

The Man who turned FADE

on the World
(Beyond... 2²)

'The Man who turned on the world' that that song is about, was St Francis of Assisi. He died 750 years ago, in the late evening of Oct 3rd 1226, and today is his festival day. He's a man, and a saint, whose life and ideals have not only greatly influenced Christian life for the best part of a 1000 years, but have had and continue to have a deep appeal for people who are not Christians at all; for anyone who knows anything ^{at all} about him, it's impossible not to be attracted by his simplicity, gentleness, humility, his devotion to Christ and to his "Lady Poverty". Very much has been written about him and is still being written — but he was not an intellectual but a man of song, and so it seems better today to keep his memory and to make our prayers, in music. His best-known hymn of praise (apart from the now popular prayer for peace attributed to him) is his Canticle of the Sun — this was the inspiration for the title of a film made some years ago 'Brother Sun, Sister Moon' which for some reason was never shown in HK: and part of that 'Canticle' is also used in the song I began with, 'The Man who turned on the world'

MUSIC 3:36

In very different vein, another song about the 'Little poor man of Umbria', the Poverello: and a prayer for ourselves MUSIC "Poverello" [Sing Song]

For as today perhaps the most significant fact about St Francis is that he was a layman, and he was a townsman. There are in fact some striking parallels with our world today. Francis was a child of one of the turbulent

urban societies of the 12th century, in which great commercial wealth lived cheek-by-jowl with great poverty: and it was this context that shaped his apostolic vocation. Rapid growth of urban populations, more educated, more critical and more quickly swayed than those of the countryside created new pastoral problems which the medieval Church was ill-equipped to deal with — hardly a new situation now, is it? To end with, a new version of the 'prayer of St Francis' — the soloist, incidentally, is billed to sing in HK during the Arts Festival next year

MUSIC (Plan of St Francis) 4:50