

# Mark Your Calendar: Sunday October 28

Wear your costume to church & celebrate with a party immediately after service.

This week we will continue our theme of being connected to everyone around us by discussing how we can try to find ways to be a blessing to others. When it comes to caring for others, we start with not actively harming others, then move to trying to be of assistance to others. The next step is to fill our minds and hearts with good thoughts and feelings towards others. (Thoughts of blessings & peace towards others). It's generally easier to avoid harmful actions towards others. It takes much more practice and patience as we work to avoid harmful words and thoughts towards others. I'm still working on it. We will discuss that the more we fill ourselves with thoughts of blessings towards others the more light, love, and peace we share with the world. We will talk about how the ending of the story might have been different if Francis did not feel such love towards the wolf, but instead attacked and then how this might be true in our own lives as well.

I Peter 3:8-9 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.

Story: SAINT FRANCIS AND THE WOLF OF GUBBIO

Francis was born to wealthy parents and lived a comfortable life in Assisi, Italy. But when he was a young man, he felt a great love for God in his heart and left his life of comfort in the city. He lived in the country as Jesus did, without any possessions. Wearing just a simple, rough robe, he sang to God, and some people thought he was crazy. Soon, however, there were others who went to live with him in the forest, and they called one another “brother.” Brother Francis taught them about seeing God in all people and in all the creatures of the forest. He called the birds and animals brother and sister as well, because he felt the same love for them as he did for his closest friend. Francis would talk to the birds and sing to Brother Sun and Sister Moon with great joy. During his travels through the country, he learned of a large and vicious wolf that was terrifying the people of the town of Gubbio. The wolf would attack the people of the town when they went to work in the fields, and everyone was afraid to leave their homes. No one could let their children play outside.

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Brother Francis decided to help, and he asked the townsfolk where the wolf lived. They were amazed and sure that he would be killed, but they showed him the direction of the evil wolf's lair. How could a simple monk, without any weapon or means of protecting himself, do anything about the beast that had forced the entire town into hiding? The huge animal could hear Francis coming down the path, and it rushed out to meet him with teeth bared, hair raised, and muscles tensed, ready to launch itself at the intruder. But Francis did not run in fear or attack with anger; he calmly made the sign of the cross in the air and spoke kindly to the wolf. "Come here, Brother Wolf, in the name of the Lord." The wolf immediately stopped and lay down at the feet of the saint, like a friendly dog would. Francis then spoke to the wolf and scolded it for frightening the people of the town.

"You must promise to stop all the killing, and I will ask the people of Gubbio to feed you until the end of your days. Will you agree?" The wolf bowed his head in agreement and even walked beside Francis all the way back into the town. The townspeople came out of their homes at the sight of the monk and the wolf walking together as friendly companions. When Francis asked them to feed the wolf, they all agreed. The wolf bowed its head and placed its paw gently in the hand of Francis to show the people it also agreed to change and be peaceful.

When Brother Francis left the little town of Gubbio, the wolf stayed. It would go door to door for food, and the people grew accustomed to seeing the friendly wolf around the town. They lived together as brothers until the end of the wolf's days, just as Francis had said.