

the prayer of st francis of assisi

The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi is one of the most beloved and widely recited prayers in the Christian tradition. Known for its powerful message of peace and selflessness, this prayer encapsulates the essence of St. Francis's teachings and his profound love for all creation. In this article, we will explore the historical context of the prayer, its themes, and its relevance in today's world.

Historical Context of the Prayer

St. Francis of Assisi, born Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone in 1181, was an Italian Catholic friar and preacher. He founded the Franciscan Order and is known for his commitment to poverty, humility, and a deep love for nature. His life was marked by a radical transformation from a wealthy merchant's son to a devoted follower of Christ.

The prayer attributed to him is believed to have been written in the early 20th century, despite the fact that St. Francis himself lived in the 13th century. The earliest known version of the prayer was published in 1912, and it has since gained popularity across various denominations, transcending religious boundaries.

The Prayer Text

The most commonly recited version of the Prayer of St. Francis is as follows:

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.

Thematic Elements of the Prayer

The Prayer of St. Francis is rich with themes that resonate deeply with the human

experience. Here are some of the key elements: