

October 3rd

Memory Verse

Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. Psalm 119:11
More information about today's memory verse in tomorrow's lesson.

Map Work

We begin with two stories from **Italy** today so find it on the map in your atlas. It looks just like a boot! Younger children will enjoy saying:

Big boot Italy
Kicked little Sicily
right to the middle of the Med-it-er-ran-e-an Sea.

I will **highlight** the places you can find in your atlas as we go through these two Italian stories. We will be learning about a Bible translator and scholar, Giovanni Diodati today. Here is today's memory verse in his Italian translation:

Io ho riposta la tua parola nel mio cuore; Acciocchè io non pecchi contro a te.

If you want to know how it sounds, there is a recording in today's Optional Resources files. But before we get to Dr Diodati:

Some history to read

Today is the anniversary of the death of Francis of Assisi. In the Middle Ages in Europe there were Christians, often persecuted, who tried to meet to worship God in a more Biblical and genuine way than was the custom in the Roman Catholic churches which were the only kind of churches officially allowed. There were also some other Christians who, although they did not try to come out of the Roman Catholic church, wished it could be changed and tried hard to make that change from within.

Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) was one of these. His home was the town of **Assisi** and one winter day when he was a young man of 25 he heard something that astounded him in church. It happened some words of Jesus were read. They were the words which he spoke when he sent out his disciples to preach. Some of the words that specially struck Francis were:

Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

Francis had been thinking about the greed and wealth of the church officials and it at once became obvious to him that this was quite the opposite of these words of Christ to his disciples. Christ had sent out his own disciples with nothing! He felt a strong call to preach, and to do so in complete poverty, relying, as the apostles of old, on God to supply his need. Francis was a wonderful preacher, and his sincerity and devotion and joyous nature drew crowds to hear him. Others joined him and became Franciscan friars, a preaching brotherhood that spread at length all over the world. But at first Francis and his friars were just a small band. All were bound to follow a "rule" of poverty.

In 1210 Francis went to **Rome** with his friars. The pope (not a poor man himself) was a little reluctant but he gave the "rule" his approval and said the friars could preach – though he did not write any of this down.

Soon there were many more who wanted to join the Franciscans. Some were men who wanted to add preaching to their ordinary jobs. This they were allowed to do so long as they vowed to live at peace with all and do charitable work and other good deeds.

Francis longed for the conversion of the Muslims. He set off to **Palestine** and to **Morocco**. On this missionary endeavour he was nearly killed more than once and five of his companions did indeed suffer death.

Francis's Friars came into being because of a yearning to put right the evils in the church. For a time they did much good. The Order of Franciscan Friars got bigger and bigger. Francis could no longer control the organisation. Other men took charge and, to his great grief, the Rule of Poverty, which had started it all, was changed.

After Francis died on **3rd October** 1226 things got worse. The friars who no longer followed the Rule of Poverty became more powerful and began to persecute those who were stricter. The Friars who wanted to maintain the Rule of Poverty were known as *Spirituali* or *Fratricelli* which means "little brothers." Four of the *Spirituali* were burnt to death by the church officials in **Marseilles** in 1318, and in the same year the Pope declared it heretical to teach that Christ and his Apostles possessed nothing. The Pope's earlier words to Francis meant nothing. The Pope did not like the ideas that the *Spirituali* taught for, if it was true that church leaders should be poor, he would have to renounce his great wealth and life of luxury.¹ We have looked at the work of Wycliffe in some lessons already.² Wycliffe called the *Spirituali* "those evangelical men," and said they were "very dear to God". In the England of Wycliffe's times many of the persecuted *Spirituali* became Wycliffe's followers.³ The rest of the friars were bitter enemies of Wycliffe and his Lollard followers. The Lollards saw the root of the problem: "...are we to believe that ...Francis surpasses the wisdom of Christ?" wrote one Lollard, pointing out that Christ had never instructed Christians to form themselves into such organisations as the Franciscan Friars.

Use your thinking skills⁴

Francis was mistaken about many things, although he longed for changes in the church and for ordinary people to be converted. After his death the Catholic church made use of Francis. Here is a tale about him from *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* written in the fourteenth century.

At the time when Francis dwelt in the city of **Gubbio**, there appeared in the neighbourhood an enormous wolf, terrible and ferocious, which devoured not only animals but even men also, insomuch that all the citizens stood in great terror. Therefore Francis had compassion on the men of the place, and desired to go out to this wolf, although all the citizens together counselled him not to do so: and making the **sign of the most holy cross** he went out into the fields, he and his companions, all his confidence resting in God. And the others hesitating to go any further, Francis took his way to the place where the wolf was.

And behold! The wolf made at Francis with open mouth. And when he had come near, Francis made on him the **sign of the most holy cross**, and called him to him, saying: "Come along, Brother Wolf, I command thee on the part



1 Adapted from Broadbent, E.H. *The Pilgrim Church* (1931)

2 See lessons for 1st February, 22nd May and 10th June.

3 G M Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe*. (London, 1925 edn.) p.152.

4 Adapted from Owen, Evan, *What Happened Today?* Book 3 available on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com/>

of Christ, that thou do no harm, neither to me, not to anyone". And O wonder! Immediately Francis had made the holy sign, the terrible wolf shut his mouth, and ceased to run, and did as he was commanded, coming gently as a lamb, and lay down to rest at the feet of Francis. Then Francis spoke to him thus: "Brother Wolf, though hast done many evil deeds, ravaging and killing the creatures of God; and not only killing and devouring the cattle, but destroying men made in the image of God, for which cause thou dost deserve to be hung upon the gallows like a convict, as being a thief and the worst of murderers; and all the people cry out and murmur because of thee. But, Brother Wolf, I would make peace between them and thee, so that thou offend no more, and they shall pardon thee all past offences, and neither men nor dogs shall persecute thee more. I promise that I shall have thy food given to thee continually by the men of this place, as long as thou shalt live, for I know well that it is hunger which made thee do all this evil. But since I have obtained for thee this grace, I desire, Brother Wolf, that thou promise me never more to harm man or beast; dost thou promise me this?" And the wolf, by inclining his head, made evident signs that he promised.

And immediately the news spread over the whole city, and all the people, men and women, great and small, thronged to the piazza to see the wolf with Francis. And when all the folk were gathered together, St. Francis rose up to preach unto them, saying, among other things, how, by reason of sin, God permits such pestilences; and far more perilous is the fire of hell, the which must for ever torment the damned, than is the fury of a wolf which can only kill the body; how much then are the jaws of hell to be feared when the jaws of a little beast can hold so great a multitude in fear! "Turn ye then, most dear ones, turn ye to God, and do befitting penance for your sins, and God will save you from the wolf in this present world and from the fire of hell in that which is to come."

The wolf lived two years in Gubbio and went sociably into the houses, going from door to door without doing harm to anyone, or anyone doing harm to him. Finally after two years, Brother Wolf died of old age; at which the citizens grieved much; for while he went so gently about the town, they remembered the virtue and sanctity of Francis.

This is an entertaining tale but it has no gospel message in it. Can you see where the writer mixes up truth and error? No doubt Francis himself may have been somewhat muddled. The author of *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* was writing in the century after Francis lived and he uses the popularity of Francis to promote penance (while not mentioning repentance) and to promote the superstitious use of the cross as a "magic sign" (while never mentioning what the cross is really about).

Something to think about

Poor Francis is still used today as a promoter of ideas he probably would not have espoused himself. In 1979, Pope John Paul II declared him the Patron Saint⁵ of Ecologists. His love of animals has led to his adoption by environmentalists who claim he "wanted all creatures on Earth, including humans, to be treated as equals under God." Can you work out what is wrong with such ideas?⁶

We are told Francis had not had much of an education. We know that the Bible was not easily available in his day. Notice that Francis had not encountered the words of Jesus from Matthew's gospel or read them for himself before hearing them in church. Consider today's memory verse. It

⁵ Francis is often called *Saint* Francis. See the lesson for 1st March.

⁶ Human beings descendants of Adam who was made in the image of God, see Genesis 1:27. This is not true of any other creature. We have been commanded to look after the earth and all the creatures in it. Genesis 1:26. As fallen creatures we can no longer do this properly. We often pollute and destroy. Claiming that there is no difference between human beings and animals will not put this right!

would have been much harder for Francis to hide God's Word in his heart that it is for us. What a blessing to have an open Bible and to be able to read it!

And what about the wolf? There is a story that when a church in Gubbio was repaired in 1873 some animal bones were found in a tomb and the local vet confirmed that they were the bones of a wolf. I can't find any record of this from the time but who knows? The next Italian story today is much less mysterious!

Something to read from Reformation history



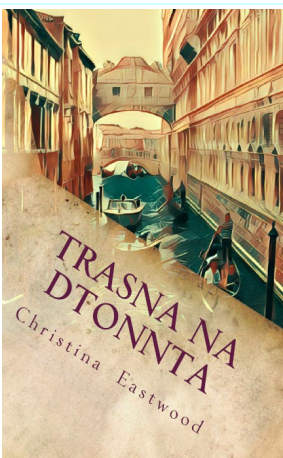
One of the the key figures of the Reformation about whom we do not read much today was Giovanni Diodati (1576-1649) who died in his native Geneva on 3rd October. Although Diodati had been born in Geneva he was not really a Swiss but an Italian. His family came from the city of Lucca and it was Italy that was closest to his heart. At this time there was no reliable, complete translation of the Bible in Italian. Diodati, who had been trained at the Geneva Academy, was a brilliant linguist and theologian and he set to work in 1603 to put this right.

Diodati's translation has a special place in the heart of Italian Christians today rather like that occupied by the King James Authorized Version translation of 1611 in the hearts of English speakers. It is still in print.⁷

Diodati's translation was banned by the Roman Catholic authorities in Italy. However, Diodati hoped that a door could be opened into Italy through the Republic of Venice where he had a good friend the Doge's right hand man Paolo Sarpi, or Brother Paul. The Doge was the supreme ruler of Venice (you can see him in his special horned cap on the right) so Brother Paul was just the man for Diodati to have for a friend.



Diodati had a handy sized edition of his Italian translation of the New Testament specially published for distribution in Venice, small and easy to keep out of sight. It had an electrifying effect. As Samuele, Brother Paul's servant boy explains:⁸



Brother Paul was quite correct to say that there was now good preaching to be heard in Venice ... There were several brothers of various orders, who had come to a clear understanding of what the Bible taught and were now not afraid to tell the people. They were very frustrated that the Italian translation by Signor Diodati was prohibited in Venice. ...

Next Sunday morning the crowd in the church of St. Lorenzo was so large that I had a job to get in at all as a late-comer and I only just managed to squeeze through the door. Inside the atmosphere was tense with excitement. The crowd was standing listening very quietly. They had to be quiet if they were to be able to hear but it was not a drowsy silence; it was the silence of people straining to catch every word and drink in everything they heard. There seemed to be something in their souls that thirsted to hear. Brother Micanzio was preaching on the verse in Matthew chapter thirteen where the

⁷ <https://www.tbsbibles.org/store/viewproduct.aspx?id=9079716&hhSearchTerms=%22Italian%22>

⁸ Extracted from *Trasna na Dtonnta* which is available from <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Trasna-Dtonnta-Tale-Three-Cities/dp/197982374X>. Although Samuele is a fictional character the story of what Brother Micanzio preached is true.

Lord Jesus challenges his hearers with the words, “Have ye not read?” and it was this little phrase that he was talking about as I pushed into the building between a very fat man in green stockings and a neatly dressed old lady who was listening with such intensity that she had cupped her hands behind her ears, pushing them forward to catch every word.

“You all know the scornful words of Pontius Pilate, *what is truth?*” Brother Micanzio was saying, “Pilate thought there was no answer to this question and so it did not matter what evil he did, what injustice he committed. Well, I stand here today and I can tell you that Pilate was *wrong*. I have found that there *is* an answer to his question. I have been searching for truth for many years and I have found it. I can tell you all where you can find it too—here in this book,” and before the astonished gaze of the congregation he pulled out one of Diodati’s New Testaments in Italian and held it up for everyone to see. “But,” he continued, returning the little book to his pocket, “the book is prohibited!” He paused and looked round before continuing slowly and deliberately, “If the Saviour were to ask the question *have ye not read?* to us all here today, the only thing we would be able to say would be: ‘no, we are *forbidden—forbidden* to do so.’” These last words were thundered out and a murmur—no more—of approval ran through the congregation. The old lady, obviously short-sighted as well as deaf, whispered across my head to the man in green stockings, “What was he holding out?”

“A Bible,” he mouthed back, “an Italian Bible.”



A skill to learn

Have you ever seen an old phone box like this one that has been given a new purpose? The device that is kept handy in here is a portable defibrillator and its inventor, Frank Pantridge (1916-2004), was born on 3rd October.

Frank Pantridge was something of a character. He did not get on well with school and was expelled from several secondary schools before completing his initial education at a Quaker School in Lisburn. From here he went on to study medicine.

Although Frank Pantridge was a war hero who was awarded the Military Cross for his actions during the fall of Singapore in the Second World War, he is best known as the Father of Emergency Medicine.

As a military doctor, Frank Pantridge was taken prisoner by the Japanese when Singapore fell and along with thousands of other prisoners he was forced to slave in inhuman conditions building the Burma Railway. He always said that President Truman had saved his life because it was he who ordered the bombing of Hiroshima that forced the Japanese to surrender, resulting in his release. Thus he survived the Burma Railway although he was very weak and ill. His sufferings as a prisoner of war left him with ill health for the rest of his life.

The disease, beriberi, from which Frank Pantridge and his fellow prisoners had suffered is due to dietary deficiency. It has effects on the heart and on his return to his native Northern Ireland he became a cardiologist, or heart specialist. He was particularly interested in heart attacks.

The most common cause of death in heart attack patients is ventricular fibrillation which is when electrical signals to the heart that control the lower heart chambers or ventricles make the ventricles twitch instead of working properly. This causes the heart to stop pumping blood. If that happens for long it will be fatal. To get the heart started again a defibrillator is used to deliver an electric shock to the chest. But the problem in the era not long after the war was that the patient had to get to hospital before he could have defibrillator treatment and by that time it was often too late. Frank



Pantridge wanted patients to be able to have treatment *before* arriving at hospital.

Together with a bio engineer he developed a defibrillator that was powered by a car battery and could be carried by an ambulance. Pantridge's defibrillator equipped ambulance meant a patient could be treated before he got to hospital and it saved many lives.

Pantridge went to the USA for further study and the Americans took up his idea with enthusiasm. In 1972 the ex-president, Lyndon Johnson, suffered a heart attack during a visit to Virginia and a portable defibrillator was used to help him. This raised the profile of Pantridge's

work in the USA even more. By 1979 the first automated external defibrillators (AEDs) became available. These were an early version of the little machines you will find in old phone boxes, post offices, village halls, sports pavilions, GP surgeries and churches which can be used by members of the public if someone has a heart attack.

Do you know where your nearest defibrillator is? Find out,⁹ then, if someone has a heart attack, the adult dealing with the situation could send you to fetch it while they give the casualty cardiopulmonary resuscitation or CPR. The cabinets which contain community defibrillators have a key code lock. In an emergency the code to unlock the cabinet is received by dialling 999. The adult sending you to fetch the defibrillator will need to do this (or you could do it yourself under their supervision) and give you the code before you go to get it. Find your local defibrillator and have a good look at it so you know exactly what to do to get it out of its cabinet. No training is needed to use a defibrillator as the machine will simply tell you what to do as soon as it is switched on. If you want to be even more prepared, though, it would be great to learn how to do CPR yourself.¹⁰

⁹ You can find out by using the map here: <https://www.nddb.uk/>

¹⁰ You can teach yourself by using this training <https://revivr.bhf.org.uk/> All you need to do the training is a cushion!