



Francis of Assisi: The Life

Augustine Thompson

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Francis of Assisi: The Life is an elegant and accessible biography of one of Catholicism's most beloved saints. Originally published as Part 1 of *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography* by Augustine Thompson, O.P., it stands alone as a richly informed portrait of a man whose complex faith and commitment continue to inspire today. A new introduction by Thompson places his biography in the context of continuing discussions about Francis's legacy, particularly the new Pope's decision to adopt the saint's name.

From reviews of *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography*-

"This is not a typical biography of Francis of Assisi (1181-1226). Thompson, a Dominican priest and church historian, bases his biography solidly on verifiable material. He seeks the historical Francis, not the Francis of legend, and succeeds admirably in this task. . . . A well-written, scholarly portrait of a saint whose biography has been based too often on legends."-*Library Journal*(starred review)

"Among Thompson's many keen yet painful insights into the historical Francis, one stands out and serves to bind together the entire narrative and to shed light on the discordant history of the Franciscan order: Leadership was an 'intolerable burden' to Francis, spiritually, 'one he wished to be rid of as quickly as possible.' . . . The stripped-down, bare-bones historical Francis of this biography is at once immensely likeable and deeply disturbing. He is appealing insofar as Thompson makes him seem much more like an ordinary man who accomplished extraordinary things rather than a heaven-sent, self-assured prophet. His befuddlement, his inner turmoil, his inability to control events make him seem not just very human but also much like nearly anyone who is likely to pick up this book."-*First Things*

"Francis of Assisi so impressed the people of his own time that even before his death a rich field of stories, images, anecdotes, and reports of miracles had sprung up. These so enveloped the saint that many scholars have despaired of uncovering the man behind the legends. But this new, lucid study by Thompson largely achieves this goal. . . . An engaging, well-written new biography of the saint."-*Choice*

"I recommend this book strongly to anyone serious about understanding Francis of Assisi. I admire the clarity and brevity of the writing. With decisiveness, Thompson cuts through the conflicting medieval accounts of each event in Francis' life, adjusts for the hagiographers' spin and creates a credible chronology out of the blurry dates. His knowledge of medieval Italy allows him to provide insightful explanations of the legal, liturgical, and ecclesiastical practices of the time."-*America*

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