



## Saint Francis Of Assisi

*Before prayer this morning:*

Francis of Assisi did not begin his life as the serene saint we know from countless garden statues. While he would become known for his poverty and peaceful ways, his early life was far different. He was born in Italy in the twelfth century during the violent death pangs of feudalism. A member of the prosperous merchant class, he dressed in finery, threw lavish parties and trained as a crusader. Early in the thirteenth century, however, he underwent a profound spiritual crisis. No longer comfortable living out the collective values of his age, Francis embarked on the life-changing process of individuation. In a new study of Francis of Assisi, author Susan W. McMichaels describes one man's struggle to become the hero of his own life by following the deepest promptings of his heart.

(for those who want to do more reading: *Journey Out Of The Garden: St. Francis of Assisi and the Process of Individuation* by Susan W. McMichaels)

## St. Francis of Assisi --- October 2004

**Reader 1:** We find a world in which the rich spend their money on frivolity while the poor get more and more desperate; a world which seems unsafe and dangerous; a world in which the old certainties have gone. We see a Church confused, divided, and racked by scandal; an inward looking Church; a Church with little to say to young people.

**Reader 2:** All this being not a description of the present, of course, but of the situation eight hundred years ago. The world and the Church in which the saint we celebrate today lived and moved. Francis was very much part of that world and of that Church. In his youth he squandered his father's money and had little regard for the message of the gospel. Yet one day - we might want to say by chance but really it was by providence - he came across the ruins of a Church. There he experienced a profound conversion and set about rebuilding the Church, at first literally and then in a much fuller sense. His spirit of simplicity and joy overcame obstacles from family and friends, from Church officials, and from worldly powers.

**Reader 3:** As survey after survey has shown, for all our wealth and comfort we who live in the Western world are not happy. The media bluntly reminds us of the scandals that have beset the Church in recent times. We are aware that many youngsters feel that the gospel is 'irrelevant'. We need the faith and simplicity of Francis, but above all we need his sense of Christian joy. May his prayers today inspire us to follow his example.

P.D. (from Catholic Teachers Gazette <http://www.e-ctg.co.uk/> )

The Prayer of

Saint Francis of Assisi



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;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

**Amen.**

Arranged by Brother Michael Livaudais, FSC

