

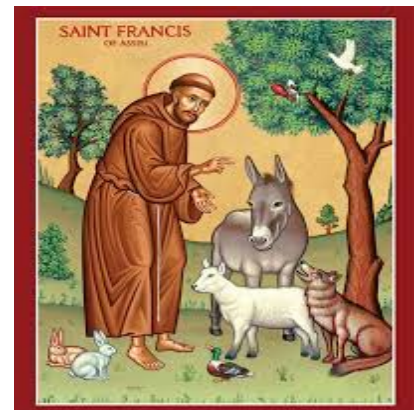
St Francis of Assisi

Sunday (October 4th) was the Feast of **St Francis of Assisi** in Italy, a very important saint who gave up his life of riches to follow Jesus and to serve the sick and the poor. When Francis was young he dreamed of becoming a noble knight, fighting in battles for an important ruler. However he found that when he did go to war as a knight, it did not make him happy. One night he had a strange dream when a voice invited him to follow the 'real Lord'. Francis understood that Jesus was calling him. For the rest of his life, he worked for Jesus, giving everything he had to the poor, looking after people in need & going from place to place telling everyone about God's love for them.

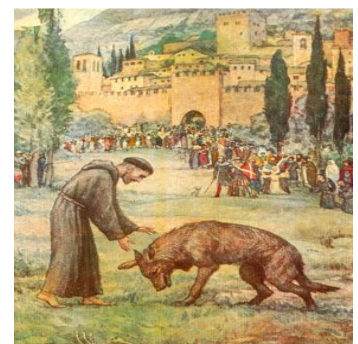


St Francis and the animals

St Francis is especially known for his love of nature and of animals. He loved even the smallest creatures and said that even they were a sign of the love of God. There are many stories told about him that show that animals understood him and were tamed by him:



- Once Francis was telling a crowd of people about God, and a flock of birds were making so much noise that he could not be heard. He turned to the birds and told them to stay quiet. And they did!
- Another story tells about how he changed a vicious wolf that was attacking & killing people & animals in the town of Gobbio, into a gentle animal who became the town pet and was fed everyday by them!





CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES

Here is part of a famous canticle or song that Francis wrote:

**All praise be yours, My Lord in all your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun who brings the day;
you give us light through him.
How beautiful he is, how radiant in his splendour.**

All praise be yours my Lord for sister Moon and the Stars

You have made them in the heavens, bright and precious and fair.

All praise be yours my lord for Brother Wind and the Air, for every kind of weather, fair and stormy by which you nourish everything you have made.

All praise be yours my Lord for Sister Water, so useful and lowly, so precious and pure

All praise be yours my Lord for Brother Fire by whom you brighten the night.

How beautiful he is, how merry, robust and strong!

All praise be yours My Lord for Sister Earth our mother, who feeds us, rules us and brings forth all manner of fruit, all coloured flowers and herbs.

Interesting fact about St Francis:

St Francis was the first person to make a **Christmas crib**. He made it in Greccio in Italy on Christmas night nearly 800 years ago with a real ox and a real donkey and a statue of the baby Jesus in a manger.

