

4 OCTOBER

- 1 It was the year 1205 in the town of Assisi, in northern Italy. Francis was the son of a cloth merchant, and he was thought of as rather “wild”, seeming to have more money than was good for him. He had fought in two wars, spent over a year in prison, and almost died of an illness that had lasted for months.
- 2 Now, trying to sort out his life, he was spending a few moments in quiet prayer in a small stone church with a low curved roof. Suddenly, with no-one else in the very small church, he heard himself being addressed by name. Three times the voice spoke the same words to him, and he was convinced that he heard the words being spoken from the cross itself:
- 3 *“Francis - go and build up my church which is falling down.”*
- 4 Francis presumed that Jesus meant the run-down church-building in which he was at that moment. In the following days he set about repairing the stonework of that church. He began to realise that to “*build up the Church*” wasn’t referring to a building, but to the strengthening of the community of God’s people.
- 5 Deep within himself, Francis was being re-built as a person. The re-formed Francis - now more clearly formed in God’s own likeness - was able to help lead people to “open themselves” to God’s Spirit working in their lives. It wasn’t by force of his own efforts that Francis became a better person, but by “allowing God to **be** God” in his life. Many people followed Francis and returned to the simplicity of the Gospel.
- 6 One of his most famous prayers is sometimes called “*The Peace Prayer*”. Before we use that prayer we can think of some other words of Francis:
 - 7 *“While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart.”*
 - 8 *Let us pray:*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.**For it is in giving that we receive,**
it is in pardoning
that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying
that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in
'Praying Each Day of the Year',
a 3-volume book
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine
to research this topic further.

This material is part of
the prayer and education website
of the De La Salle Brothers
in Great Britain:

www.prayingeachday.org