

# CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

## Frances of Rome

By Janaan Manternach  
NC News Service

Frances was born in 1384. She was raised in luxury in a wealthy noble family in Rome.

While she was still a young girl, her parents arranged for her to marry a young nobleman named Lorenzo. He and his family loved Frances. Lorenzo's sister, Vanozza, became her best friend.

Frances treated her household servants more like brothers and sisters. What time she had to herself she spent praying or going about the city helping poor people. Rich people made fun of Frances for her concern about the poor.

Lorenzo and Frances had three children. Frances raised the children and taught them. Her rich relatives could not understand why she did that. They all hired nurses to care for their children and tutors to teach them.

Once when the Tiber River flooded Rome, many poor people were hungry, homeless and sick. Frances was so generous that her

father-in-law became upset. She was giving away food, clothes, family possessions. For a while he took all the house keys from her.

Later he changed his mind. "You have found the secret of real happiness," he told Frances one day. "It is love, love that grows the more you give it away."

Lorenzo encouraged Frances in her compassion for the poor. She sold her jewels and expensive clothes to have more money to share.

Then a war arose. Farms around Rome were burned. Houses in the city were destroyed. Hundreds of people were homeless. Lorenzo and a son were taken captive. Their palace was partially destroyed. Frances, her other children and Vanozza lived in a corner of the palace. Her second son died there.

Then the Tiber flooded again. Frances and Vanozza went all over Rome begging medicines, bandages and food for the sick. They set up a soup kitchen for the hungry.



Finally the war ended. Lorenzo was able to come back. But he was not well. Frances was delighted to have her husband back with her. They loved each other very much. She cared for him and he allowed her freedom to follow a dream she had had since she was a child — to start a congregation of women to serve the poor.

Now, in the year 1425, Frances was able to organize a group of women to work with the poor. They lived with their families but gave their free time to works of charity. Later some of the unmar-

ried women decided to live together in community.

Frances was very sad when Lorenzo died. They had been married 40 years.

She spent more time praying and helping the poor. Then she decided to live in the community with the women she had brought together.

Today we remember her as St. Frances of Rome.

*(Ms. Manternach is the author of catechetical works, scripture stories and original stories for children.)*

### Hidden Words

Find the words hidden in the puzzle below. They may be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. All the words are in this week's children's story.

S	A	V	D	H	X	O	L	C	P
I	E	I	A	Y	Z	A	C	T	E
C	V	M	T	N	H	L	E	I	V
K	F	Z	E	S	O	C	K	B	Q
R	G	R	F	I	A	Z	P	E	R
J	O	J	A	L	S	Q	Z	R	O
L	N	M	A	N	B	M	R	A	D
F	W	P	E	U	C	V	W	O	Y
V	K	T	W	O	M	E	N	N	Z
B	X	A	E	G	I	L	S	N	Z

LORENZO, FRANCES, TIBER, ROME, VANOZZA, PALACE, WOMEN, SICK

### HOW ABOUT YOU?

What did Frances of Rome's father-in-law call the secret of real happiness? What do you think he meant?

#### Children's Reading Corner

As societies change down through the ages, parents' lives are affected too. But parents' roles of nurturing, protecting, cherishing, enabling children to develop their gifts and one day letting go remain constants. "Locadio's Apprentice," by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, is a story that tells about a family in ancient Pompeii in Italy at the time of its destruction. The story's power lies in the way the parents help their children realize their dreams. Read the story and then talk about it together. Talk about how the members of your family can help each other. (Harper and Row Junior Books, 10 E. 53 St., New York, N.Y. 10022. 1984. Hardback. \$12.02.)

### THE SPIRITUAL TOUCH

Just as animals respond to the human touch, so do humans respond to the spiritual touch. God depends on His people to care for one another and to be an extension of His love.

Sister Thea Bowman travels to elementary and high schools to present her one-woman show of Scriptural singing and narrative. She gives college lectures, designs parish liturgies, and leads revivals for Advent and Lent. A yearly Extension grant makes Sister Thea's travel possible.



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