Saint Frances of Rome • Saint stories

Did you know that at one time it was legal for fathers to sell their children into slavery or kill them? Children **HAD** to do whatever they were told, or else.

What do you want to be when you grow up? A doctor? A firefighter? We all make plans when we are young as to what we will do as a grown up, though our plans often change. Well, St. Frances of Rome planned to be a nun. She was extremely stubborn and not about to change her mind. But her father had other ideas. When she turned thirteen he announced to Frances that she would marry a wealthy young man. All the arrangements had been made. (Remember, the father had the final word about his children.)

“What? I don’t want to. I want to be a nun!” Frances stubbornly protested. She sulked, moped, and complained. Nonstop she begged God not to let the marriage happen. One day she was talking with a priest who said to her, “Are you wanting to do God’s will or are you wanting God to do your will?”

Frances married the young man—but not joyfully. Up until the last minute, she prayed for the marriage to not occur. But it did. To make matters even tougher, the newly married couple lived with his parents and his brother’s family. Being a wealthy family meant parties and fancy events to attend. Frances hated these! She wanted to spend her days in prayer and making sacrifices. (Ever have your parents tell you to come help when you were in the middle of something **YOU** wanted to do?) Frances would be all ready to fast for the day and instead be told she must go to a feast!

One day she discovered that her sister-in-law had also wanted

to be a nun. The two began to pray together, visit the sick, feed the poor, and visit those in prison. With the two supporting one another, they joyfully embraced the cross of living the wealthy lifestyle expected of them.

When famine struck the city of Rome, Frances gave away grain in the household to the hungry. This made some in the family angry, and she was forbidden to continue giving away food.

“We might not have enough for ourselves if you continue to give away our grain to the poor,” they said.

The grain was kept in storage rooms lined with straw. One day, she decided to sift through the straw of an empty room to see if she might find a few stray kernels to give away. She walked away with a small handful. Her husband noticed her sifting through the straw and looked in the room after she left. It was now **FULL** of grain!

Frances and her husband were blessed with three children. She ended up outliving her husband and children. The last four years of her life she lived the vocation she had always desired—that of a nun. Frances died in the year 1440.

Feast day: March 9

St. Frances of Rome, pray for us!

Activity: From Thorns to Flowers

Here is a good activity to do together as a family this Lent.

Take a plant pot and fill it with dirt; DO NOT put a plant in it. Instead, take a bunch of toothpicks and stick each one in the dirt. Every time someone in your family asks you to do something and you do it without complaining, remove a toothpick from the dirt. Also remove a toothpick anytime you do something helpful or nice for someone in the family without being asked.

Hopefully, by Holy Saturday all the toothpicks are gone. Now you have a perfect pot to plant Easter flowers in!