



Blessed Be The Peacemakers – A Peaceful Saint: St Francis



Gather: Be Peaceful



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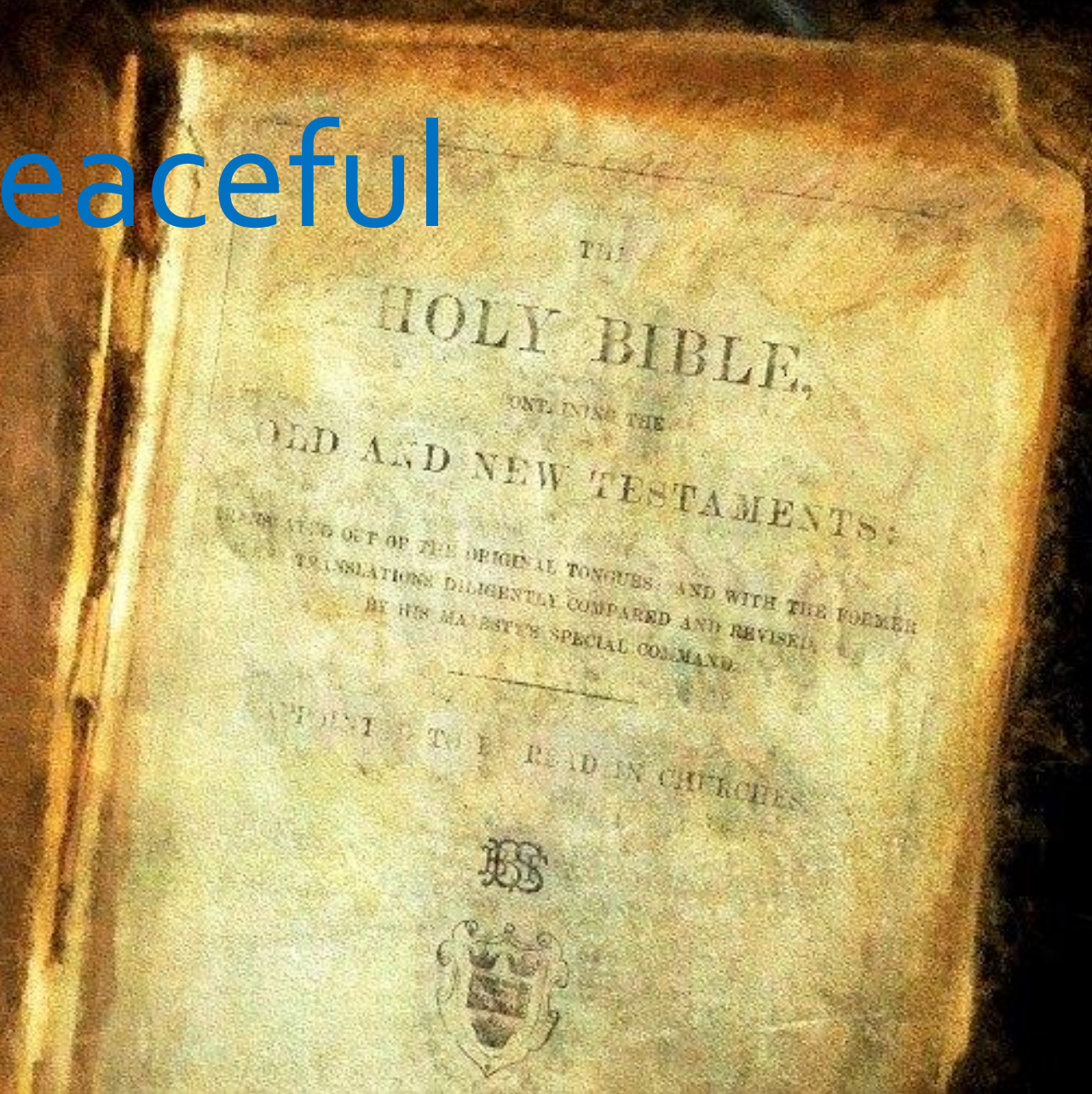
Father,
Thank you for
your word.
Help us to listen
carefully
And enkindle in
us your love.

Amen



Listen: Be Peaceful

The sixth
Beatitude asks
us to be
peacemakers.



Listen: Be Peaceful

St Francis was born in a town in Italy called Assisi in 1182. His father was a wealthy cloth merchant and his mother was French. Francis grew up in a rich household, with all the luxuries money could buy.

Francis was a good student who loved to learn. His father wanted him to work within the family business.



Listen: Be Peaceful



When he was young he was well known for enjoying his family's wealth spending his money on fine clothes and enjoying himself at fancy parties.

Around the age of 19, Francis fought in a battle against the nearby town of Perugia. Francis was captured and imprisoned for nearly a year until his father paid the ransom and he was released.



Listen: Be Peaceful

Whilst in prison Francis began seeing visions of God, that changed his life forever.

One day, when Francis was out riding his horse, he came across a poor man suffering from leprosy. Instead of riding on he stopped, gave the man his cloak, some money and more importantly he kissed him, an outcast from society.



Listen: Be Peaceful

Then one day Francis was at a ruined chapel near Assisi, where, kneeling before the cross, he heard God speak to him.

The voice said "Go and repair my house which you see is close to ruin." Taking these words literally, he rushed home and took as much cloth as his horse could carry from his father's warehouse. He sold the cloth and horse and gave the money to the local priest to rebuild the church.



Listen: Be Peaceful

Francis' father was angry that his son had stolen his cloth. He summoned Francis to appear before the Bishop. Francis repaid the debt to his father and also took off all his clothes and presented them to him. The Bishop then clothed Francis in an old tunic. Francis then said that he now had only one father, his Father in heaven. He dedicated his life to the service of God, taking a vow of poverty, inspired by the rule of the apostles in the Gospel of Matthew.



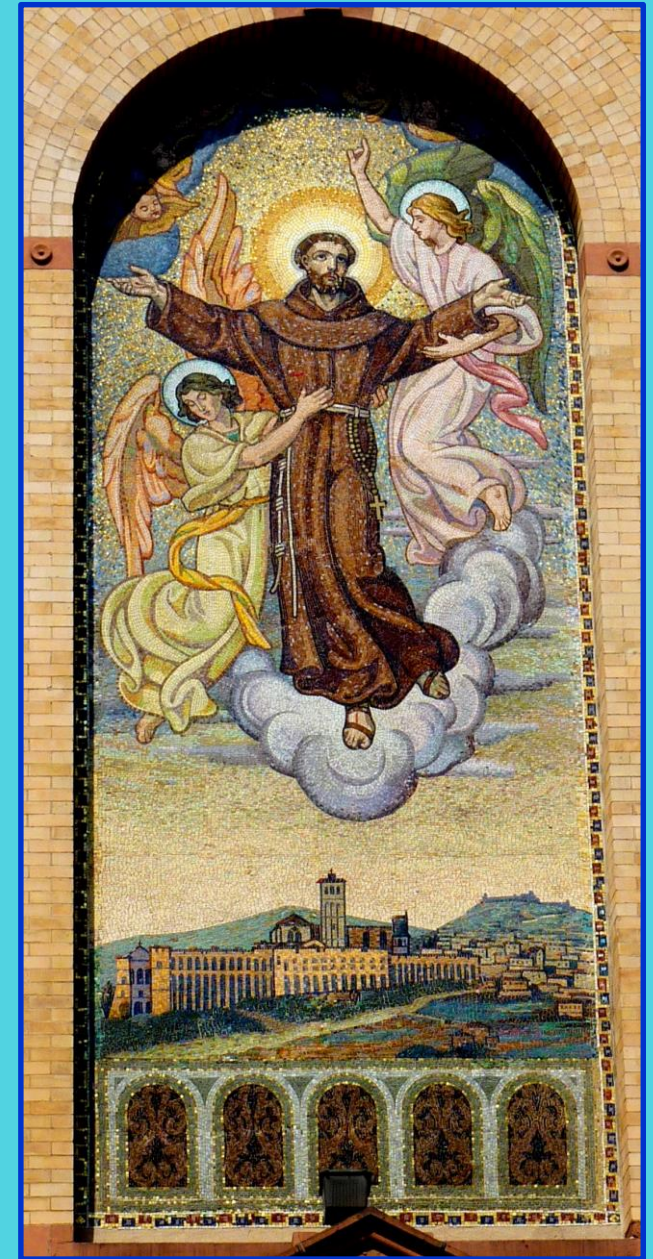
St Francis by Jusepe de Ribera



Listen: Be Peaceful

As Francis lived out his life in poverty and preached about the life of Christ, he soon began to attract many followers. He had one simple rule which stated “To follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps.” Francis then went on to Rome to seek Papal approval. After some time the Franciscan Order was eventually established.

St Francis lived out his life serving others. He died at the age of 44 in 1226 and his Feast Day is celebrated on 4th October.



Respond: Be Peaceful

Take time to read and reflect on the following quotes of St Francis.

"While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart."

"It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching."

"No one is to be called an enemy, all are your benefactors, and no one does you harm. You have no enemy except yourselves."



"Preach the Gospel at all time and where necessary use words."

"All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle."

"A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows."

"If God can work through me he can work through anyone."



Respond: Be Peaceful

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”
John 14:27

- What did St Francis do to put others first?
- How did he care for the earth and it's people?
- How did St Francis demonstrate being peaceful?



Respond Prayer: Be Peaceful

The Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.



(The Ecstasy of St Francis by Stefano di Giovanni)



Mission – Be Peaceful

I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world. John 16:33

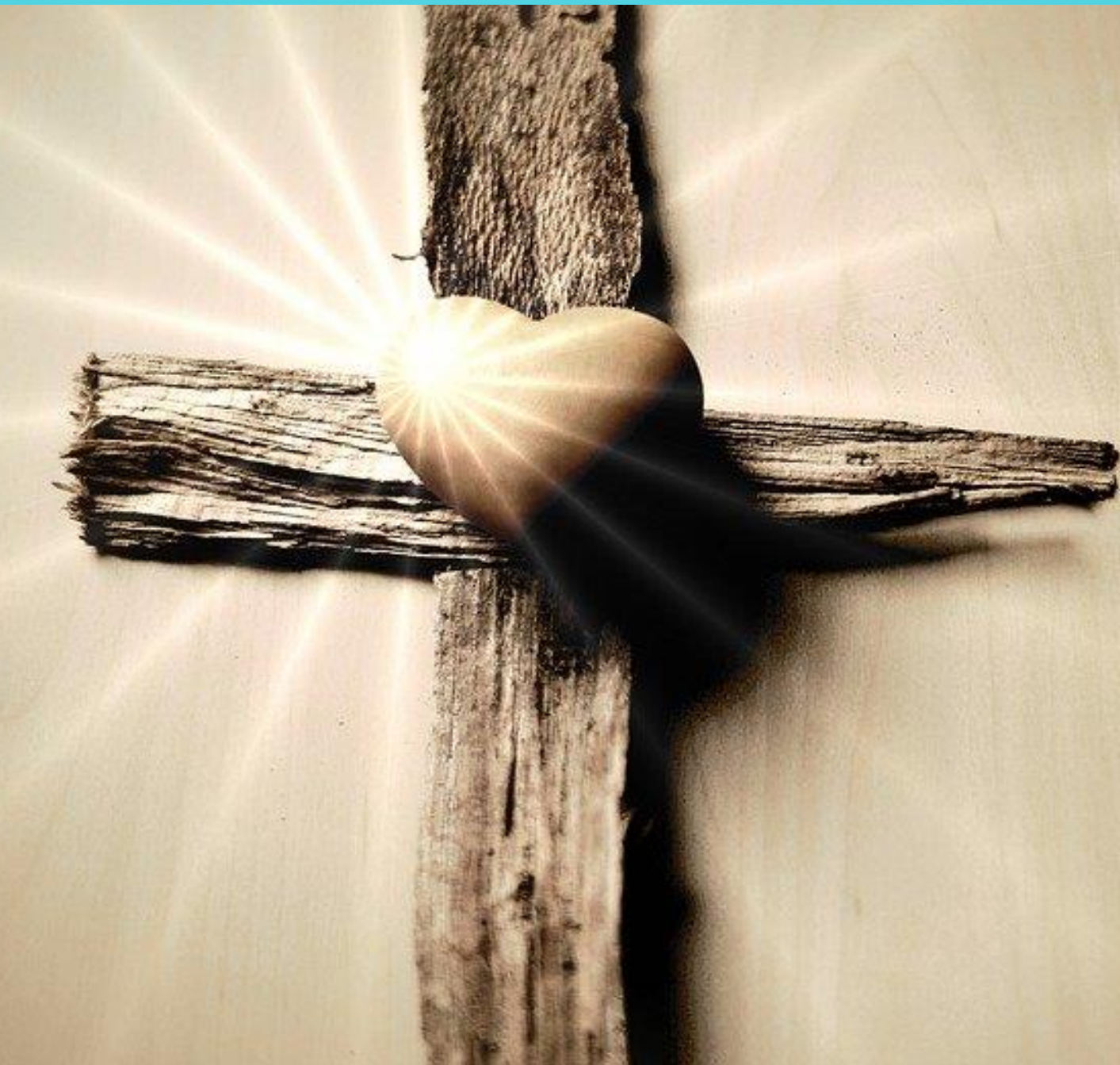


Mission

Think of ways you can be a Peacemaker

- Learn more about the life of St Francis and how you can live a life of peace.
- Create a prayer for peace in our time.
- Find and read stories where Jesus preaches about peace.
- Think about ways you can be peaceful at home, school and within your community





God of love,
We pray for peace in our world,
And an end to war.
Instead of hatred, let there be
love.
Shelter your children and protect
us,
Guide us,
And keep us from harm,
So we can build a world of love,
And live our lives in Peace.
Amen

(Harriet Patterson, CAFOD)



Blessed Be The Peacemakers

Matthew 5: 1 - 12



A Peaceful Saint: St Francis

