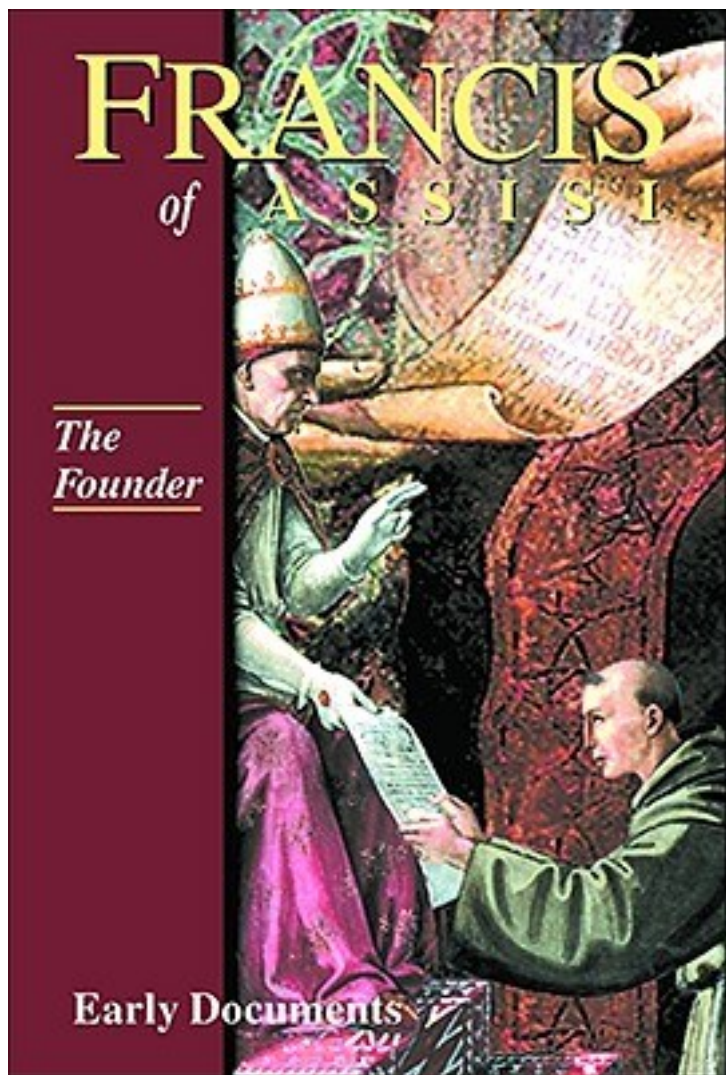


# Francis of Assisi



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Saint Francis of Assisi continues to be counted among the most important personalities of history. The life and ideals of this humble, semiliterate medieval figure have had a shaping influence on the Christian church that has spilled over into Western culture at large. This biography by Lawrence Cunningham looks anew at St. Francis's life and legacy, seeking to counter efforts to romanticize him yet without diminishing his deep piety or abiding significance. Drawing on peerless scholarship, Cunningham argues against common stereotypes that sentimentalize Francis as a "blesser of animals," as a church rebel, or as the precursor of the "spirituality" movement. According to Cunningham, Francis was a devotedly orthodox Catholic whose life must be understood as a response to reforming elements abroad in the church of his day. Francis's originality derived from his success in articulating the "ideal gospel life": his message and actions were a kind of "acting out" of the scriptures. Really seeing Francis requires the lens of theology rather than the lens of quaint spirituality so often used. In constructing his portrait of Francis, Cunningham follows the saint's life in chronological order, placing him within his culture, exploring official developments within the Catholic Church, and highlighting the many conversions of Francis as his life played out. Cunningham also reflects on the modern rediscovery of the Franciscan charism, including its relevance to contemporary Christian social action.

作者介绍:

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