St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church



Novena to St. Francis of Assisi – Daily Reflections

He was graced with the stigmata shortly before his death on Oct. 3, 1226. He died singing psalms of praise. He was canonized on July 16, 1228, by Pope Gregory IX. His feast day is celebrated on Oct. 4.

Day 1 Reflection - Novena in Honor of Saint Francis of Assisi

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Holy Saint Francis, through your kind intercession we seek holiness above all things. We seek the faith, hope and love that allowed you to joyfully renounce the pleasures of earthly life and to radically follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pray for us that we enjoy the privilege of suffering with and for the poor in the example of Jesus. Help us to be always grateful for the all blessings we have received and the strength to overcome our most pressing concerns, especially…

(Mention your intentions here, followed by the daily prayer)

St. Francis, as you left a comfortable life to lead a life of poverty and service to our Lord Jesus Christ, we ask you to pray that we also realize the folly of seeking to amass material gains and experience worldly pleasures. This day I humbly forego (_____) as an offering to God our Father, hoping this act signals a start of my conversion.

St. Francis, help us in praying for the grace to truly repent for our sins and actively seek reconciliation with God. May the blessings we obtain through your intercession deepen our faith, and inspire us to store treasures in Heaven, where we hope to spend eternity with the Almighty Father.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and forever shall be, world without end. Amen

St. Francis of Assisi, Pray for us!

Day 2 Reflection - Novena in Honor of Saint Francis of Assisi

Francis has begun his conversion as we saw yesterday, but here he still has a way to go. Richly dressed and lavish with his money he provides another great party for his friends, something he is well known for! Soon he will leave this rich way of living far behind him, but his generosity and spirit of giving will continue in other ways.

As we open our hearts to be transformed by God's great love, He is not going to totally wipe us out and start over from scratch! No, our gifts and talents that we have, will now be used in brand new different ways. Just as Jesus changed Simon Peter and his brother Andrew from catching fish into fishers of Men - He will now do the same with our talents and gifts.

Today, let us thank God for all the blessings He has given to us. Let us thank Him for each moment we have received, for even those that were not consecrated to him from our past, can be proofs now of the wonderful transforming work of grace daily taking place in us.

Prayer: *Saint Francis, you are the Saint of Joy because you found the true riches in God's field. You are the Saint of Peace because you found the true peace, that comes from trusting in God. Help us, Saint Francis, to find this same joy and experience this same peace in our hearts and in our lives. Amen.*

Day 3 Reflection – Novena in Honor of St. Francis of Assisi

So many times when we think of saints - we think of their holiness as something accomplished from day one. But it is not so, they like us had to grow. They had to overcome their natural aversion to the crosses and trials of this life. Francis is no exception, common to that period of time not only did he have a great fear of lepers he also had a great loathing for them. He would do anything to let not even so much as their shadow come close to him. So what happens? He is riding gaily along on his fine horse and there is a leper. Quickly he turns his head and speeds his horse past him, and then comes the old remorse. Is this what our Lord would have done? Is this how Jesus would have treated such a poor and pitable man? No, of course not. So he takes a deep breath, turns his horse around and returns to the leper.

So here is where we come in. Who or what are the lepers in our life? If we can change our responses to them as Francis did - I am sure we will find like he did, that the lepers disappear and only Christ remains.

Prayer: *Saint Francis, all holiness stems from how we treat one another. Open my heart and my conscience to see the areas I need to change. Pray that I may act upon the grace given, to respond lovingly and generously. Amen.*

Day 4 Reflection - Novena in Honor of Saint Francis of Assisi

God spoke to Saint Francis, "Go, Francis, and restore my Church." Francis heard the words coming from the crucifix - which right away tells us something. Francis was in a church and he was praying! If we want God to speak to us than we also must spend that time in prayer.

Another word for prayer is "relationship" - we speak to God and God speaks to us. As readily as we want God to listen to us - so we must give that same readiness to listening to God. If we want God to answer our prayers - we must be ready as Saint Francis, to respond to God in the same manner.

Prayer: *Saint Francis, I do not often have the resolution and firmness of heart to pray as much as I should. Beg God to give me the grace of a prayerful and listening heart. Amen*.

Day 5 Reflection - Novena in Honor of Saint Francis of Assisi

Francis heard Jesus speaking to him from the crucifix. Immediately he starts looking about and figuring out where to start. The Portiuncula "little portion" is the perfect place. A small, broken down church that is definitely in need of repair. He starts in with a few rocks and some mortar. We can pretty much assume that Francis as a wealthy young man did not know a whole lot about church building... but he doesn't let that stop him. He starts and just keeps going.

He begs a few stones here, a little mortar there and continues to work. After a while he gets a few helpers and thus it begins... the great Franciscan order originates with a simple person listening to God and hauling around some rocks. Pretty amazing.

Jesus will speak as simply and plainly to us. We must imitate Francis. Maybe we don't quite know what God is saying, maybe we make a few false starts, but if we listen, and then follow as we think we are given to do, amazing things will happen for us as well. God will clear up things as we go along, but first we must dig in and get started. How exciting!

Prayer: *Saint Francis, help me to listen, help me to follow through! Help me to just get started in the way I think God is drawing me. You are not calling me to do great things but to pick up a few rocks, a few simple stones, and rebuild your church right where I am today. Amen.*

Day 6 Reflection - Novena in Honor of Saint Francis of Assisi

There are a few areas that I have a problem with Saint Francis. I don't quite follow his reasoning on punishing himself constantly by taking all his clothes off. Seems very weird and not all that effective - it is not something I can ever imagine Jesus doing so where he came up with this idea is beyond me. Must be some Middle Ages thing that is escaping my grasp.

But the point is, Francis was determined to belong totally to God. Since his father complained to the Bishop that the clothes Francis has on his back belonged to him, Francis readily gave them up. Much as I hate to admit it, I need to be as ready and willing to give everything up to totally follow Jesus.

Pride is perhaps the hardest thing to let go of in our Christian walk...maybe this was really what Francis was trying to throw off.

Prayer: *Saint Francis, help me to let go of the many things that are holding me back from living a truly free and unencumbered life. Not the responsibilities that my state of life require work, family, etc., but those interior things that hold me down, the little puffed up images of self that need to be stripped and given up. Help me, like Saint Francis to be more of a fool in this world and to be more lighthearted and joy-filled because I am not always protecting my image. Amen.*

Day 7 Reflection - Novena in Honor of Saint Francis of Assisi

Today, Saint Francis is one of the most popular saints. But he wasn't so popular during his life time. At least when he first started out! He was thought a fool of the worst kind! He had everything going for him and he threw it all away to wear ragged clothes, eat food that was thrown to the dogs, and sleep in a ruined church that didn't even have a proper roof to keep out the rain.

In many ways we too must live a "fool's" life if we want to be true followers of Christ. We may not live as radical as Saint Francis did but each day we are called to make choices that will determine who we are following. The clothes we wear, the food we eat, where we work, the people we associate with ... all these are silence witnesses of just how committed we are to living the Christian life.

Prayer: *Saint Francis, help me to become more committed to living my life totally as a follower of Jesus Christ. Give me the courage and boldness to live totally for God each day. Make known to me any changes I need to do to make this possible. Amen.*

Day 8 Reflection - Novena in Honor of Saint Francis of Assisi

Francis lived a free and simple life, but it was not without certain imposed boundaries. These boundaries were the words and life of Jesus. His life was guided by the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was not a very learned or educated man, he accepted the gospels as they were presented and lived them. Completely. It was enough to make him one of the greatest saints of all time.

Prayer: *Saint Francis, you loved God and took Him completely at His Word. Help me to do that too. Amen.*

Day 9 Reflection - Novena in Honor of Saint Francis of Assisi

Each religious order has a certain charism about it that sets it apart from others. Though to some extent all share the same gospel values - usually one area is more emphasized than another. While many associate the spirit of Poverty or Joy with Franciscans one must not discard lightly the great spirit of "fraternity" that is so present among all the brothers and sisters of the order.

"See how they love one another" must always be the witness of every Christian. How we relate to one another, how we treat differences among ourselves with respect and understanding - is always the bottom line in every walk of faith. Not how much we know, how much we suffer, or give up but always and forever - how much we love one another.

Prayer: *Saint Francis, I know there is no greater virtue than love to draw souls to God. Help me to let go of self and embrace my brothers and sisters with the great love and generosity God is asking of me. Amen.*