



Prayer and St. Francis

Why was prayer important to St. Francis?

Prayer was central, the most important thing; in his letter to Brother Anthony of Padua: “I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers provided that, as is contained in the Rule, you ‘do not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion’ during study of this kind.”

What can we learn from how and where St. Francis prayed?

How? The characteristics

- Scriptural: a man of the Gospel; he opened the Book of the Gospels for direction in life.
- Evangelical, Gospel-centered (all Rules: “to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ”); “Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary use words.”
- Trinitarian (prayer for the entire Order)
- Christocentric, Incarnational (totally caught up in the humility of God in Christ, totally devoted to become like Jesus in every aspect of his life. This attitude led to Christmas at Greccio in 1223)
- Affective, centering one’s heart in God (“My God and my all!”)
- Marian (*The Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; An Antiphon From The Office Of The Passion*)
- Cosmic, seeing God present in all of creation (*Canticle of the Creatures*)

Where?

Everywhere! Especially in churches; in his Testament: “And the Lord gave me such faith in churches that I would pray with simplicity in this way and say, ‘We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all your churches throughout the world and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.’”

Personally, in community with his brothers (Office, Mass); also, alone or with just one companion, in caves and in the mountains (e.g., LaVerna where he received the Stigmata in 1224 – total identification with the crucified Christ).