

St. Francis of Assisi



1181-1226

Feast Day:
October 4

Francis was born in 1181 into a rich Italian family. He had an easy life with lots of friends and was a favorite among the noble young men of Italy.

Francis wished to become a knight and win glory. On his way to battle, he received a vision from God telling him to go home and wait for a different kind of knighthood. He listened. One day, when he was praying in a chapel, Christ spoke to Francis from the crucifix. Jesus said, “Francis, repair my church.” Francis did exactly what Jesus said. He fixed the chapel’s walls and roof. But Jesus wanted Francis to fix more than just the physical walls of the Church. He had plans for Francis to build up His Church throughout the world.

Francis followed Christ’s commands. Many men joined Francis. They also gave away their possessions. They begged when they needed food. They gave whatever they did not need to the poor and the sick. This was the knighthood Francis had been looking for: a knighthood in service of Christ and of others.

Francis set out to Egypt to try to make peace with the Sultan who was fighting Christians in the Crusades. The Sultan was impressed by Francis, but the war continued, so Francis returned to Italy.

While praying one evening, Francis received the stigmata (wounds like the ones Jesus received on the Cross). He died a few years later. Religious men all over the world today continue to live according to the rules of St. Francis. They are known as Franciscans.