

A Poem: Not to Hurt...

*Not to hurt our humble brethren (the animals)
Is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough.
We have a higher mission:
To be of service to them whenever they require it.
—St Francis of Assisi*

St. Francis of Assisi was a strong advocate for animal welfare as early as the late 12th Century and the early 13th Century. He believed that unlike human beings, nature could not speak for itself and therefore required human beings to speak on its behalf. In his poem *Not to Hurt...* St. Francis spoke out against the more common thinking of the day that animals and nature were to be dominated by humankind; that humankind could treat nature as it saw fit and justify such treatment as the “nature of things.” Such mentality has led to a careless exploitation and depletion of our world’s natural resources and in some instances to near if not complete extinction of some plants and animals.

What do you think prompted this advocacy?

Why was/is it important that someone advocate for this cause?

What has been/continues to be the results of this type of advocacy?

