

# Saint Francis of Assisi: A Life of Joy

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He turned away from his life of wealth and privilege to live with lepers, the "untouchables" of his society. He preached the idea of the sanctity of all life, becoming an advocate of animal rights and environmentalism in a time when even human life often had little value. He found joy in owning nothing, and giving everything away. He was story of Saint Francis of Assisi and the story of his life is inspiring and radical. And now more than ever, it bears important messages for American children living in a culture of casual abundance and waste. Saint Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.-a father, a devout Roman Catholic, a crusader for clean air and water, and a member of a family famous for its dedication to public service. It is no wonder, then, that this saint's story should resonate so powerfully with him. Mr. Kennedy has retold Francis's story as a lesson and inspiration for his own children-and for children everywhere.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is a lawyer with the Pace University environmental clinic, and is well known for his dedication to activism. He has written two books for adults, and two other books for children, *St. Francis of Assisi: A Life of Joy* and *Joshua Chamberlain and the American Civil War*. He lives with his wife and children in Westchester County, New York. Grade 1-4-Kennedy's passion for nature and lifelong connection to this saint are evident in both the narrative and introduction, in which he reveals his personal convictions. The book paints Francis in glowing terms (with some fictionalized dialogue), weaving together the major threads of his life: his early kindness to beggars in his family's fabric shop; his call to and ultimate rejection of a military career; his estrangement from his wealthy father; and his ministry to lepers, the impoverished, and animals. The famous prayer, "Lord, make me an instrument of Your Peace..." is printed across the bottom of the pages. Nolan's oil paintings render realistic figures in carefully staged scenes. The architecture and landscape of Assisi are accurately captured, although the New Age angel depicted at the conclusion is anachronistic. While much of the information overlaps with that found in Guido Visconti's *Clare and Francis* (Eerdmans, 2004), the telling and aesthetic are quite different: the books will appeal to vastly different audiences. The book has no source notes or bibliography. Purchase where religious picture-book biographies are in high demand.-Wendy Lukehart, Washington DC Public Library  
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*Francis of Assisi - The Founder: Early Documents, vol. 2*, *The Founder* is the second volume of the long-awaited and best-selling project *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*. All three volumes contain helpful introductions to each section, colored maps, cross references, and extensive annotation. *The Founder* contains: *The Beginning or the Founding of the Order and the Deeds of those Lesser Brothers who were the First Companions of Blessed Francis in Religion* *The Legend of the Three Companions* *The Assisi Compilation* *The Remembrance of the Desire of A Soul by Thomas of Celano* *The Treatise on the Miracles of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano* *An Umbrian Choir Legend* *A Letter on the Passing of Saint Francis Attributed to Elias of Assisi* *The Legends and Sermons about Saint Francis by Bonaventure of Bagnoregio* *Related Documents*

☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ . The pope's jubilation is even more obvious in the first life of the saint, *Francis of Assisi*, commissioned by Gregory and written by Thomas of Celano. Joy resonates throughout the liturgical pieces written by Thomas of Celano and by ..."