

Seeds of Hope, Stories for Lent #29 – *Saint Francis of Assisi*

Saint Francis of Assisi is one of the most popular saints of all time. In spite of the fact that he lived centuries ago, we can still learn so much from his life.

It was during a period of intense suffering when he had a total change of heart in the direction of his life. As we know, suffering does tend to make rethink the meaning and direction of our lives. For this reason, St. Francis spent a lot of time in prayer.

One day, he went off to pray in an abandoned church, kneeling before a crucifix, perhaps identifying with the suffering of Christ on the cross. It was there Christ spoke to Francis these words,

“Francis, go and rebuild my church which is falling into ruin.”

Francis being a humble and simple man, took those words to heart and began to rebuild the church – that little chapel of San Damiano – stone by stone, day by day. Faithfully, he rebuilt that church until he finally understood how God was really calling him to build the bigger Church — brother by brother and sister by sister.

Little by little, God taught St. Francis how to build a community of love. Within five years, 5,000 Friars had joined Francis in his humble effort to rebuild the Church.

Today, God wants to rebuild the Church. Today, the Lord is looking for people who will come in their suffering, in their “littleness,” in their weakness, before the cross of Christ.

He invites us to pray and to listen to what is our specific mission and our own part of rebuilding the Church. It always begins right at home, in a small chapel, in a small way.

May St. Francis bless us and lead us to rebuild God’s Church today — brother by brother and sister by sister.

Amen? Amen!

For Further Reflection...

1. When has suffering lead you to change the direction of your life?

2. What can you do today to aid in the rebuilding of God’s Church?

“You are no longer strangers, but members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ, Himself, as the cornerstone.” Ephesians 2: 19-20