

Crossword Puzzle

Saint Francis of Assisi



ANIMALS
BEG
BELL
BIRDS
CAVE
CHAPEL
CHURCHES
CLOTHES
DEACON
DREAM

FATHER
FOOD
FRANCIS
FRENCH
GOD
GOLD
GOSPIL
HORSE
HYMNS
KNIGHT

LOVE
PARTIES
PEACEFUL
PLEASURE
POOR
PREACH
REBUILT
SERVICE
WEALTHY
WOLF

Nurturing Faith... Every Day in Every Way

October 4, 2020

Isaiah 5:1-7

Psalms 80:7-15

Philippians 3:4b-14

Matthew 21:33-46



18th Sunday after Pentecost

Hello friends! Today, we celebrate the patron saint of animals, St. Francis of Assisi. Saint Francis built bonds of love with all of the kinds of creatures in the animal kingdom. However, Saint Francis had a special relationship with birds, who often followed him around and rested on his shoulders, arms, or hands as he prayed or walked around outside. Birds often symbolize the Holy Spirit so some believers think that the miracle of the birds listening intently to Francis' message was sent by God to encourage Francis and his fellow monks to continue their work preaching the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, which focuses on how people can become closer to God. Here's the story of the famous bird sermon that Francis preached one day:

A Flock of Birds Gathers As Francis and some companions were traveling through the Spoleto Valley in Italy, Francis noticed that a huge flock of birds had gathered in some trees beside a field. Francis noticed that the birds were watching him as if they were expecting something. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he decided to preach a sermon about God's love for them.

Francis Speaks to the Birds About God's Love Francis walked over to a spot beside the trees and began an impromptu sermon, reported the monks who were traveling with Francis and wrote down what Francis said. Their report was later published in the ancient book *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*.

"My sweet little sisters, birds of the sky," Francis said, "you are bound to heaven, to God, your Creator. In every beat of your wings and every note of your songs, praise him. He has given you the greatest of gifts, the freedom of the air. You neither sow, nor reap, yet God provides for you the most delicious food, rivers, and lakes to quench your thirst, mountains, and valleys for your home, tall trees to build your nests, and the most beautiful clothing: a change of feathers with every season. You and your kind were preserved in Noah's Ark. Clearly, our Creator loves you dearly, since he gives you gifts so abundantly. So please beware, my little sisters, of the sin of ingratitude, and always sing praise to God." The monks who recorded Francis' sermon to the birds wrote that the birds listened intently to everything Francis had to say:

"While Francis said these words, all those birds began to open their beaks, and stretch out their necks, and spread their wings, and bend their heads reverently toward the earth, and with acts and songs, they showed that the holy father [Francis] gave them great pleasure."

Francis Blesses the Birds Francis "rejoiced" at the birds' response, the monks wrote, and "wondered much at such a multitude of birds and at their beauty and at their attention and tameness, and he devoutly thanked God for them." The birds remained attentively gathered around Francis, the story goes, until he blessed them and they flew away—some heading north, some south, some east, and some west—going out in all directions as if on their way to pass along the good news of God's love that they had just heard to other creatures.

Hopler, Whitney. "Saint Francis of Assisi and His Sermon to Birds." Learn Religions, Aug. 27, 2020, learnreligions.com/saint-francis-assisi-sermon-to-birds-124321.

Activity: Today, go on a walk with your family. Take notice of all of God's wonderful creation, especially the animals. Keep a list, or take pictures of the animals that you see and mention each one in your prayers this week.

Family Table Prayer for October:

October brings hoodies, pumpkins, and spooky fun.

God, we are thankful for all that you have done.

With each happy thought we are reminded of the glory of our days and how you are with us in so many ways. Amen.

October Memory Verse: Psalm 19:1 The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the sky proclaims God's handiwork.

