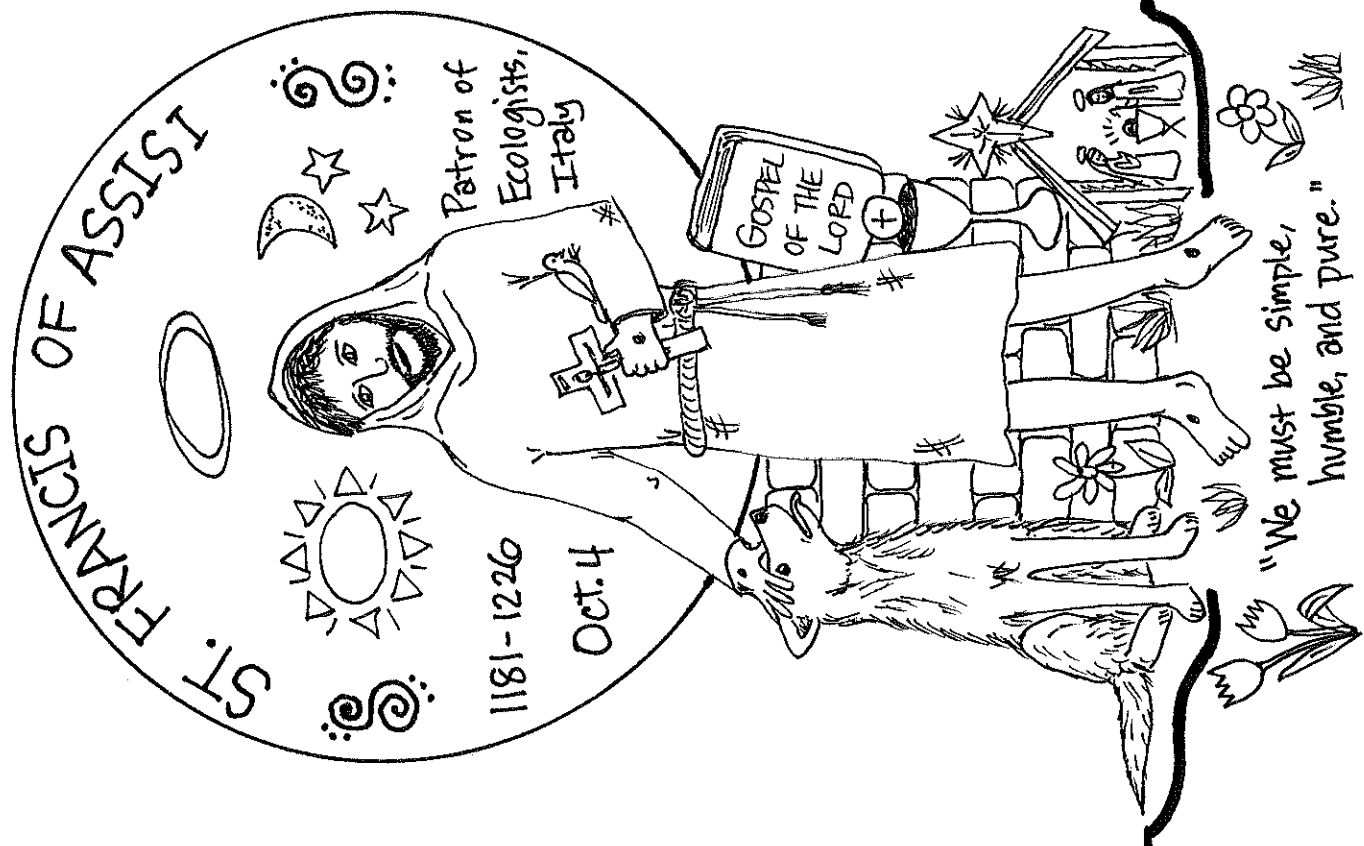


Glue, Tape or
Paper Clip into
Ring

cut out under
manger & wolf

color and
cut out



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Patron of
Ecologists,
Italy

1181-1226
OCT. 4

"We must be simple,
humble, and pure."

The Story of Saint Francis of Assisi

St. Francis was born in the town of Assisi in 1181. His father, Pietro Bernardone, was a wealthy cloth merchant who had a very disagreeable temper. St. Francis was a careless and undisciplined young man who spent his time singing and going to parties. He wanted to be a knight and win renown in battle. But he was captured and put in prison. Jesus came to him in a dream and challenged him to choose to serve him, the true king, rather than earthly rulers. Francis' heart began to change, and he spent long hours in solitary prayer. He came to understand that he was to share the love of Christ with everyone he met. The next time he met a leper on the road, he went up and embraced him rather than run away in fear and disgust. He wondered what God wanted him to do with his life.

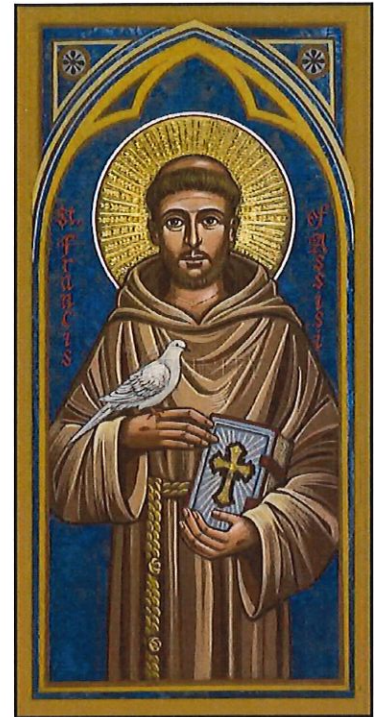
One day at Mass he heard the Gospel where Jesus tells his disciples to go preach without carrying any money or owning anything, he decided to follow Jesus' teaching and give away all he had. He also took some of his father's expensive cloth and his horse and sold them—he gave the money to a priest. His father took him to court and Francis renounced his inheritance and wealth. After giving his life to the Lord, he heard Jesus speak from the crucifix in the church of St. Damian. Jesus asked him to rebuild his church, so Francis began repairing a little church that was falling apart.

Francis began to preach the Gospel in many different towns. Some men wanted to join him, and they began to be called Franciscans. The Rule of the Order of Friars Minor (the Franciscans) was approved by Pope Innocent III in 1209. The members of his order would embrace total poverty and littleness and travel as preachers. Francis and his followers began to preach the Gospel in many countries, including Morocco and Egypt. After meeting with the Muslim ruler of the region, Francis' followers were given authority to care of the major churches in the Holy Land. The Franciscans are known as the caretakers of the devotion known as the Stations of the Cross.

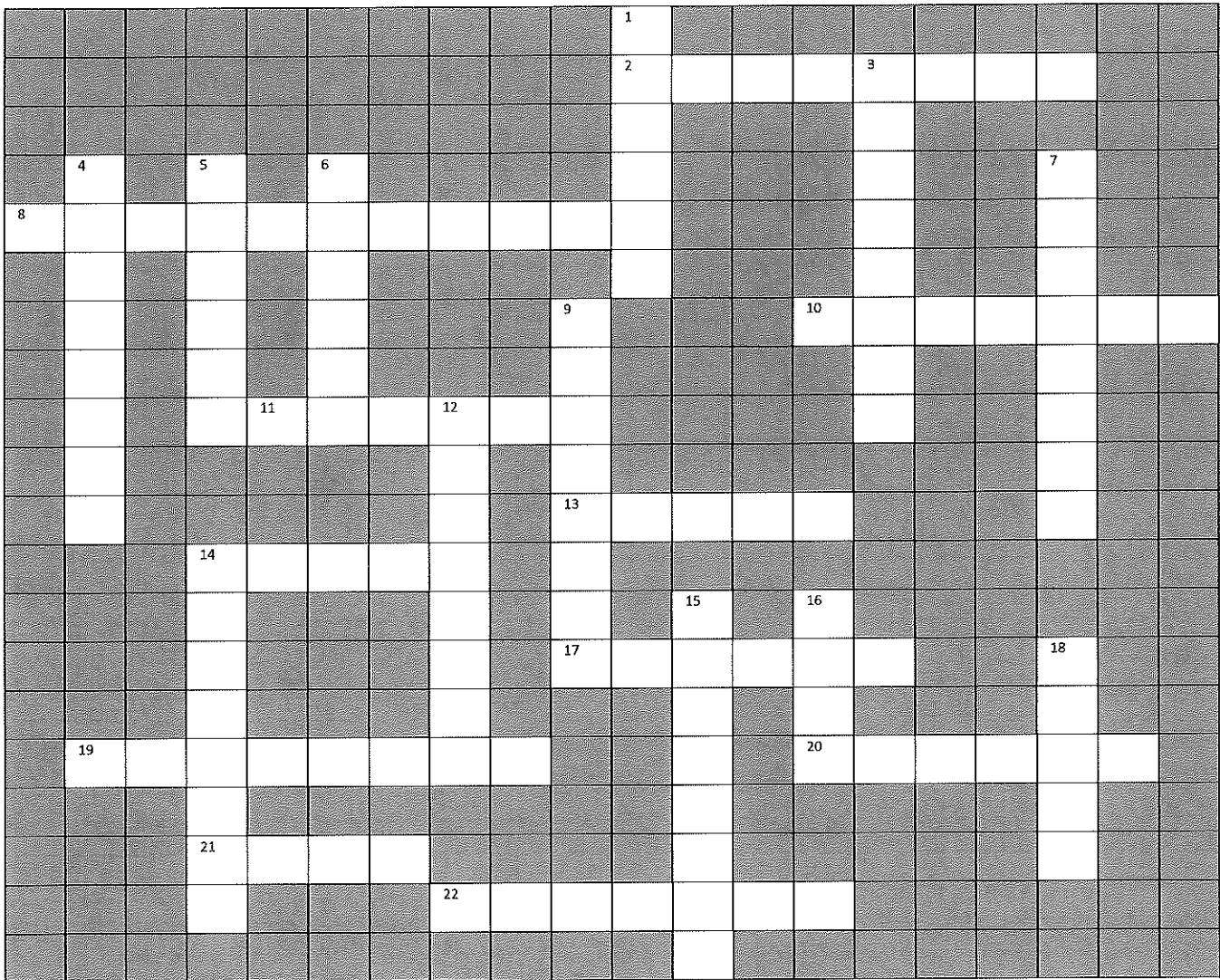
Francis founded a women's order of nuns after Clare of Assisi wanted to join him. Francis was fearless before men and animals; he tamed a wolf that was terrorizing the town of Gubbio. He preached to birds in the countryside and had a pet lamb that he had rescued from the town butcher.



Francis was ordained as a deacon, but he never sought to be ordained as a priest. He began the tradition of the Christmas Nativity set in 1223. A couple of years before his death, Francis received the stigmata (the wounds of Christ) while praying in a cave on Mt. Alverno. He composed a prayer called the Canticle of the Sun toward the end of his life. Francis died at the age of 45 in the year 1226 and the basilica built in his honor is a major pilgrimage site to this day. Many people who go to Assisi remark that the spirit of peace and joy that Francis lived by can still be felt in his hometown.



St. Francis of Assisi Crossword Puzzle



Across

2. The Franciscans are the caretakers of the devotion known as the _____ of the cross.
8. The followers of Francis are called _____.
10. Jesus asked Francis to _____ His church.
11. Francis heard the _____ at Mass and it changed his life.
13. Francis met a _____ and embraced him rather than run away from him.
14. The first woman to join the Franciscans was named _____.
17. Francis was ordained a _____ in the Church.
19. While at prayer on Mt. Alverno, Francis received the _____, or the wounds of Christ.
20. Francis' followers are called the Order of _____ Minor.
21. Francis rescued a _____ from a butcher.
22. Francis preached in many countries, including _____ and Egypt.

Down

1. Francis was born in the town of _____.
3. Francis' rule was approved by Pope _____ III.
4. Jesus spoke to Francis from the _____.
5. Francis wanted to be a _____ in battle.
6. Francis' father was called _____.
7. Francis set up the first _____ scene.
9. Franciscans take care of the major churches in the _____ (2 words).
12. A key part of Francis' life was to embrace total _____ and littleness.
14. Francis composed a prayer called the _____ of the sun.
15. There is a _____ in Assisi built to honor Francis.
16. Francis tamed a _____ who was attacking the people of Gubbio.
18. Francis preached a sermon to _____.

Word Bank: Assisi, Basilica, Birds, Canticle, Clare, Crucifix, Deacon, Franciscans, Friars, Gospel, Holy Land, Innocent, Knight, Lamb, Leper, Morocco, Nativity, Pietro, Poverty, Rebuild, Stations, Stigmata, Wolf