ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING



Is that supposed to be Jesus? No, it's a very kind man whose name was St. Francis of Assisi. The name "Assisi" is nearly always associated with St. Francis for it is the name of the town in Italy in which he was born and where he lived most of his life. As a young man he was wild and got into all kinds of trouble. As the son of a very rich man he felt he could do anything he wanted and not be punished for it.

One night he was made to realize how wrong such a life was. He began to feel he should pattern his life after Jesus. He took a vow of poverty so he could say, like Jesus, that he owned nothing and gave all he had to help poor people. That is what is meant by a vow of poverty.

Not only his simple clothes, but all that he did — helping the sick and poor, wandering about the country to tell the peasants and all who would listen about the joys of serving Christ — everything was St. Francis' way to prove his love for God by serving his fellow man!

St. Francis loved God's world and the flowers and the many creatures in it. He wrote "All Creatures of Our God and King" — which is so full of joy and praise and the beauties of nature — when he was almost blind and near death. Imagine that you were painting a large mural of this hymn. What would be some of the things you would paint in it:

The German tune name, "Lasst Uns Erfreuen," means "Let us be glad"... and if you listen carefully the music has this feeling. Just listen to the joyful rhythm and lilt of the music. This tune was first written for an Easter Alleluia, but doesn't it express the happiness of St. Francis' words very well?

Did you notice the $\frac{3}{2}$ rhythm? The 2 means that a half note gets only one count, so that the rhythm would be:



Listen and look to see how many times you find these melodic patterns:





If you ever visit the little town of Assisi in Italy, you will find there a beautiful church built 700 years ago in memory of St. Francis — and whenever you hear this hymn, you can think of the young man who gave up wealth and it's accompanying excitement. He discovered, through a life of poverty, great joy in a full life of love and gentleness. "Alleluia!"