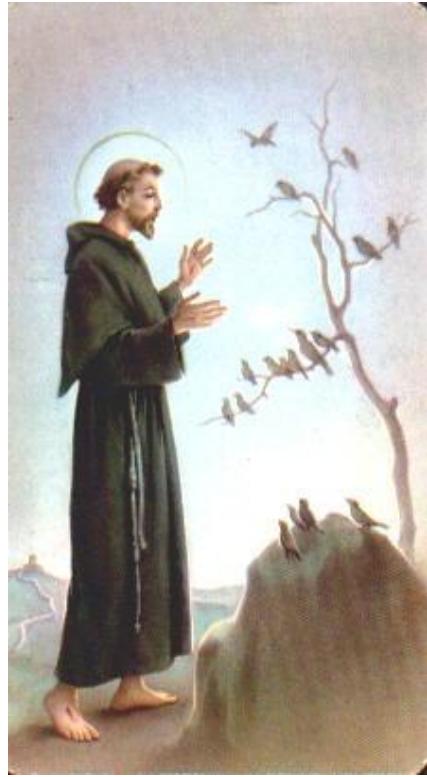


# St. John's Newsletter



## Year of St. Francis of Assisi

In commemoration of the 800-year anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Leo XIV has named it a special year beginning Jan. 10, 2026.

The patron saint of animals, merchants and ecology, St. Francis is one of the most recognized saints of the Catholic Church. He was known for his humility, vow of poverty, love of animals, and care for creation. He established the Franciscan order, attended the Lateran Council, was a prisoner of war, preached to Muslims, beloved by the people and the Church, and spent time in the wilderness recognizing the beauty of Nature as God's creation. During a 40-day fast he received the stigmata which is wounds on his hands, feet and side reflecting the wounds that Jesus suffered on the Cross.

### Early Life and Conversion

Born into a life of wealth and ease, Francis spent his early years being spoiled in a life of luxury and pleasure. He was popular and liked to have a good time. It appeared that he would follow his father's dream and join him in business, but he wanted glory so he set out as a soldier in the Crusades but only made it a day's journey when the voice of God told him he was wrong and needed to return home and devote his life to God. Upon his return, he was ridiculed as a coward which embarrassed his father. He rejected everything about the life he had been leading. While he was in the ruins of the San Damiano church, he heard the voice of Jesus from the Crucifix say: "Repair my Church." Francis interpreted that as the actual building (church with a little c). He begged for stones and rebuilt the San Damiano church with his own hands, but he later realized that God meant to rebuild the Church with a capital C. Scandal and greed were working on the Church from the inside while outside

heresies flourished by appealing to those longing for something different. Francis's simple message of service and peace changed hearts.

### Call to Poverty and Peace

Following the Gospel literally, Francis and his companions went out to preach two by two. At first, listeners were understandably hostile to these men in rags trying to talk about God's love. People even feared them, but soon these same people noticed that these barefoot beggars wearing sacks seemed filled with constant joy. They celebrated life. And people had to ask themselves: Could one own nothing and be happy? Soon those who had met them with mud and rocks, greeted them with bells and smiles. Francis did not try to abolish poverty, he tried to make it holy. When his friars met someone poorer than they, they would rip off the sleeve of their habit to give to the person. They worked for all necessities and only begged if they had to. But Francis would not let them accept any money. Years of poverty and wandering made Francis ill. He died at the age of 45 on Oct. 4, 1226.

### Prayer of St. Francis

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;  
And 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.

With Pope Leo's decree, the faithful can obtain a plenary indulgence until Jan. 10 of next year. This grace requires the usual conditions — sacramental confession, Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the pope — by making a pilgrimage to any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis anywhere in the world.

### Sources:

<https://www.churchpop.com/12-facts-saint-francis-of-assisi-2026-franciscan-jubilee-year/>  
<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/269025/leo-xiv-proclaims-franciscan-jubilee-year-and-grants-plenary-indulgence>  
[https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=50](https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=50)  
<https://catholic-link.org/special-year-of-st-francis-of-assisi-indulgence-catholic-guide-catholic-resources/>