

Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius **(Acts of Blessed Francis and His Companions)**

[Chapter XXIII]

A certain wonderful and memorable event happened in the city of Eugubius. For while the most holy father Francis was still alive, there was in the territory of that city a certain wolf, terrible in size and most ferocious in rabies and hunger. He devoured not only animals but also men and women, so that he held all the citizens in such great pestilence and terror that all went armed when they left the land, as if they were to proceed to deadly wars. Yet, even though armed, the said wolves were unable to escape their biting teeth or their brutal rage when they accidentally encountered him. Hence such great terror seized everyone that hardly anyone dared to go out safely outside the city gate. But God, wishing to make known the holiness of blessed Francis to the aforementioned citizens, since the blessed father himself was there at that time, having compassion on them, arranged for him to go out to meet the said wolf. To whom the citizens said: "Beware, brother Francis, do not go out of the gate, for the wolf who has already devoured many will kill you completely." But Saint Francis, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, who rules over the spirits of all flesh, did not protect himself with a shield or helmet, but with the sign of the holy cross, and went out of the gate with his companion, placing his entire trust in the Lord, who makes those who believe in him walk without any harm over the basilisk and the asp, and trample not only the wolf, but also the lion and the dragon. And so the most faithful Francis went out fearlessly to the wolf. And behold, many saw him from the places where they had gone up to look, that terrible wolf ran towards Saint Francis and his companion with his mouth open. Against whom the blessed father made the sign of the cross, and by divine power restrained the wolf both from himself and from his companion, and stopped his course, and closed his mouth which was savagely open. And finally, calling him, he said: "Come to me, brother wolf, and on behalf of Christ I command you not to harm me or anyone else." What a wonderful thing it was that immediately after making the cross, he closed that terrible mouth! And having given the command, he immediately prostrated himself at the feet of the saint, now transformed from a wolf into a lamb, with his head bowed. And thus prostrated himself before him, Saint Francis said: "Brother wolf, you do much harm in these parts and have committed horrible evils, destroying the creatures of God without mercy. Not only do you destroy irrational animals, but, what is more detestable audacity, you kill and devour men made in the image of God. Wherefore you are worthy to be mutilated with a horrible death as a robber and a most wicked murderer; for which reason all rightly cry and murmur against you, and this whole city is hostile to you. But, brother wolf, I wish to make peace between you and these people, so that they will no longer be harmed by you, and they, forgiving you of all past offenses, will no longer be persecuted by men or dogs." And the wolf, by gestures of his body and tail and ears and head bowing, showed that which the saint said he accepted in every way. And Saint Francis said again: "Brother wolf, since it pleases you to make this peace, I promise you that I will give you daily expenses as long as you live among the people of this city, so that you will never suffer hunger again, because I know that whatever evil you do, you do it because of the rage of hunger. But, my brother wolf, since I will gain such a favor for you, I want you to promise me that you will never harm any animal or man. Do you promise me so?" And the wolf, with a clear sign, bowed his head, did as he promised, doing what the saint imposed on him. And Saint Francis said: "Brother wolf, I want you to give me faith so that I may confidently believe what you promise." And when Saint Francis had extended his hand to receive faith, the wolf also raised his right front paw, and gently and gently placed it on Saint Francis' hand, giving the sign he could of faith. Then Saint Francis said: "Brother wolf, I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that you come with me from now on, doubting nothing, into the city, to make this peace in the name of the Lord." And the obedient wolf immediately set out on his journey with Saint Francis like a most meek lamb. Seeing which, those from the city began to be greatly astonished; and this novelty immediately resounded throughout the whole city, so that all men and women, great and small, gathered together in the street, because Saint Francis was there with the wolf. Therefore, when the greatest multitude of people had gathered, Saint Francis rose and gave them a wonderful sermon, saying among other things how such plagues are permitted because of sins, and how much more dangerous is the devouring flame of hell, which has the power to devour the damned for eternity, than the rabies of the wolf, which can kill only the body; and How dreadful it is to be plunged into the abyss of hell, when so many were held in such fear and danger by one little animal. "Return therefore, my dearest, to the Lord and do worthy penance, and God will deliver you from the wolf in the present, and in the

future from the devouring abyss of fire." And having said these things, he said: "Listen, my dearest, brother wolf, who stands here before you, has promised me, and has shown faith in his promise, to make peace with you; and never to harm you in anything, if you nevertheless promise to pay him daily expenses. And I, for brother wolf, give you my word that you will firmly observe the peace treaty." Then all those gathered there promised with a loud cry to feed the wolf continually. And Saint Francis said to the wolf in the presence of all: "And you, brother wolf, do you promise to keep the treaty with these people, namely that you will not harm any animal or the person of any person?" - And the wolf, kneeling down, with a bow of his head, and gestures of his body and tail, and flattering his ears, clearly showed everyone that he would keep the pacts he had promised. And Saint Francis said: "Brother wolf, I want that just as you gave me your word about this when we were outside the gate, so also here in front of all this people you give me your word that you will observe these things, and that you will never abandon me in the pledge you have made for you." Then the wolf, raising his right foot, gave his word in the hand of Saint Francis, his surety, in the presence of all those present. And there was such great admiration to the joy of all, both for the devotion of the saint and for the novelty of the miracle, and moreover for the peace between the wolf and the people, that all They cried out to the stars, praising and blessing the Lord Jesus Christ, who sent to them Saint Francis, who by his merits freed them from the mouth of the most evil beast and restored them to peace and quiet from such a horrible plague. From that day on, therefore, the wolf kept the pacts established by Saint Francis between the people and the people between the wolf. And the wolf, living for two years and attacking the city from door to door, without harming anyone, nor being harmed by anyone, was brought up in a courtly manner. And it is very strange that no dog ever barked at him. Finally, Brother Wolf died in old age. The citizens were greatly grieved at his death, because the said wolves, with their peaceful and kind patience, and whenever he went through the city, he recalled the wonderful virtue and holiness of Saint Francis. To the praise and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Fioretti di san Francesco **(The Little Flowers of Saint Francis)**

[Chapter XXI]

While Saint Francis was living in the city of Gubbio, a very large, terrible, and ferocious wolf appeared in the countryside around Gubbio. He not only devoured animals, but also men, so much so that all the citizens were in great fear because he often approached the city. And everyone went armed when they left the town, as if they were going to battle, and yet they could not defend themselves from him, even those who encountered him alone. And out of fear of this wolf, they came to such a point that no one dared to leave the town.

Therefore, Saint Francis, having compassion for the people of the town, wanted to go out to meet this wolf, even though the citizens absolutely advised him against it. And making the sign of the holy cross, he and his companions left the town, placing all his trust in God. And as the others were hesitant to go any further, Saint Francis set out towards the place where the wolf was. And behold, seeing many citizens who had come to witness this miracle, the said wolf approached Saint Francis with its mouth open. And approaching him, Saint Francis made the sign of the cross on him, called him to himself, and said: "Come here, brother wolf, I command you in the name of Christ not to harm me or anyone else." A wonderful thing to say, for as soon as Saint Francis had made the sign of the cross, the terrible wolf closed its mouth and stopped running. And having obeyed the command, he came meekly as a lamb and threw himself at the feet of Saint Francis to lie down. Then Saint Francis spoke to him thus: "Brother wolf, you are doing much harm in these parts, and have committed very great evils, destroying and killing God's creatures without his permission. And not only have you killed and devoured beasts, but you have had the audacity to kill and destroy men, made in the image of God, for which you are worthy of the gallows as a most wicked thief and murderer, and all people cry out and murmur against you, and all this land is your enemy. But I want, brother wolf, to make peace between you and these people, so that you will no longer offend them, and they will forgive you for every past offense, and neither men nor dogs will persecute you anymore." Having said these words, the wolf, with movements of his body, tail, and ears, and by bowing his head, showed that he accepted what Saint Francis said

and that he wished to observe it. Then Saint Francis said: "Brother wolf, since you are pleased to make and keep this peace, I promise you that I will have your food continually paid for as long as you live by the men of this land, so that you will never suffer hunger again, because I know well that it is because of hunger that you have done every evil. But since I will obtain this favor for you, I want you, brother wolf, to promise me that you will never harm any man or animal. Will you promise me this?" And the wolf, by bowing his head, made a clear sign that he was promising. And Saint Francis said: "Brother wolf, I want you to give me assurance of this promise, so that I can trust it." And when Saint Francis stretched out his hand to receive faith, the wolf raised his front paw and placed it familiarly on Saint Francis' hand, giving him what sign of faith he could.

Then said Saint Francis: "Brother wolf, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come with me without hesitation, and let us go to establish this peace in the name of God." And the wolf, obedient, went with him like a meek lamb. Whereupon the citizens, seeing this, were greatly alarmed.

They marveled. And suddenly this news spread throughout the land; so that all people, great and small, male and female, young and old, flocked to the square to see the wolf with Saint Francis. And when all the people had gathered there, Saint Francis rose up and preached to them, telling them, among other things, that it is for sins that God commits such plagues; and that the flames of hell, which must last forever for the damned, are far more dangerous than the rage of the wolf, which can kill only the body. How much, then, is the mouth of hell to be feared, when such a multitude is held in fear and terror by the mouth of a small animal! "Return, then, dearest ones, to God, and do worthy penance for your sins, and God will deliver you from the wolf in the present, and in the future from eternal fire." And when the sermon was over, Saint Francis said: "Listen, my brothers: Brother Wolf, who is here before you, has promised, and has given me his word, to make peace with you and never to offend you in any way, if you promise to provide him with his necessary expenses every day. And I stand surety for him that he will firmly observe the pact of peace." Then the people all with one voice promised to feed him continually. And Saint Francis, before all the people, said to the wolf: "And you, Brother Wolf, do you promise to observe the pact of peace with these people, that you will not offend either animals or men or any other creature?" And the wolf, kneeling and bowing his head, and with gentle movements of his body, tail, and ears, demonstrated, as much as possible, that he wanted to observe every pact with them. Saint Francis said: "I want you, brother wolf, just as you gave me your assurance of this promise outside the gate, so here, before all the people, give me your assurance of your promise, and that you will not deceive me about the surety I have given for you." Then the wolf, raising his right foot, placed it in Saint Francis's hand. Thus, what with this act and the others mentioned above, there was such admiration and joy among all the people, both because of the devotion of the saint and because of the novelty of the miracle and because of the peace of the wolf, that they all began to cry out to heaven, praising and blessing God, who had sent them Saint Francis, who through his merits had freed them from the mouth of the cruel beast.

And then the said wolf lived two years in Gubbio; and he familiarly entered from door to door, without harming anyone or being harmed. He was fed courteously by the people, and he wandered through the land and from house to house, and no dog ever barked at him. Finally, after two years, brother wolf died of old age. The citizens mourned this greatly, for, seeing him go so meekly through the city, they were better reminded of the virtue and sanctity of Saint Francis. To the praise of Christ.