan Order

- As Francis lived his life of poverty and preached to people about the life of Jesus Christ, people began to follow him. By 1209, he had around 11 followers. He had one basic rule which was "To follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps".
- Francis was a devoted follower of the Catholic Church. He and his followers travelled to Rome to get the approval for their religious Order from the pope. At first the pope was reluctant. These men were dirty, poor, and smelled bad.

Other Orders

- When a woman named Clare of Assisi wanted to take similar vows, Francis helped her start the Order of the Poor Ladies (Order of Saint Clare). He also started another order (later called the Third Order of Saint Francis) that was for men and women who didn't take vows or leave their jobs, but lived out the principals of the Franciscan Order in their daily lives.

Franciscan Order

- That is how the great Franciscan order of priests and brothers began. They helped the poor and sick and preached everywhere. Even after the order had spread all over Italy, Francis insisted that they should not own anything. He wanted his priests to love poverty as he did.

Working Miracles

- St. Francis had the power of working miracles. He loved all creatures and the birds and animals happily obeyed his commands!
- As a reward for his great love, Jesus gave him his own wounds. Two in his hands, two in his feet and one in his side but the humble Francis tried to hide them from people.



Love for Nature



- Francis was known for his love of nature and animals.
- There are many stories about Saint Francis and his preaching to animals. It is said that one day he was talking to some birds when they began to sing together. Then they flew into the sky and formed the sign of a cross.
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- It was said that Francis could tame wild animals. One story tells of a vicious wolf in the town of Gubbio that was killing people and sheep. Francis went to the town to confront the wolf. Francis made the sign of the cross and told the wolf not to hurt anyone else. The wolf then became tame and the town was safe.





The end of his life

- Toward the end of his life, he became very sick.
- He exclaimed, "Welcome, Sister Death!"
- He asked to be laid on the ground and covered with an old habit.
- Francis died on October 3, 1226.

