

The Writings of

St. Francis of Assisi

Translated from the Critical Latin Edition

of

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MARIAE IMMACULATAE VIRGINI
GENERIS HUMANI CORREDENTRICI
OMNIS GRATIAE MEDIATRICI
DEI GENETRICI
ANGELORUM HOMINUMQUE REGINAE
FRANCISCANORUM ORDINUM PATRONAE AC REGINAE
IN PERPETUAM OBLATIONEM

To the Immaculate Virgin Mary,
Corredemptrix of mankind,
Mediatrice of every grace,
Mother of God,
Queen of Angels and Men,
Patroness and Queen of the Franciscan Orders:
As a perpetual oblation.

Introduction

St. Francis of Assisi lived from 1182 to 1226 A.D.. Since his death St. Francis has been acclaimed by the popes as a "thoroughly Catholic and apostolic man," and praised by many of the faithful as one of the greatest saints of the Roman Catholic Church. In recent times Pope Pius XI, in the Encyclical Letter Rite Expiatis (April 13, 1926 A.D.) confirmed this, saying:

If some dare to compare one with another the heavenly heroes of sanctity destined by the Holy Ghost each to his own special mission among men—these comparisons, the fruit for the most part of party passions, are valueless and are at the same time an insult to God, the author of sanctity—it seems necessary for Us to affirm that there has never been anyone in whom the image of Jesus Christ and the evangelical manner of life shone forth more lifelike and strikingly than in St. Francis. He who called himself the "Herald of the Great King" was also rightly spoken of as "another Jesus Christ," appearing to his contemporaries and to future generations almost as if he were the Risen Christ. He has always lived as such in the eyes of men and so will continue to live for all future time. Nor is it marvelous that his early biographers, contemporaries of the Saint, in their accounts of his life and works, judged him to be of a nobility almost superior to human nature itself. Our Predecessors who dealt personally with Francis did not hesitate to recognize in him a providential help sent by God for the welfare of Christian peoples and of the Church. (n. 2)

St. Francis was born in either the summer or autumn of 1182 A.D., and received the name "John" at his baptism. Being a merchant who frequented France, his father named him "Francis." His mother raised him to be a devout Roman Catholic. He attended the Cathedral school in Assisi and went on to help his father in his work as a cloth merchant. After a short service in the military on behalf of Assisi, St. Francis was captured by her rival, the city of Perugia, and imprisoned for a year. When released he returned home an invalid. During a long sickness God weaned his heart from this world and soon he took up the habit of spending long hours in prayer.

One day in January of 1206 A.D. St. Francis paid a visit to San Damiano, a decrepit church on the outskirts of Assisi. There he knelt in prayer before an ancient icon depicting Christ Crucified, with Our Lady and St. John standing beneath His right arm.¹ Suddenly a voice came forth from the icon and said, "Francis, go and rebuild My Church, which as you can see, is falling into ruin." Afterwards, St. Francis resolved to obey Our Lord and set quickly to work repairing that old church.

In the three years that followed St. Francis went on to repair two other churches: San Pietro della Spina, in the countryside south of Assisi, and Santa Maria degli Angeli, also known as the Portiuncula, in the plain below the town. During this time St. Francis lived the life of a hermit.

It was at the Portiuncula, on the Feast of St. Matthias, the Apostle (February 24, 1208 A.D.), that St. Francis began the religious life for which he is famous. While attending Mass he

¹ For more on the historical verification of this incident, cf. Fr. Kajetan Esser, O.F.M., Gli Scritti di San Francesco d'Assisi, published by Edizioni Messaggero Padova, Italy, 1982 (reprinted 1995, p. 458). Today the original icon is kept at San Rufino; the icon at San Damiano is a copy.

listened intently to the priest, as he read the Gospel: "Take nothing with you on the way, neither gold, nor silver...". After Mass St. Francis asked the priest to explain the meaning of this reading. Thereupon the cleric described to him the life Christ taught to the Apostles. At this St. Francis exclaimed, "This is what I want; this is what I long for with all my heart!"

From that day St. Francis began living simply and literally the religious life which Christ taught in the Gospel. Soon devout Catholic men joined him and they began preaching penance to the people throughout central Italy, France, Spain, Germany, England, Palestine, and Hungary. He himself went on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela during these early years. And later in 1219 A.D., moved by a desire for martyrdom, St. Francis journeyed to accompany the soldiers of the Fifth Crusade (1218-1221 A.D.) at Damietta, Egypt. On his return, he did much to improve the discipline of his fledgling order, and in 1223 A.D. retired to the hermitage of Fonte Colombo, in Italy, to write the Rule of the Friars Minor.

St. Francis is particularly noted for the extraordinary and singular grace which Jesus Christ gave him on the morning of September 14, 1224 A.D., while he was at prayer on Mt. Alverna, in Italy. He saw a Seraph come down from Heaven, bearing the Image of the Crucified, from the five wounds of which beams of light shone forth upon his own hands and feet and side. It was then he received the stigmata, which bled profusely for the next three years of his life. Of this extraordinary gift, St. John of the Cross, the Carmelite Doctor of the Church, writes in the second redaction of the Living Flame of Love (1586-91 A.D.):

Let us return to the work of the Seraphim, for he truly inflicts a sore and wounds inwardly in the spirit. Thus, if God sometimes permits an effect to extend to the bodily senses in the fashion in which it existed interiorly, the wound and sore appears outwardly, as happened when the Seraphim wounded St. Francis. When the soul is wounded with love by the Five Wounds (of Christ), the effect extends to the body and these Wounds are impressed on the body and it is wounded, just as the soul is wounded with love. God usually does not bestow a favor upon the body without bestowing it first and principally upon the soul. Thus the greater the delight and strength of love the wound produces in the soul, so much the greater is that produced by the wound outside on the body, and when there is an increase in one there is an increase in the other. (II,13)

St. Francis passed to his eternal reward on Saturday, October 3, 1226 A.D., during the recitation of Vespers. Both in life and death he worked a great number of miracles, especially for the infirm and those overcome by sudden disasters.

In his short life St. Francis founded three religious orders: one for religious brothers and priests, the Order of Friars Minor; one for religious women, the Poor Clares; one for lay men and women who wished to sanctify their daily lives in a spirit of Christian poverty and prayer, the Third Order. In his own day more than 5,000 men had joined the Friars Minor. Today the number of men who observe St. Francis' Rule numbers over 35,000; the number of Poor Clares is over 1,000; and the number of laymen and women in his Third Order is well over 1,000,000.

St. Francis also was responsible for introducing and fostering many devotions and practices that have characterized Roman Catholicism for the last 800 years: Eucharistic Adoration, devotion to the Immaculate Virgin Mary, the Christmas crèche and Christmas carols, devotion to Christ's Passion, public preaching, and the promotion of the life of devotion and good works among the laity.

The Popes have made St. Francis patron of Catholic Action, of Italy and of the

environment. His is also a most powerful patron for those seeking to repent of their sins and vices. His feast day is October 4. His tomb at Assisi, Italy, is one of the centers of pilgrimage in the Catholic world.

Recommended Reading

The Life of St. Francis, by St. Bonaventure

The Little Flowers of St. Francis.

St. Francis of Assisi, by G. K. Chesterton.

The Life and Times of St. Francis of Assisi

by Pope Pius XI

Excerpted from Rite Expiatis (April 13, 1926 A.D.), nn. 6-34.

The terrible conditions existing in the times when St. Francis lived are well known to you, Venerable Brothers. It is quite true that then the faith was more deeply rooted in the people, as is proven by the holy enthusiasm with which not only professional soldiers but even citizens of every class bore arms in Palestine to free the Holy Sepulcher. However, heresies gradually arose and grew in the vineyard of the Lord, propagated either by open heretics or by sly deceivers who, because they professed a certain austerity of life and gave a false appearance of virtue and piety, easily led weak and simple souls astray. They went about, too, amid the multitudes spreading the destructive flames of rebellion. If some of these men, in their pride, believed themselves called by God to reform the Church to which they imputed the faults of private persons, even going to the length of rebelling against the teachings and authority of the Holy See, later they openly manifested the real intention by which they were inspired. It is a notorious fact that before long the greater part of these heretics ended their careers in licentiousness and vice, and succeeded in embroiling the state in difficulties and in undermining the foundations of religion, of property, of the family, and of society. In a word, what happened then is precisely what we see recurring so often in the course of the centuries; rebellions leveled against the Church are followed or accompanied by rebellions against the state, the one receiving aid and comfort from the other.

Although the Catholic faith still lived in the hearts of men, in some cases intact and in others a bit obscured, however lacking they might have been in the spirit of the gospels, the charity of Christ had become so weakened in human society as to appear to be almost extinct. To say nothing of the constant warfare carried on by the partisans of the Empire, on the one hand, and by those of the Church on the other, the cities of Italy were torn by internecine wars because one party desired to rule, refusing to recognize the rights of the barons to govern, or because the strong wished to force the weak to submit to them, or because of the struggles for supremacy between political parties in the same city. Horrible massacres, conflagrations, devastation and pillage, exile, confiscation of property and estates were the bitter fruits of these struggles.

Sad indeed was the fate of the common people, while between lords and vassals, between the greater and the lesser, as they were called, between the owners of land and the peasants existed relations in every sense of the world foreign to the spirit of humanity. Peace-loving people were harassed and oppressed with impunity by the powerful. Those who did not belong to that most unfortunate class of human beings, the proletariat, allowed themselves to be overcome by egotism and greed for possessions and were driven by an insatiable desire for riches. These men, regardless of the laws which had been promulgated in many places against vice, ostentatiously paraded their riches in a wild orgy of clothes, banquets, and feasts of every kind. They looked on poverty and the poor as something vile. They abhorred from the depths of their souls the lepers—leprosy was then very widespread—and neglected these outcasts completely in their segregation from society. What is worse, this greed for wealth and pleasure was not even absent, though many of the clergy are to be commended for the austerity of their lives, from those who should have most scrupulously guarded themselves from such sin. The custom, too, was prevalent of monopolizing wealth and piling up large fortunes. These fortunes were often acquired in divers and sinful manners, sometimes by the violent extortion of money and other

times by usury. Many increased and swelled their patrimony by an illicit trade in public office and emoluments, in the administration of justice, and even by the procuring of immunity from punishment for persons convicted of crime.

The Church was not silent under these circumstances; neither did it spare its edicts of punishment; but of what use was all this when even the Emperors drew down on themselves the anathemas of the Holy See, and, to the great scandal of all, contumaciously despised these decrees? Even the monastic life, which had brought so many spiritual fruits to maturity, tarnished now by the dirt of this world, possessed no longer the strength to resist and to defend itself. If the founding of new religious orders brought some small help and strength to the maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline, certainly a much stronger flame of light and love was necessary to reform human society which had been so profoundly disturbed.

To bring light to the people of this world which We have described, and to lead them back to the pure ideals of the wisdom of the Gospels, there appeared, in the Providence of God, St. Francis of Assisi who, as Dante sang, "shone as the sun" (Paradiso, Canto XI), or as Thomas of Celano had already written of a similar figure, "he shone forth as a resplendent star on a dark night, like the morning which spreads itself over the darkness." (Legenda I, No. 37)

As a youth, St. Francis was expansive and highstrung, a lover of luxurious dress. He was accustomed to invite to magnificent banquets the friends he had chosen from among the fashionable and pleasure-loving young men of the town. He walked through the streets with them, singing gaily. But even at that time in his life he became known for the integrity of his moral life, his correctness in conversation, and his utter disdain of wealth. After his imprisonment in Perugia, which was followed by a long illness, he felt himself, not without a certain sense of astonishment, completely transformed. However, as if he desired to flee from the hands of God, he went to Puglia on a military mission. On this journey he felt himself commanded by God in unmistakable terms to return to Assisi and learn there what he must do. After much wavering and many doubts, through divine inspiration and through having heard at solemn Mass that passage from the Gospels which speaks of the apostolic life, he understood at last that he, too, must live and serve Christ "according to the very words of the Holy Gospels." From that time on he undertook to unite himself to Christ alone and to make himself like unto Him in all things. In "all his efforts, public as well as private, he turned to the Cross of Our Lord, and from the moment he began to live as a soldier of Christ, the divers mysteries of the Cross shone round about him." (Thomas of Celano, Treatise on Miracles, No. 2) Truly he was a brave soldier and knight of Christ because of the nobility and generosity of his heart; wherefore to prove that neither he nor his disciples were ever to be separated from Our Lord, he always had recourse to the Gospels as to an oracle whenever he had to make a decision on any matter. The rules of the Orders founded by him were made to agree most scrupulously with the Gospels, and the religious life of his followers with the life of the Apostles. For this reason at the very beginning of his Rule, he wrote: "This is the life and rule of the Friars Minor, to observe the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ." (Beginning of Rule of the Friars Minor)

In order not to prolong this subject unduly, let us see now with what exercise of perfect virtue Francis prepared himself to follow the counsels of divine mercy and to make himself a capable instrument for the reformation of society.

It is not hard to imagine, although We know it is a very difficult task fitly to describe, the love of evangelical poverty which burned within him. Everyone knows how he, because of the noble character bestowed on him by nature, loved to befriend the poor, and how, as St. Bonaventure has said, he was so filled with kindness that being "no mere hearer of the Gospel" he had decided never to deny help to the poor, especially if they in asking for assistance did so

with the plea "for the love of God." (Legenda Maior, Chap. I, No. 1) Divine grace completed in him the work of nature and brought him to the highest perfection. Having on one occasion refused alms to a poor man, he forthwith repented and felt impelled to go and seek him out so that by the very abundance of his charity he might succor this man in his poverty.

On another occasion he was with a party of young men, singing in the streets after a gay banquet, when he stopped suddenly and, as if lifted outside himself by a wonderful vision, turned to his companions who had asked him if he was thinking of getting married and quickly replied, with some warmth, that they had guessed rightly because he proposed to take a spouse, and no one more noble, more rich, more beautiful than she could possibly be found, meaning by these words Poverty or the religious state which is founded on the profession of poverty. In fact, he had learned from Our Lord Jesus Christ Who, "although he was rich made Himself poor for us" (II Corinthians viii, 9) that we, too, should become rich by His poverty, which is, in truth, divine wisdom; a wisdom which cannot be overthrown by the sophistries of human wisdom, a wisdom which alone can renew and restore all things. For Christ has said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; if thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me." (Matt. v, 3, and Matt. xix, 21)

Poverty, which consists in the voluntary renunciation of every possession for reasons of love and through divine inspiration and which is quite the opposite of that forced and unlovable poverty preached by some ancient philosophers, was embraced by Francis with so much affection that he called her in loving accents, Lady, Mother, Spouse. In this regard, St. Bonaventure writes: "No one was ever so eager for gold as he was for poverty, nor more jealous in the custody of a treasure than he was of this pearl of the Gospel." (Legenda Maior, Chap. VII) Francis himself, recommending and prescribing for his followers in the rule of his Order the exercise of this virtue in a very special manner, manifested the high esteem he had for poverty when he wrote these expressive words: "This is the sublimeness of the highest poverty which made you, my dearest brothers, heirs and kings of the Kingdom of heaven, which made you poor in things of this world but enriched you with all virtue. This should be your heritage; to which, giving yourselves up entirely in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, nothing else will you desire forever under heaven." (Rule of Friars Minor, Chap. VI)

The reason why Francis particularly loved poverty was because he considered it a special virtue of the Blessed Virgin, and because Jesus Christ on the Cross, even more especially chose poverty for His spouse. Since then poverty has been forgotten by men and has appeared to the world both irksome and foreign to the spirit of the age.

Often when thinking of these things, St. Francis used to break down and shed bitter tears. Who would not be moved at this spectacle of a man who was so much in love with poverty that he appeared to his former boon companions and, to many others besides, bereft of his senses? What are we to say then of the generations following him which, even if they are very far from an understanding and practice of evangelical perfection, yet are filled with admiration for so ardent a lover of poverty, an admiration that is continually on the increase and which is particularly noteworthy in the men of our own day? Dante anticipated this admiration of posterity in his poem "The Nuptials of St. Francis and Poverty," in which poem one finds it difficult which to admire more, the remarkable sublimity of the ideas expressed or the beauty and elegance of the style. (Paradiso, Canto XI.)

The high ideals and generous love of poverty which possessed the mind and heart of Francis could not be satisfied by a mere renunciation of external wealth. Could one ever succeed in acquiring true poverty, following the footsteps of Jesus Christ, if he did not make himself also poor in spirit by means of the virtue of humility? Francis well understood this truth; he never

separated one virtue from the other and greeted them both warmly: "Holy Lady Poverty, may the Lord save you and your sister, Holy Humility.... Holy Poverty destroys all cupidity and avarice and anxiety for the things of this world. Holy Humility destroys pride, all men who are of the world, and all the things which are in the world." (*Opusculum, Salutatio Virtutum*, p. 20 et seq., edition 1904)

The author of that golden book *The Imitation of Christ* describes St. Francis in a word when he calls him "humble." "For how much so ever each one is in Thine eyes, O Lord, so much is he and no more, saith the humble St. Francis." (*Imitation of Christ, Book III, Chap. 50*) In fact, it was the supreme wish of his heart to carry himself always with humility, as the least and last among men. Therefore, from the very beginning of his conversion, he ardently desired to be looked down upon and to be despised by all. Later on, although he became the Founder, the writer of their Rule, and the Father of the Friars Minor, he insisted that one of his followers should become the superior and master on whom even he was to depend. At the earliest possible moment, steeling himself against the prayers and wishes of his disciples, he desired to give up the supreme government of his Order "in order to practice the virtue of holy humility" and to remain "with her till death, living more humbly than any other friar." (Thomas of Celano, *Legenda*, Chap. II, No. 143)

Cardinals and great lords often offered him hospitality but he abruptly refused all such invitations. Though he exhibited the greatest esteem for all men and rendered each man every possible deference, he looked upon himself as a sinner, considering himself as only one among many sinners. In fact, he believed himself the greatest of all sinners. He was accustomed to say that if the mercy shown him by God had been given to any other sinner, the latter would have become ten times holier than he, and that to God alone must be attributed whatever was found in him of goodness and beauty, for from God only was it derived. For this reason he tried in every possible way to hide those privileges and graces, especially the stigmata of Our Lord imprinted on his body, which might have gained for him the esteem and praise of men. When at times he was praised, either in public or in private, he not only refused to accept such praise but protested that he was worthy only of contempt and abuse and was really saddened thereby. Finally, what must we say about the fact that he thought so humbly of himself that he did not consider himself worthy to be ordained a priest?

On this selfsame foundation of humility he desired that his Order of Friars Minor should be founded and built. He repeatedly taught his followers, in exhortations begotten of a truly marvelous wisdom, that they should glory in nothing, and above all not in their acquisition of virtues or in the possession of divine grace. He admonished them too, and even, on occasion, reprov'd those friars who because of their duties as preachers, men of letters, philosophers, superiors of convents and provinces, were exposed to the dangers of vain glory. It would take too long to go into details; this is enough to prove our point that St. Francis, following the example and words of Christ (*Matt. xx, 26, 28; Luke xxii, 26*), considered humility in his followers as the distinctive mark of his Order—namely, "he insisted that his disciples be called 'Minors,' and the superiors of his Order 'Ministers.' He did this in order both to make use of the very language of the Gospels which he had promised to observe and to make his disciples understand by the name which they bore that they must go to the school of the humble Christ in order to learn humility." (St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior*, Chap. VI, No. 5)

We have seen how the Seraphic Father, motivated by the idea of perfect poverty which had taken complete possession of his soul, made himself so small and humble as to obey others (it would be better to say almost everyone) with the very simplicity of a child, for the reason that he who does not deny himself and give up his own will, certainly cannot be said to have

renounced all things or to have become humble of heart. St. Francis by his vow of obedience consecrated gladly and submitted fully his will, the greatest gift which God has bestowed on human nature, to the will of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

What evil they do and how far from a true appreciation of the Man of Assisi are they who, in order to bolster up their fantastic and erroneous ideas about him, imagine such an incredible thing as that Francis was an opponent of the discipline of the Church, that he did not accept the dogmas of the Faith, that he was the precursor and prophet of that false liberty which began to manifest itself at the beginning of modern times and which has caused so many disturbances both in the Church and in civil society! That he was in a special manner obedient and faithful in all things to the hierarchy of the Church, to this Apostolic See, and to the teachings of Christ, the Herald of the Great King proved both to Catholics and non-Catholics by the admirable example of obedience which he always gave. It is a fact proven by contemporary documents, which are worthy of all credence, "that he held in veneration the clergy, and loved with a great affection all who were in holy orders." (Thomas of Celano, *Legenda*, Chap. I, No. 62) "As a man who was truly Catholic and apostolic, he insisted above all things in his sermons that the faith of the Holy Roman Church should always be preserved and inviolably, and that the priests who by their ministry bring into being the sublime Sacrament of the Lord, should therefore be held in the highest reverence. He also taught that the doctors of the law of God and all the orders of clergy should be shown the utmost respect at all times." (Julian a Spira, *Life of St. Francis*, No. 28) That which he taught to the people from the pulpit he insisted on much more strongly among his friars. We may read of this in his famous last testament and, again, at the very point of death he admonished them about this with great insistence, namely, that in the exercise of the sacred ministry they should always obey the bishops and the clergy and should live together with them as it behooves children of peace.

The most important side of his obedience, however, is shown by the fact that as soon as the Seraphic Patriarch had drawn up and written out the rules of his Order, he delayed not even an instant in presenting himself personally, together with his first eleven disciples, to Innocent III, in order to gain the Pope's approval of his Rules. That Pontiff of immortal memory, moved deeply by the words and presence of the humble Poverello, embraced Francis with great affection and, divinely inspired, sanctioned the Rules presented to him. He also gave to Francis and to his co-laborers the faculty to preach penance. History attests that Honorius III added a new confirmation to this Rule, after it had been somewhat modified, in answer to the prayers of St. Francis.

The Seraphic Father commanded that the Rule and the Life of the Friars Minor should be the following: to observe the "holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ" living in obedience, without possessing any property, and in all chastity, and this not according to one's own whims or individual interpretation of the Rule, but according to the commands of the Roman Pontiffs, canonically elected. For those who eagerly longed "to follow this manner of life. . . they had to be, first, diligently examined by the Father Ministers concerning their Catholic Faith and their reception of the sacraments of the Church; whether they believed all these things and were firm in their intention to profess them until death." Those who had already become members of the Order must for no reason leave except it be "by order of Our Lord, the Pope." To the clerics of the Order it is prescribed that they celebrate "the divine office according to the calendar of the Roman Church"; to the friars in general it was commanded that they should not preach in the territory of a bishop without his permission, and that they should not enter, not even for reasons of their ministry, the convents of sisters without a special faculty from the Apostolic See. No less reverence and docility towards the Apostolic See is shown by the words which St. Francis uses

in commanding that a Cardinal Protector should be appointed for the Order: "In obedience, I enjoin the Ministers to ask the Lord Pope for one of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church to be the guide, protector and corrector of this Brotherhood; so that subordinate at all times and submissive, at the feet of the same Holy Roman Church, and thus firm in the Catholic Faith, . . . we shall observe, as we have faithfully promised to do, the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rule of Friars Minor, *passim*)

We must speak also of the "beauty and cleanliness of purity" which the Seraphic Father "loved singularly," of that chastity of soul and body which he kept and defended even to the maceration of his own flesh. We have already seen that as a young man, although gay and fashionable, he abhorred everything sinful, even in word. When later on he cast aside the vain pleasures of this world, he began to repress the demands of his senses with great severity. Thus at times when he found himself moved or likely to be influenced by sensual feeling, he did not hesitate to throw himself into a bush of thorns or, in the very depths of winter, to plunge into the icy waters of a stream.

It is also well known that our Saint, desiring to call back men so that they would conform their lives to the teachings of the Gospel, used to exhort them "to love and fear God and to do penance for their sins." (Legend of the Three Companions, No. 33 et seq.) Moreover, he preached and invited all to penance by his own example. He wore a hair shirt, he was clothed in a poor rough tunic, went about barefoot, he slept resting his head on a stone or on the trunk of a tree, ate so little that it was barely sufficient to keep him from dying of starvation. He even mixed ashes and water with his food in order to destroy its taste. He passed the greater part of the year in fasting. Besides all this, no matter whether he was well or ill, he treated his body with the greatest severity; he used to call his body "my brother the ass"; nor could he be induced to give himself any relief or rest, not even when, as during the last years of his life, he was suffering greatly, the sufferings of one nailed to a cross, for he had become like unto Christ because of the stigmata which he bore. Neither did he neglect to inculcate austerity of life in his disciples, and, in this only did "the teachings of the Holy Patriarch differ from his own actions," (Thomas of Celano, *Legenda* II, No. 129) he advised them to moderate a too excessive abstinence or punishment of the body.

Is there anyone who cannot see that all these virtues proceeded from the one and same fountain of divine love? In truth, as Thomas of Celano writes, "he was ever afire with divine love and longed to perform deeds of great heroism; walking with a strong heart in the way of the divine commandments, he eagerly desired to reach the highest perfection"; and St. Bonaventure testifies that "he seemed like a burning coal alive with the fire of God's love." (*Legenda Maior*, Chap. IX, No. 1) Wherefore there were those who "seeing him raised so rapidly to a state of intoxication of divine love" burst into tears. (Legend of the Three Companions, No. 21) This love of God he poured out in love for his neighbor, and conquering himself loved with a special tenderness the poor and, among the poor, the most miserable of all, the lepers, whom as a youth he had so abhorred; he dedicated completely both himself and his disciples to their care and service. He also wished that a brotherly love similar to his own should reign among his disciples; because of this his wish, the Franciscan Brotherhood grew to be "a noble edifice of charity, from the living stones of which, gathered from every part of the world, there was built a dwelling for the Holy Ghost." (Thomas of Celano, *Legenda* I, No. 38 et seq.)

It is Our pleasure, Venerable Brothers, to detain you somewhat more at length in a study of these his sublime virtues, for the reason that, in our times, many infected by the false spirit of secularism, habitually attempt to strip our saintly heroes of the true light and glory of their sanctity. These writers view the saint merely as models of human excellence or as professors of

an empty spirit of religion, praising and magnifying them exclusively because of what they have done for the progress of arts and sciences, or because of certain works of mercy which they have accomplished and which have proven helpful to the fatherland and to mankind. We do not cease to wonder how an admiration of this kind for St. Francis, so false and even contradictory in itself, can in any way help his modern admirers who devote their lives to the search for riches and pleasure or who decked out in finery frequent public places, dances and theaters, or who roll in the very mud of voluptuousness, who ignore and cast aside the laws of Christ and His Church. In this context the following warning is very significant: "He who pretends to admire the good works of a saint must at the same time admire the homage and love due to God. Therefore either imitate that which you praise or do not permit yourself to praise that which you do not care to imitate. He who admires the good works of the saints must also distinguish himself by the holiness of his own life." (Roman Breviary, 7th of November, Lesson IV)

St. Francis, trained in the manly virtues We have written about, was called providentially to a work of reform for the salvation of his contemporaries and to assist in the work of the Church Universal.

In the Church of St. Damian where he was accustomed to pray, he heard three times a voice from Heaven saying: "Go Francis, rebuild my house which is falling down." (St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior*, Chap. II) But Francis, because of that deep humility which made him think himself incapable of accomplishing any great work whatsoever, did not understand the meaning of these mysterious words. Innocent III, however, discovered their import through the miraculous vision in which Francis was shown in the act of supporting on his shoulders the Church of the Lateran which was falling to the ground. The Pope then understood clearly that the mission of St. Francis was a very special one, given to him by a most merciful God.

The Seraphic Father founded two Orders, one for men and the other for women, both made up of aspirants to evangelical perfection. He then began a visit to the cities of Italy announcing, either personally or through the first disciples who had come to him, the foundation of his two Orders, preaching penance to the people in few but fiery words, gathering by this ministry and by his words and example almost unbelievable fruits. In all the places where he went to perform the functions of his apostolic ministry the people and clergy came out in procession to meet Francis, and there was much ringing of bells, singing of popular songs, and waving of olive branches. Persons of every age, sex, and condition flocked to him and, by day or night, surrounded the house where he lived so that they might have a chance of seeing him when he went out, of touching him, speaking to him, or listening to his words. No one, even if he were grown gray in habits of vice and sin, could resist the preaching of the Saint. Very many people, even some of mature age, vied with one another in giving up all their earthly goods for love of the evangelical life. Entire cities of Italy, reborn to a new moral life, placed themselves under the direction of Francis. The number of his sons grew beyond reckoning. Such was the enthusiasm which filled all to follow in his footsteps that the Seraphic Patriarch himself was often obliged to dissuade many and turn aside from the proposal to leave the world both men and women who were willing and ready to give up their conjugal rights and the joys of domestic life.

Meanwhile the principal desire which filled these new preachers of penance was to help bring back peace not only to individuals but to families, cities, and even nations, torn by interminable wars and steeped in blood. If at Assisi, Arezzo, Bologna, and in many other cities and towns it was possible to bring about a general era of peace, at times confirmed even by solemn treaties, this was due altogether to the superhuman power of the eloquence of these rough men.

In this work of reform and of bringing about a universal peace, the Third Order assisted

greatly. The Third Order is indeed a religious Order but an altogether new type of community at that time, for while it possesses the spirit of a religious order, it does not obligate its members to take vows. It offers to both men and women, living in the world, the means not only of observing the laws of God but of attaining Christian perfection. The Rules of this new order may be reduced to the following principal articles. No one was accepted as a member unless he were of an unquestioned Catholic faith and obedient in all things to the Church; the manner of receiving candidates from each of the sexes into the Order; admission to religious profession was permitted after a year of novitiate, subject to the consent of the wife in the case of husbands and of the husband in the case of wives; love of purity and poverty, especially in the use of clothes, and of modesty in feminine attire; that the Tertiaries should abstain from feasting, from immodest shows and balls; abstinence and fasting; confession and communion three times a year, taking care to make peace with everyone beforehand and to restore the goods rightly belonging to others; not to bear arms except in defense of the Roman Church, of the Christian faith, and of one's own country, or with the consent of one's Minister; the recitation of the canonical hours and other prayers; the duty of making a last will and testament three months after admission into the Order; to restore as soon as possible peace among one's brethren or among those outside the order if any trouble had arisen; what to do in case the rights and privileges of the Order had been violated; not to take an oath except in case of urgent necessity recognized by the Apostolic See. To these rules were added others of no less importance; for example, on the duty of hearing Mass; of attending meetings called on certain fixed days; on the giving of alms by each according to his ability to help the poor and, especially, the sick; on the performing of the last rites for dead members; on the manner of exchanging visits in case of illness; on the manner of bringing back to the ways of virtue those who had fallen or were obstinate in sin; on the duty of not refusing the offices and functions assigned to each and to fulfill these with care; on the manner of settling disputes.

Translator's Forward

This English translation of the Writings of St. Francis is the first of its kind to appear since the publication in 1976 of the critical Latin edition, by the renowned Franciscan scholar, Fr. Kajetan Esser, O.F.M..

The translation has been made from the Latin text edited by Fr. Kajetan Esser, O.F.M., as published in the Italian-Latin version Gli Scritti di San Francesco d'Assisi, of Edizioni Messaggero Padova, Italy, 1982. Fr. Esser's introductions and notes, were also a major source for historical and textual information for the preparation of this English edition. Although his Latin edition also includes among the writings of St. Francis portions of manuscripts that only report that St. Francis wrote or general paraphrases of what the Saint taught in a particular, now-lost, writing, this English translation has omitted these and included only the writings attributed in some authentic manner to St. Francis himself. This edition therefore comprises all the known works and writings of the Saint.

The ratio interpretandi of this English version is the simple, word-for-word literal transposition of ideas from Latin to English. An attempt was made to avoid all modern idiomatic expressions, as much as possible, and to revert in many cases to those lesser used, but truly Catholic, Latinate words which form the bulk of the erudite English language used so widely in the past. Whenever the English word did not succeed in capturing the meaning of its Latin counterpart, it was complimented by a explanatory footnote. Specifically Franciscan or Catholic terminology was often likewise explained in the notes. Unless otherwise noted, the division of sentences in the English translation is identical to the Latin text.

Capitalization in this work conforms to the custom of Catholic English, in which not only God, the Holy Trinity, and Christ but also the Blessed Virgin, the Saints and the Sacraments of the Church are set apart by the use of the initial capital. Though not as common today as in the past, this serves to capture the reverence and respect that St. Francis embodied for God and His handiwork, both in his life and in his writings.

All the notes and introductions have been written by the English translator. Since this edition is destined for popular use, extensive references and bibliography have been omitted, along with variant readings. Punctuation follows the Latin text as closely as possible. All the scriptural references in round () brackets in the text have been taken from Fr. Esser's work and refer to the Vulgate text of the Bible. For the sake of making St. Francis' own thought transparent to the English reader, scriptural passages quoted by St. Francis are set off from the text with quotation " " marks; translated from his own Latin, they will thus often not correspond to a modern English translation of the same verses. The usage of quotation " " marks in the notes is however standard. Within the text itself, items in square [] brackets or *italics* represent the English translation of items interpolated or added by Fr. K. Esser, or which are traditional in the manuscript tradition through which these writings have come down to the present day. Other items in round () brackets, in either the text or notes, have been added by the English translator for the sake of clarity. Finally the acronym used by Fr. Esser to identify each writing for scholarly purposes is found in square brackets immediately below the title of each work, and his corresponding division of its verses has been denoted by the position of centered "." dots. These latter two are the basis for the system of citation accepted in scholarly circles for the writings of St. Francis.

The translator wishes to thank God, Mary, St. Francis, the many Franciscan priests and

religious who have so edified him during his life, his Latin teachers, especially Mrs. Kansas, and Friar Pierbattista Pizzaballa, O.F.M., for introducing him to the Latin texts of St. Francis, and all the kind and generous benefactors who assisted in the preparation, editing, and publishing of this translation.

A Note on the Translation of some common Latin terms

Throughout his writings St. Francis frequently returns to his major themes of the love of God, and the prior the necessity of turning away from the attractions of this world. In explaining these, the Saint repeatedly uses Latin in a manner that has no strict equivalent in the English language; and for this reason, a brief explanation will be useful to the reader, prior to reading St. Francis in translation.

The first Latin term is saeculum: which literally means "the time-span of a single generation," and thus denotes "a generation," as well as that indistinct period of time called "an age", or even "the world," in the sense of the contemporary human society. This term is used frequently in the New Testament to refer to corrupt human society (e.g. Lk 16:8; 20:34; Mt 13:22; Jn 4:4; 1 Cor 2:6,8; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Tm 6:7). Thus in the English translation of St. Francis writings, saeculum, will be normally translated as "age," but when the context requires another English word (i.e. "generation", "world"), it will be followed immediately with the Latin term placed in round () brackets.

The second Latin term is associated with the first: sollicitudo, which means "a diligent or anxious concern," depending on whether it is used in a positive or negative context. St. Francis' usage of this term is almost always in association with saeculum, and this association is most probably on account of Mt 13:22, which speaks of the word of God being suffocated by sollicitudo saeculi istius. Since this could be translated into English as either "a concern for" or "a concern of," it will be helpful to refer to what the learned Jesuit, Cornelius à Lapide says on this text, in his famous Commentarium in Sacram Scripturam:

SOLLICITUDO SAECULI: That is, for secular and temporal affairs, e.g. care for a wife, for children, for family, status, office, the dignity, which one has, or which one seeks for himself or for his own; these as a thorn with it stings lacerate the mind, that is, distract, disturb, kill, would, (and) devour, in accord with that (saying): *Res est solliciti plena timoris amor* [This thing is a love full of solicitous fear]. Since on the contrary solicitude for salvation and for divine things focus the mind, brighten, heal, (and) invigorate it.

Therefore sollicitudo will be translated either as "anxious concern" (sollicitudo) or "solicitude" depending on the context.

The third Latin term is religio. Literally the word refers to the state of being bound to God, and for this reason St. Francis uses this word almost exclusively as a synonym for the religious Order which God inspired him to found. As can be seen from the twelfth chapter of the Rule of St. Francis, members of other "religions," in the modern sense of the word, were called "infidels" in the Middle Ages. And therefore, lest a contemporary understanding of this term be imposed upon St. Francis' writings, religio will always be translated as "religion," along with a footnote to notify the reader accordingly.

The fourth Latin term is infirmus. It should be noted that throughout his writings, St. Francis never uses the Latin word aegrotus "sick" (one who suffers from a disease), but rather the Latin word infirmus "infirm" (one who is weak in body). In this he is making a distinction which fosters respect not only for those who are ill but also for the aged and poor in health, which distinction is vital in the government of a community of men who make a life-long promise. However, since in English the word "infirm" is used as a predicate adjective or a substantive, "sick" has been chosen to translate the other usages of infirmus. The English reader therefore should take note, not to construe this usage of "sick" in the standard fashion, when reading this translation.

The fifth term is really two Latin words: reddo and refero. The former means "to restore, to render," and the latter "to return, to refer." St. Francis uses the first in regard to restoring unto God the honor and glory, praise and thanks that are His due; and the second, in regard to man's duty to refer unto God all thanks and praise for the good things of this world. In this translations the former will always be translated with the English word "render" and the latter with the English word "return."

The sixth term is really three Latin words: amor, dilectio, caritas. In English these can each be translated by the word "love." However this is problematic, for the Latin terms have distinct meanings, and as such merit differing English words if their sense is to be manifested in translation. For this reason the following arrangement has been chosen for utility's sake. The Latin term caritas, will be always translated by the English word "charity" (or other forms such as "charitable") which, however, is meant here, not in the sense of an alms or donation, but of that supernatural form of love that moves one to give of himself or of his possessions to another. The other Latin terms have similar meanings: amor is often used to signify a natural, human, or sensible love, as well as that love which unites one person to another, and dilectio, the love that proceeds from a rational and free choice and which results in delight in another person. Thus St. Francis speaks of the amor Christi which urges us to follow and serve Christ; while Christ in the Gospels speaks of His own dilectio for His disciples, to show that He has chosen to love us first, while we were yet sinners. Nevertheless, English has no single word to distinguish these two forms of love. Hence the Latin terms amor and dilectio, *whether used in as nouns, adjectives, adverbs or verbs*, will both be translated with the English word "love" (or other forms such as "loving," "lovable," etc.). However to clarify St. Francis' usage, in each of his writings, the first instance of each term will be indicated in round () brackets with the root Latin word. Thereafter the Latin term will only appear in brackets if St. Francis' switches between them. In this manner both the English reader and the student of St. Francis' theology of love will find the Saint's teaching accessible.

The seventh term is really four Latin prepositions: de, ex, pro, and propter, which are often used in Latin to express the relation between an action and some cause, event or circumstance. Their meanings in Latin are derived from their use in spatial relations: de (down from), ex (out of), pro (in front of), propter (near by). To manifest this precision of expression, a consistent approach will be taken in translation, in which the English "because of," "from," "on behalf of," and "on account of" will be employed, respectively, in this regard. The only exception being the use of the Latin propter to express the intention or goal of an action; in that case it will be translated with the English phrase "for the sake of."

Finally, it should be noted that since St. Francis' use of language to convey obligation is at the heart of the purpose of nearly all his writings, some remark is necessary to clarify the precise translation of the Latin hortatory subjunctive into English. Throughout the Saint's writings one finds the present subjunctive used predominately for the purpose of instructing his

listeners in their obligations in life and in such cases there are several ways to render this in English. For example, Father Benen Fahy, O. F. M., in his translation entitled The Writings of St. Francis, (Burns & Oats: 1963), renders this construction predominantly with the English helping verb "should," which in English is used to convey a moral obligation less forceful than "ought to" and "must." The difficulty with this approach is the ambiguity of "should" in the English language: it can signify an obligation either of necessity or fittingness; and thus to employ it extensively in the translation of St. Francis' writings would be to considerably obscure the force and intent of his exhortations. In addition the use of the English helping verbs "should," "would," "may," "might," which are regularly employed in the translation of subjunctive verbs in Latin and which have usages particular to the English language, would present considerable difficulties, since they have no strict equivalent in the Latin language. Hence to employ them extensively in translating St. Francis' writings would be to impose levels of meaning that ultimately are derived more from the verbal habits of the English translator than those of the Saint himself. To avoid these possible misunderstandings, which would obscure St. Francis' thought, this translation will retain the standard approach to the translation of the Latin hortatory subjunctive, set forth in textbooks of the Latin language, which is to render this construction into English in the first person plural and third person, singular and plural, with the simple imperative constructed with the English helping verb "let." In other persons and number, and in all other cases where the subjunctive is used to express obligation, and where English does not permit the use of the helping verb "let," the English helping verb "to be" will be employed instead. Moreover, the imperfect subjunctive, which St. Francis occasionally uses in primary discourse, will be translated with the English helping verb "would" to manifest both the conditionality and continual past action expressed by this Latin construction. Similarly, the other Latin verbs, such as debere (ought to/must/be obliged), licet (it is licit to), and oportet (it is proper), will be rendered in a consistent manner. With these provisions the English reader will be able to at once to recognize and distinguish clearly the intent and force of St. Francis' genius.

Accepted Abbreviations for St. Francis' Writings

included in this translation

Adm	The Admonitions
CantSol	The Canticle of Brother Sun
BenLeo	The Blessing given to Friar Leo
BenBern	The Blessing given Friar Bernard
EpAnt	The Letter to Saint Anthony
EpCler I	A Letter to Clerics: <i>First recension</i>
EpCler I	A Letter to Clerics: <i>Later recension</i>
EpCust I	The First Letter to the Custodes
EpCust II	The Second Letter to the Custodes
EpFid I	A Letter to the Faithful: <i>First recension</i>
EpFid II	A Letter to the Faithful: <i>Later recension</i>
EpLeo	The Letter to Friar Leo
EpMin	Letter to a certain Minister provincial

EpOrd	The Letter sent to the whole Order
EpRect	A Letter to the Rulers of the Nations
ExhLD	An Exhortation to Praise God
ExpPat	The Exposition of the Our Father
FormViv	The Form of Living given to St. Clare
Frag	Fragments of other Rules
LaudDei	The Praises of God Most High
LaudHor	The Praises to be said at every hour
OffPass	The Office of the Passion of the Lord
OrCruc	A Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB	The Regula Bullata
RegNB	The Regula non-Bullata
RegEr	The Rule given for those in hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalVirt	A Salutation to the Virtues
Test	The Testament of Saint Francis
UltVol	St. Francis' last Will for Saint Clare
TestSen	The Testament given at Siena
VPLaet	On true and perfect gladness

Abbreviations Used that are particular to this work

CSEL	<u>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</u> , Viondobonae 1866 ss.
fn.	footnote
fns.	footnotes
lit.	literally
PL	J. P. Migne, <u>Patrologia cursus completus</u> , Series latina, Paris 1944-64.
Gal. Ps.	Gallican Psalter
Rom. Ps.	Roman Psalter

The Admonitions

[Adm]

St. Francis of Assisi wrote the Admonitions at various times throughout his religious life. They served as short exhortations to his religious brothers to persevere in their vocation. These Admonitions were so popular that they soon became known outside the Order. Indeed they first appear in the historical record in a citation made during a sermon given by a Dominican preacher at the University of Paris, July 13, 1231 A.D.²

Of all the writings of St. Francis, the Admonitions contain the most stirring and enduring legacy of the Seraphic Patriarch. They are a monument of the Poverello's profound and sober grasp of the spiritual reality of the religious vocation. As such they are a perennial source of inspiration for all his spiritual sons and daughters, as well as for all generations of those who seek to follow in the footsteps of Christ Crucified.

Chapter I. On the Body of the Lord

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." · "If" you know "Me," you would know "My Father as well; and from now on you shall know Him and have seen Him." · "Philip said to Him: Lord, show us the Father, and that suffices for us." · "Jesus said to him: So much time I have been with you, and you do not know Me? Philip, he who sees Me, sees even" My "Father" (Jn 14:6-9). · The Father dwells "in inaccessible light" (cf. 1 Tm 6:16), and "God is spirit" (Jn 4:24), and "no one ever sees God" (Jn 1:18). · For this reason He cannot be seen except in spirit, "since it is the spirit which vivifies, the flesh is good for nothing" (Jn 6:64). · But neither does the Son in that, which He is equal to the Father, seem to anyone to be otherwise than the Father, otherwise than the Holy Spirit. · Whence all who saw the Lord Jesus according to the Humanity and both did not see and believe according to the spirit and the Divinity, that He Himself is the true Son of God, have been damned; · so even now all who see the Sacrament, which is sanctified by the words of the Lord upon the altar by the hand of the priest in the form of bread and wine, and do not see and believe according to the spirit and the Divinity, that this is truly the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, have been damned, since the Most High Himself testifies, who said: · "This is My Body and" My "Blood of the New Testament [which is poured forth on behalf of the many]" (Mt 14:22,24); · and "He who eats" My Flesh "and drinks" My Blood, "has life eternal" (cf. Jn 6:55). · Whence of the Spirit of the Lord, who dwells in His faithful, is he who receives the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord. · All others, who do not share this same Spirit and presume to receive Him,³ eat "and" drink "judgement upon themselves" (cf. 1 Cor. 11:29).

Whence: "Sons of men, how long with a heavy heart?" (Ps 4:3) · Why is it that do you not know the truth and believe "in the Son of God?" (cf. Jn 9:35) · Behold, every day He humbles Himself (cf. Phil 2:8), just as when "from royal thrones" (Wis 18:15) He came into the womb of the Virgin; · every day He comes to us Himself humbly appearing; · everyday He

² K. Esser, *Gli Scritti di San Francesco d'Assisi: nuova edizione critica e versione italiana*, Edizioni Messaggero Padova, 1982 (reprinted 1995), pp. 83-4, n. 5. All citations of K. Esser's work will be made from this edition.

³ i.e. Our Lord Jesus Christ.

descends from the bosom of the Father upon the altar in the hands of the priest. · And just as to the holy Apostles in true flesh, so even now He shows Himself to us in the Sacred Bread. · And just as when they gazed at His very own flesh they saw only His flesh, but contemplating with spiritual eyes believed Him to be God, · so we too seeing bread and wine with bodily eyes, are to see and firmly believe, that they are His Most Holy Body and Blood, living and true. · And in such a manner the Lord is always with His faithful, just as He Himself says: "Behold I am with you even to the consummation of the age" (cf. Mt 28:20)

Chapter II. On the wickedness of one's own willfulness⁴

The Lord said to Adam: From "every tree eat, however, from the tree of good and evil you may not eat" (cf. Gen 2:16.17). · From every tree of paradise he could eat, because while he did not go against obedience, he did not sin. · For one eats of the tree of the knowledge of good, who appropriates his own will to himself and exalts himself because of the good things, which the Lord says and works in him;⁵ · and so through the suggestion of the devil and the transgression of the mandate it has become the fruit of the knowledge of evil. · Whence it is proper, that he endure punishment.

Chapter III. On perfect obedience

The Lord says in the Gospel: "He who" will "not" have renounced "all that he possesses, cannot be My disciple" (Lk 14:33); · and: "He who will have wanted to save his soul, shall lose it" (Lk 9:24). · That man abandons all that he possesses, and loses his own body, who offers himself whole to obedience in the hands of his prelate.⁶ · And whatever he does and says, that he himself knows, which is not contrary to his will, as long as what he does is good, is true obedience. · And if at any time the subject sees better and more useful things for his own soul than those which the prelate precepts⁷ him, let him sacrifice these willingly to God; but those which are the prelate's, let him strive to fulfill. · For this is charitable obedience (cf. 1 Pet 1:22), since it satisfies God and neighbor.

If indeed the prelate precepts anything against his soul,⁸ though he is not to obey him, nevertheless let him not give him up. · And if he has endured persecution by others for that reason, let him love (*dilectio*) them more for God's sake. · For he who will endure persecution rather than wanting to be separated from his brothers, in truth remains continually⁹ in perfect obedience, since he lays down "his own life" (cf. Jn 15:13) on behalf of his brothers. · For there are many religious, who under the appearance of seeing better things than those which their prelates precept, look back (cf. Lk 9:62) and return "to the vomit" of their own willfulness (cf.

⁴ lit. *propriae voluntatis*, "of one's own will." But St. Francis is speaking not of the wickedness of the will as such, but of a wicked manner of using the will to choose evil. On the text of this chapter, cf. Gottfried, Abbot of Admont, *Homiliae dominicales*, XXII; PL 174, 150c.

⁵ i.e. by means of actual graces which inspire and assist the individual in the accomplishment of virtuous deeds. Since in their source they cannot be but by God's grace, St. Francis attributes them to God as his property and possession.

⁶ A "prelate," is an ecclesiastical superior. In the next sentence "his" refers to the prelate.

⁷ To "precept," is to issue a formal command that establishes a standard or norm of conduct.

⁸ i.e. against the moral law.

⁹ lit. *vere permanet*, "truly remains throughout."

Prov. 26:11; 2 Pet 2:22); · these are murderers and on account of their bad examples cause many souls to perish.

Chapter IV. That no one should appropriate to himself the office of superior

I did not come "to be ministered unto, but to minister" (cf. Mt 20:28), says the Lord. · Let those, who are set up over others, glory as much because of that office of superior, as if they had been appointed to the office of washing the feet of the brothers.¹⁰ · And in as much as they are more disturbed because of having lost their office of superior than because of (having lost) the office regarding feet, so much more do they assemble purses¹¹ for themselves to the danger of their souls (cf. John 12:6).

Chapter V. That no one should be proud, but rather glory in the Cross of the Lord

Be attentive, oh man, to how many excellent things the Lord God has placed in you, since He created and formed you "to the image" of His own Beloved Son according to the body¹² "and to (His) likeness" according to the spirit (cf. Gen 1:26). · And all the creatures, which are under heaven, after you serve, know and obey their Creator better than you. · And even the demons did not crucify Him, but you with them have crucified Him and even now you crucify (Him) by delighting in vices and sins.¹³ · Whence therefore can you glory? · For if you were so subtle and wise that you had "all knowledge" (cf. 1Cor 13:2) and knew how to interpret every "kind of tongue" (cf. 1 Cor 12:28) and to search subtly after celestial things, in all these things you cannot glory; · since one demon knew of celestial things and now knows of earthly things more than all men,¹⁴ (even) granted that there has been someone, who received from the Lord a special

¹⁰ Since the friars went about barefoot (cf. RegB II,15; III,12; RegNB XV,1), the task of washing the brothers feet, when they returned from their journeys, was both a constant and laborious daily necessity; hence the reason to compare it with the office of a superior; cf. Abbot Geoffrey, Declamationes ex S. Bernardi Sermonibus, n.16; n.65; PL 184,466 C; 471 D and Bl. Ogerius, Abbot, De sermone Domini in ultima cena, Sermo I; PL 184, 882 D.

¹¹ On account of St. John's condemnation of Judas Iscariot for stealing from the purse entrusted to him by Christ, the purse became symbolic of his treachery. In the early sources of St. Francis' life, the keeping of a purse is frequently the cause of condemnation and the hallmark of infidelity to the Franciscan vocation (e.g. St. Bonaventure, Legenda maior, VII, 5), and this is reflected in St. Francis' own writings (cf. RegNB VIII, 6-7; RegB IV,1). In the passage above, the symbol of the purse is used in reference to the avariciousness of human willfulness and pride, which St. Francis demanded to be rejected by the Franciscan vow of obedience (cf. RegB X,3; RegNB V,16).

¹² In this St. Francis manifests that Catholic and Christocentric understanding of creation (cf. Jn 1:1,3,10; 1 Cor 11:7; Col 1:16,17; Heb 11:3).

¹³ "To crucify Christ again" is a ancient theme in Christianity, referring not to the actual physical suffering of Calvary, but to the offense given to the Divine Majesty of the Son of God, who has already suffered so much on Calvary so that men would sin no more (cf. Heb 6:4-7).

¹⁴ A reference to Lucifer, whom Catholic Tradition holds to have been one of the most intelligent of all the angels before his fall; and who afterwards, as Satan, being cast down upon the Earth, perverted his celestial manner of knowing into an earthly, carnal way of knowing. For a classic exposition of this see St. Bonaventure, Commentarium in Quattor Libros Sententiarum, II, d. 6,

understanding of the highest wisdom. · Similarly even if you were more handsome and wealthy than all and even if you were working miracles,¹⁵ as would put demons to flight, all those things are injurious¹⁶ to you and nothing (about them) pertains to you and you can glory in them not at all. · But in this we can glory, "in" our "infirmities" (cf. 2 Cor 12:5) and bearing each day the Holy Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Lk 14:27).

Chapter VI. On the imitation of the Lord

Let us be attentive, all friars, to the Good Shepherd, who to save His own sheep endured the Passion of the Cross. · The sheep¹⁷ of the Lord have followed Him in tribulation and persecution, shame and hunger, in infirmity and temptation and all other things; and because of these they have received from the Lord everlasting life. · Whence it is a great shame to us servants of God, that the saints did the works, but we, by reciting them, want to receive the glory and honor.

Chapter VII. That good work should follow knowledge

The Apostle says: "The letter kills, the spirit, however, vivifies" (2 Cor 3:6). · Those have died by the letter who desire to know only the words,¹⁸ so as to be held as wiser among others and be able to acquire great riches to be given to relatives and friends. · And those religious have died by the letter, who do not know want to follow the spirit of the Divine Letter,¹⁹ but rather desire only to know words and to explain them to others. · And those have been vivified by the Divine Letter, who do not attribute every letter, which they know and desire to know, to the body,²⁰ but in word and example render them to the Most High Lord God, of whom is every good.

Chapter VIII. On avoiding the sin of envy

The Apostle said: "No one can say, 'Lord Jesus,' except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3); · and "There is no one who does good, not even one" (Rm 3:12). · Whoever therefore envies his own brother because of the good, which the Lord says and works in him,²¹ tends towards the sin of blasphemy, because he envies the Most High Himself (cf. Mt 20:15), who says and works every good.

a. 1. q. 1..

¹⁵ lit. mirabilia, "wonders" which according to the context are supernatural in nature; hence "miracles." This term mirabilia is an allusion to the Psalms, cf. fn. 57.

¹⁶ In the sense that, as objects of vainglory, they could be the occasion of one's downfall.

¹⁷ i.e. the Saints (cf. Jn 10:1-6; Mt 25:31-46).

¹⁸ i.e. of Sacred Scripture. Learning in the Middle Ages was the career path for advancement in public and ecclesiastic life. Concerning this entire chapter, cf. St. Bernard, Sermones in Cantica Canticorum, Sermo XXVI,3; PL 183,968 D.

¹⁹ i.e. Sacred Scripture itself; called the "divine writing" inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is its principle author.

²⁰ i.e. to their own natural talents.

²¹ see fn. 5.

Chapter IX. On love

The Lord says: "Love your enemies; [do good to those who hate you, and pray on behalf of those who are persecuting and calumniating you]" (Mt 5:44). · For he truly loves his enemy, who does not grieve because of the injury, which he did to him, · but, concerning the sin against his own soul, burns for the sake of the love (amor) of God.²² · And he shows love (dilectio) for him from (his) works.²³

Chapter X. On the chastisement of the body

There are many, who while they sin or receive injury, often blame their enemy or neighbor. · But it is not so: because each one has in his own power (his) enemy, namely the body,²⁴ through which he sins. · Whence "blessed is that servant" (Mt 24:46), who having surrendered such an enemy into his own power,²⁵ has held it always captive and wisely guarded himself from it; · because, as long as he has does this, no other enemy, visible or invisible, will be able to harm him.²⁶

Chapter XI. That no one should be corrupted by the wickedness of another

No thing ought to displease the servant of God except sin. · And in whatever manner another person would sin, even on account of this the servant of God, out of charity, would not be upset or grow angry, (as one who) hoards up fault for himself (cf. Rm 2:5). · That servant of God, who does not grow angry nor disturbs himself on another's behalf, lives rightly without anything of his own.²⁷ · And blessed is he, who does not let anything remain for himself,²⁸ rendering those things "which are Caesar's to Caesar, and those which are God's to God" (Mt

²² That is, burns from the love of God so as to reconcile his brother to God, rather than burning from hatred of his brother so as to do him evil in return. Since bearing suffering, especially when this suffering is brought on from injustices received from neighbors and family members, can be so meritorious, St. Francis encourages his sons to its practice, by reminding them that it serves and honors that which he valued so greatly himself, the love of God. This joy in the service of divine Love is what is meant by "rejoicing in one's sufferings" and sharing in the victory of the Cross (compare Rm 8:16-18; 2 Cor 4:10,17; 12:7-9; 1 Pt 2:19-21; 3:17; 4:12-13; 1 Pt 5:10).

²³ cf. St. Augustine, Sermo LXXXII, III, 4; PL 38,507-8.

²⁴ In the sense that the body, perverted in its harmony with the soul by the effects of original sin, is now a source of temptation. The importance of holding this enemy in contempt is, for St. Francis, one of the crucial struggles of the Christian life; for unless this be done, the individual will succumb to judging all things according to their relation to the satisfaction of the body, that is, without any relation to supernatural goods and the standards of the divine and moral law. This is the origin of that manner of judging which in Catholic teaching is called "the carnal mind."

²⁵ By means of mortification of the senses, fasting, and other penances.

²⁶ cf. John Cassian, Institutiones V,21; CSEL XVII,98.

²⁷ For to be upset that others are not as we would like them to be, is avariciousness and selfishness, not that virtuous anger which the Scriptures call "righteous" (compare Lk 9:51-56 and Jn 2:13-17).

²⁸ i.e. does not fail to render all thanks, praise, honor, and glory to God for the good He does through him for others' sake, in him for his own sake, and for him through others.

22:21).

Chapter XII. On recognizing the spirit²⁹ of God

Thus can the servant of God be known, if he has the spirit of the Lord: · when the Lord works through him anything good, if his flesh for that reason would not exalt itself,³⁰ because it is always contrary to every good, · but if he rather would hold himself up before (his own) eyes as more vile and esteem himself less than all other men.³¹

Chapter XIII. On patience

"Blessed (are) the peacemakers, since they shall be called sons of God" (Mt 5:9). The servant of God cannot know how much patience and humility he has in himself, while he is satisfied. · However when the time has come, that those who ought to satisfy him, do the contrary to him, as much patience and humility (is) there, that much he has and not more.

Chapter XIV. On poverty of spirit

"Blessed (are) the poor in spirit, since theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 5:3). · There are many, who persisting in prayers and (liturgical) offices practice many abstinences and afflict their own bodies, · but because of a single word, which seems to be injurious to their bodies³² or because of anything, which is brought against them, being scandalized, they are continually disturbed. · These are not poor in spirit; since he who is truly poor in spirit,³³ hates his very self and loves those who beat him in the face (cf. Mt 5:39).

Chapter XV. On peace

"Blessed (are) the peacemakers, since they shall be called sons of God" (Mt 5:9). · Those truly are the peacemakers, who concerning all those things, which they suffer in this age, preserve peace in soul and body for the sake of the love (amor) of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁹ i.e. the signs of authentic inspiration by the Holy Spirit.

³⁰ Through proud thoughts, words, or deeds.

³¹ On account of the abyss that lies between God's goodness to him and his corresponding goodness towards God.

³² i.e. their natural endowments, rights, or reputation in the sight of men.

³³ "Poor in spirit" is the habit of mind that considers one's own worth in the light of truths of the Faith and four last things: death, judgement, Heaven and Hell; for the consideration of one's sinfulness and spiritual debts before God leads to the realization that all one suffers is but a very small portion of the punishment one in fact deserves.

Chapter XVI. On cleanliness³⁴ of heart

"Blessed (are) the clean of heart, since they themselves shall see God" (Mt 5:8). · Truly are they clean in heart who despise earthly things, seek heavenly ones and do not ever withdraw from adoring and beholding³⁵ Our Lord, living and true, with a clean heart and soul.

Chapter XVII. On the humble servant of God

"Blessed (is) that servant" (Mt 24:46), who does not exalt himself more because of the good, which the Lord says and works through him,³⁶ than that which He says and works through another. · A man sins, who wants rather to receive from his neighbor, what he does not want to give of himself to the Lord God.

Chapter XVIII. On compassion for one's neighbor

Blessed (is) the man, who supports his neighbor during his frailty to the extent that he would want to be supported by him, if he falls into an exactly similar situation. · Blessed (is) the servant who renders all his goods to the Lord God,³⁷ because he who has retained anything for himself "conceals" within himself "the money of his Lord" God (Mt 25:18) and "what" he thought he "had, shall be born away from" him (Lk 8:18).

Chapter XIX. On the humble servant of God

Blessed (is) the servant, who does not consider himself better, when he is magnified and exalted by men, as when for example he is considered to be vile, simple, and despised, · because as much as a man is before God, that much he is and nothing more. · Woe to that religious, who has been placed on high by others and does not wish to descend by means of his own will. · And "blessed (is) that servant" (Mt 24:46), who is placed on high not by means of his own will and desires always to be beneath the feet of others.³⁸

Chapter XX. On the good and the vain religious

Blessed (is) that religious, who has not cheer and gladness except in the Lord's most holy discourses and works, · and with these leads men forth to the love of God with joy and gladness (cf. Ps. 50:10). · Woe to that religious, who delights himself in idle and vain words and with these leads men to laugh.³⁹

³⁴ lit. munditia, the state of being clean, free from grime, filth, dirt and stains; here used it in reference to the absence of both vice and the punishment due sin, and a purity of intention.

³⁵ By means of meditation and recollection.

³⁶ see fn. 5.

³⁷ i.e. by employing his talents in the service of God through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

³⁸ cf. St. Bernard, Tractatus de gradibus humilitatis et superbiae, ch. XV, n. 43; PL 182,966 A, 949 C.

³⁹ cf. Rule of St. Benedict, VII, 59-60; CSEL 75,50.

Chapter XXI. On the inane and loquacious religious

Blessed (is) the servant, who when he speaks, does not manifest all his own (thoughts) in view of (some) wage and is not swift to speak (cf. Prov. 29:20), but wisely provides, what he ought to speak and answer. · Woe to that religious, who does not retain in his heart (Lk 2:19.51) the good things, which the Lord shows him, and does not show them to others through work, but who in view of (some) wage desires rather to show them to men with words. · He himself receives "his wage" (cf. Mt 6:2; 6:16) and (his) hearers bring back little fruit.

Chapter XXII. On correction

Blessed (is) the servant who would endure discipline, accusation and rebuke as patiently from another as from his very self. · Blessed (is) the servant, who having been rebuked, acquiesces kindly, submits meekly, confesses humbly and makes satisfaction freely. · Blessed (is) the servant, who is not swift to excuse himself and humbly endures shame and rebuke because of a sin, where he has not committed (any) fault.⁴⁰

Chapter XXIII. On humility

Blessed (is) the servant, who is found to be as humble among his own subjects, as when for example he would be among his own lords.⁴¹ · Blessed (is) the servant, who always remains continually under the rod of correction.⁴² · A faithful and prudent servant is he (cf. Mt 24:45), who in all (circumstances) does not delay to punish his own offenses interiorly by means of contrition and exteriorly by means of confession and works of satisfaction.

Chapter XXIV. On true love

Blessed (is) the servant, who would love (dilectio) his own brother as much, when he is infirm to the point that he cannot repay him, as when he is a healthy (brother), who can repay him.

Chapter XXV. Likewise on the same (subject)

Blessed (is) the servant, who would so love and fear his own brother, when he is far from him, as when for example he is with him, and would not say anything behind him, which he cannot, with charity, say before him.

Chapter XXVI. That the servants of God should honor clerics

Blessed (is) the servant, who puts faith in the clerics who live rightly according to the manner of the Roman Church. · And woe to those who despise them; for though they may be sinners, no one however ought to judge them, since God Himself reserves to Himself alone their

⁴⁰ Since one always has many sins which have gone unpunished, it is only right that one should suffer for them, if even at another occasion.

⁴¹ i.e. not just among one's immediate superiors, but among one's highest.

⁴² i.e. in a state of mind and heart which welcomes correction from superiors and subjects.

judgement. · For as much as their administration is greater, which they have because of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which they themselves receive and which they themselves alone⁴³ minister to others, · so much greater a sin have they, who sin against them, than against all the other men of this world.⁴⁴

Chapter XXVII. On the virtue of fleeing vice⁴⁵

Where there is charity and wisdom, there (is) neither fear nor ignorance. · Where there is patience and humility, there (is) neither wrath nor disturbance. · Where there is poverty with gladness, there (is) neither cupidity nor avarice. · Where there is quiet and meditation, there (is) neither solicitousness nor wandering about. · Where there is fear of the Lord to guard the entrance hall (cf. Lk 11:21), there the enemy can have no place to enter. · Where there is mercy and discretion, there (is) neither superfluity nor hardness.

Chapter XXVIII. On concealing good lest it be lost

Blessed (is) the servant, who stores up "in Heaven" (Mt 6:20) the good things, which the Lord shows him and does not desire to manifest them to men in view of (some) wage, · because the Most High Himself will manifest his works to whomever He has pleased. · Blessed (is) the servant, who watches the secrets of the Lord "in his heart" (cf. Lk 2:19.51).

⁴³ A reference to the immemorial Tradition of the Catholic Church of reserving the administration of the Sacrament of the Altar to the clergy, cf. e.g. Pope Benedict XIV's Encyclical, *Ex Quo*, (March 1, 1756 A.D.) n. 42, in regard to Canon XXV of the Council of Laodicea (4th Century).

⁴⁴ Because the greater the dignity of the one offended, the greater the sin of the offender.

⁴⁵ St. Francis expounds this theme again in his "Salutation of the Virtues" [SalVirt].

The Canticle of Brother Sun

or The Praises of the Creatures⁴⁶

[CantSol]

The Canticle of Brother Sun is the very first work of literature in the Italian language. St. Francis composed it most likely during the winter of 1224-5 A.D.—possibly while at the Church of San Damiano, in Assisi⁴⁷—as grace, born of suffering, urged him to praise and glorify the Most Holy Trinity even unto death. The Canticle of Brother Sun first appears in the historical record in a reference made by Bl. Thomas of Celano in his Vita Prima, written 1228 A.D.⁴⁸

Most High, Omnipotent, Good Lord,

Thine be the praises, the glory, and the honor and every blessing (cf. Apoc. 4:9.11).
To Thee alone, Most High, do they belong
and no man is worthy to mention Thee.

May Thou be praised, my Lord, with all Thy creatures (cf. Tob. 8:7),
especially mister brother sun,
of whom is the day, and Thou enlightens us through him.

And he is beautiful and radiant with a great splendor,
of Thee, Most High, does he convey the meaning.

May Thou be praised, my Lord, for⁴⁹ sister moon and the stars (cf. Ps. 148:3),
in heaven Thou has made them clear and precious and beautiful.

May Thou be praised, my Lord, for brother wind,
and for the air and the cloudy and the clear weather and every weather (cf. Dan 3:64-65),
through which to all Thy creatures Thou gives sustenance (cf. Ps. 103:13-14).

May Thou be praised, my Lord, for sister water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

May Thou be praised, my lord, for brother fire (cf. Dan 3:66),
through whom Thou illumines the night,
and he is handsome and jocund and robust and strong.

May Thou be praised, my Lord, for our sister, mother earth, (cf. Dan 3:74)
who sustains us and governs,

and produces various fruits with colored flowers and green plants (cf. Ps 103:13-14).

May Thou be praised, my Lord, for those who forgive for the sake of Thy love⁵⁰ (cf. Mt 6:12),
and endure infirmity and tribulation.

⁴⁶ This English translation was made from the most ancient Italian text identified by Fr. K. Esser, p. 157. For a biblical parallel, cf. Dan. 3:17,23,51-90 and Psalm 148. Punctuation and the arrangement of fourteen verses follows that of the original Italian. The translation of the Italian *per* into English as "for" has been retained, despite K. Esser's translation of the same into Latin as propter; cf. Note on Latin terms at the beginning of this work.

⁴⁷ K. Esser, pp. 160-1.

⁴⁸ cf. 1 Celano 80-1,109,115; see also 2 Celano 213, 217.

⁴⁹ For a more recent discussion of the use of per ("for") in this Canticle, cf. K. Esser, p. 159, n.33.

⁵⁰ The Italian here reads *per lo tuo amore*. This last word is the equivalent of the Latin term amor, cf. Note on Latin terms at the beginning of this work.

Blessed those who endure them in peace (cf. Mt 5:10),
because by Thee, Most High, will they be crowned.
May Thou be praised, my Lord, for our sister, bodily death,
whom no man living can escape.
Woe to those, who die in mortal sin:⁵¹
blessed those whom she⁵² will find in Thy most holy desires,
because the second death will do them no evil (cf. Apoc 2:11; 20:6).
Praise and bless my Lord (cf. Dan 3:85),
and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility!

The Parchment given to Friar Leo

This document had its origin in a historical incident reported by both Bl. Thomas Celano and St. Bonaventure.⁵³ One day Friar Leo, a close companion of St. Francis, came to him, revealing that he was in the midst of a severe interior trial, and asked for the Saint's assistance. To satisfy his request, St. Francis wrote these "The Praises of God Most High" [LaudDei] and the "Blessing given to Friar Leo" [BenLeo] on a single piece of parchment: the former on the obverse, the latter on the reverse. Upon receiving it, Friar Leo was instantly freed of his temptation. This parchment is preserved to this day at the Sacro Convento in Assisi, and bears a note of authentication by Friar Leo himself.⁵⁴ For this reason the place and date of its composition are known very accurately: sometime after St. Francis received the stigmata (Sept. 14) and before the Feast of St. Michael (Sept. 29) in the year 1224 A.D., while both were in retreat on Mount Alverna.⁵⁵

The Praises of God Most High

[LaudDei]

The praise of God is one of the most characteristic and essential aspects of St. Francis spirituality, so much so, that for him it was a solemn duty, borne of the most profound gratitude and love of the Most Holy Trinity, our Creator and Redeemer, cf. St. Francis' "Exposition of the Our Father" [ExpPat]. It is thus quite consistent with the spirituality of the Saint that these Praises are associated with a miracle worked by him during his life. These Praises are preserved on the front of the parchment which St. Francis gave to Friar Leo (see above). In the translation below the arrangement of verses follows that of St. Francis' autograph as reconstructed by K. Esser.⁵⁶

"Thou art" the Holy Lord, the only "God, who works wonders"⁵⁷ (Ps 76:15). ·

⁵¹ cf. 1 Jn 16:17.

⁵² Sister, bodily death.

⁵³ cf. 2 Celano 49; St. Bonaventure, Legenda maior, XI,9.

⁵⁴ K. Esser, p. 164.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 175.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 167-170. However the punctuation follows the Latin text reconstructed by K. Esser on p. 170-1.

⁵⁷ lit. mirabilia, "wonders." The Psalms use this term to refer to the wonders wrought by God in

Thou art strong, Thou art great (cf. Ps 85:10), Thou art the Most High,
Thou art the Omnipotent King, Thou "Holy Father" (cf. Jn 17:11) King "of Heaven and
Earth." (Mt 11:25). · Thou art Three and One Lord, God
of gods (cf. Ps 135:2), Thou art good, all good, the Highest Good,
Love⁵⁸

Lord God living and true (cf. 1 Thes 1:9). · Thou art Charity;
Thou art Wisdom, Thou art humility, "Thou art patience" (Ps 70:5),
Thou art Beauty, Thou art gentleness; Thou art security, Thou art quiet,
Thou art our Hope⁵⁹

Thou art joy; and gladness, Thou art justice,
all⁶⁰ our

Thou art temperance, Thou art riches unto sufficiency. ·
Thou art beauty, Thou art gentleness,
"Thou art Protector" (Ps 30:5), Thou art guard and our defender,
Thou art fortitude (cf. Ps 42:2), Thou art refreshment. · Thou art our hope,⁶¹
Thou art our faith. Thou art our charity,
Thou art our eternal life:⁶²

Thou art our entire sweetness, Great and admirable Lord, God Omnipotent, merciful Savior.

The Blessing given to Friar Leo

[BenLeo]

Friar Leo was one of St. Francis' close companions. According to the early sources, St. Francis wrote this blessing to assist Friar Leo in time of temptation. It appears on the reverse of the parchment which he gave Friar Leo (see above). This writing of St. Francis has the unique honor of containing the signature of St. Francis, in the form of a Tau Cross drawn in red ink, between the letters of Leo's name [i.e. Le-T-o].⁶³ This blessing has become the customary one in Franciscan communities, and is recited over the friars by the local superior as the last prayer of the day. St. Francis ability to use language emphatically is seen particularly in the last sentence of this blessing.

saving His people. The Church applies this term "wonder" to the works of Christ in Redemption of Mankind. In particular the "wonders" which God alone can work are "miracles"; for a discussion see St. Robert Bellarmine, *Explanatio in Psalmos*, LXXVI,13.

⁵⁸ The Latin word *amor* appears in this position, above that for "charity." According to K. Esser this replaces the latter, and represents a correction by the Saint himself, cf. p. 168.

⁵⁹ This phrase, like that of *amor* above, is written between the lines, and represents a correction, by insertion, before the phrase "and gladness," cf. K. Esser, p. 169.

⁶⁰ The Latin words corresponding to "all" and "our" appear between the lines and are meant to be inserted in the phrase immediately below: "Thou art all our riches..." cf. K. Esser, p. 169.

⁶¹ In both this and the following verse, the Latin word for "our" begins the verse which follows it, rather than ending the verse in which it appears, as is done above in English by necessity.

⁶² Again, like the others before it, this phrase appears between the lines, and is to be added after "Thou art our sweetness;" cf. K. Esser, p. 170.

⁶³ The Tau is the biblical sign of election (cf. Ez 9:4), and by this means St. Francis sought to encourage his companion against final despair, cf. K. Esser, p. 172.

May the Lord bless thee and keep thee; may He show His face to thee and be merciful to thee. · May He turn His countenance to thee and give thee peace (cf. Num 6:24-26).⁶⁴ · May the Lord bless, friar Leo, thee. (cf. Num 6:27b)

The Letter to St. Anthony

[EpAnt]

St. Anthony of Padua (1195-1231 A.D.) joined the Order of St. Francis after having himself been a Canon Regular of the Holy Cross in Portugal. Once his learning came to be known, his confreres continually begged him to teach them theology, to prepare them for Sacred Orders. In this brief letter, written during the winter of 1223-4 A.D., St. Francis gave St. Anthony his permission.⁶⁵ The existence of this letter is attested by Bl. Thomas Celano in his Vita Secunda.⁶⁶

To Friar Anthony, my bishop,⁶⁷ Francis (wishes) salvation.⁶⁸ · It pleases me that you read⁶⁹ sacred theology to the friars, so long as in the study of this you do not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion, just as is contained in the Rule.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ This blessing appears as part of a rite for the reconciliation of penitents on Holy Thursday, in a pontifical published during the pontificate of Pope Innocent III (d. 1216); cf. K. Esser, pp. 175-6.

⁶⁵ K. Esser, pp. 183-4.

⁶⁶ cf. 2 Celano 163; see also St. Bonaventure, Legenda maior, XI,1.

⁶⁷ In St. Francis' day, such expertise in theological studies was considered the distinguishing characteristic of the episcopacy, to which St. Anthony was, on occasion, nominated. Moreover the recent Council of the Lateran (1215 A.D.), in its X, XI, and XXVII constitutions, had prescribed Bishops to choose suitable priests to preach throughout their dioceses in their stead; hence St. Francis' reason for calling St. Anthony a bishop; cf. K. Esser, pp. 184-5.

⁶⁸ lit. salutem. In the salutation of each of his letters, St. Francis always includes this greeting. Since the word salutem, the traditional form of greeting in Medieval Latin, has a wide range of meanings ("health," "greeting," "salvation," "soundness," "welfare," "well-being," etc.) it requires a translation according to context. Given St. Francis' devotion to the mystery of salvation in Christ it seems that by this phrase he uniformly intends a wish for "salvation," as can be seen from the context of his use of salutem in EpOrd 3. For uniformity sake, salutem will be translated as "salvation" throughout St. Francis' writings, the only exception being its use in the narration "On True and Perfect Joy" [VPLaet] 15. On the use of this greeting in the Vulgate, cf. 2 Mac 1:1 and Jm 1:1.

⁶⁹ In the Middle Ages, a professor of theology would teach by reading to his students from books such as Peter of Lombard's Liber Sententiarum, commenting on various topics in the course of his lecture; the appointment of professors of theology was recently prescribed by the Fourth Council of the Lateran (1215 A.D.), in its XI constitution.

⁷⁰ cf. RegB V,2.

A Letter to Clerics

[EpCler I]

First Recension

For St. Francis there was nothing dearer to his heart than Our Lord Jesus Christ. He devoted himself to Christ's mother, for His sake; to the Gospels, since they were Christ's teachings, to St. Peter, upon whom He founded His Church, to the Apostles, for they were His disciples, to the Catholic Church, which He founded, and to Her clergy, who administered His Body and Blood.

It was a central and principle part of the mission St. Francis handed on to his sons that they were to preach more by virtuous deeds than by words; and this chiefly to win back the clergy to a regular and devout life, so that through them the faithful would learn of and receive the Sacraments of salvation.

St. Francis wrote the first recension of this letter shortly after the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.), to exhort the diocesan clergy of his day to put its decrees into practice. The second recension was written after the publication of Pope Honorius III's *Sane cum olim* in Sept. 22, 1219 A.D. and St. Francis's subsequent return from the Holy Land in the spring of 1220 A.D..⁷¹ The timeless Catholicity of St. Francis' Letter to Clerics is a striking witness to the unchanging nature of authentic Roman Catholicism.

Let us attend, all clerics, to the great sin and ignorance, which certain men have over the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Most Holy Names and His written words, which sanctify the Body. · We know that there cannot be a Body,⁷² unless first it is sanctified by the word.⁷³ · For we have and see nothing corporally of the Most High Himself, in this age,⁷⁴ except the Body and Blood, Names and words, through which we have been made and redeemed "from death to life" (1 Jn 3:14). · Moreover let all those who minister such Most Holy Mysteries,⁷⁵ consider within themselves—most of all those who minister illicitly⁷⁶—how vile are the chalices, corporals,⁷⁷ and (altar) linens, where His Body and Blood is sacrificed. · And by

⁷¹ cf. K. Esser, pp. 192-4, 199, 203. Esser favors a date for the *First Recension* prior to 1219 A.D., when St. Francis set out for the Levant; the *Second Recension* was written sometime after March, 1220 and before St. Francis' death on Oct. 3, 1226 A.D..

⁷² i.e. the Most Holy Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ present in sacramental form.

⁷³ i.e. of the priest: "*Hoc est enim corpus meum ...*" (Mt 26:26).

⁷⁴ lit. *saeculum*, a Latin word meaning "age," "generation," or even "world" in the Christian sense of human society at large, corrupted by sin. As "age" it refers to the "last age of mankind," which begins with the Incarnation of Christ and ends with Judgement Day. As "generation" it echoes Christ's own usage, referring to those presently living to whom the Gospel of salvation is offered, but who refuse it (cf. the Parable of Jonah, Mt 12:39-41). See also the Note on Latin terms at the beginning of this work.

⁷⁵ The Sacraments of Christ's Body and Blood are referred to as "Mysteries" on account of their central importance to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is for Christians the *mysterion* (Greek for "secret, sacred ritual") and because their recognition as such is the test of Catholic Faith.

⁷⁶ i.e. by offering the Mass in a manner contrary to the rubrics and ecclesiastical laws.

⁷⁷ In the traditional Roman Rite, the corporal is the white linen cloth upon which the consecrated Host, the *Corpus Domini*, is placed. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.) had recently condemned the lack of decorum in churches in its XIX constitution.

many in vile places He is placed and abandoned, borne about in a wretched manner and received unworthily⁷⁸ and ministered to others indiscreetly.⁷⁹ · Even the Names and His written words are sometimes by feet trampled upon; · because "the bestial man does not perceive the things that are of God" (1 Cor 2:14). · Are not we moved with piety concerning all these things, when the pious Lord Himself offers Himself into our hands and we handle Him and receive Him each day by means of our mouth? · Or are we ignorant that we must (one day) come into His Hands?⁸⁰ · Therefore let us quickly and firmly amend (ourselves) regarding all these things and the others; · and wherever the Most Holy Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ has been illicitly placed and abandoned, let Him be removed from that place and be placed and sealed⁸¹ in an precious⁸² place. Similarly let the Names and written words of the Lord, wherever they are found in unclean places, be gathered together and they ought to be placed together in an honorable place. · All these things all⁸³ clerics are bound to observe above all until the end.⁸⁴ · And let those who have not done this, know that they must render "an account" before the Lord "on the Day of Judgement" (cf. Mt 12:36). · This having been written, so that it ought to be better observed, let them know themselves (to be) blest by the Lord God, who have had it copied.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ i.e. without faith and/or in the state of mortal sin. The Latin verb sumere, translated here and in the following sentences as "received", means literally "to take," "choose" or "obtain" in the physical sense. Thus sumere differs from "receive" in that it does not imply possessiveness; but although it is the root of the English word "consume," it also differs from this, in that it is not a final act: what is sumptus with the mouth can still be spat out. The use of sumere, in regard to receiving the Blessed Sacrament with the mouth, is an ancient expression of the Roman Church, cf. Leo the Great (pope 440-461 A.D.) Sermon, n. 91, iii: "*Hoc enim ore sumitur quod fide creditur*": [For this (Sacrament) which is believed by faith, is received by the mouth.] And this usage of the Roman Church is clearly definitive, as can be seen when the text of the Vulgate is examined, for therein sumere is used for that physical action of touching, handling, picking up, grasping *with the hands*, particularly as regards both sacred things (Lv 8:23; Tob 11:13; 2 Mac 5:16; Ez 10:7) and especially bread (Mt 17:26; Lk 6:4) during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (Acts 27:35). Hence by juxtaposing ore (or per orem) to sumere the Roman Church is professing its ancient Tradition, whereby the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is to be taken (received) by the communicant, not with the hands, but with the mouth. See also fn. 178.

⁷⁹ i.e. without the dignity and prudence worthy of so great a Sacrament.

⁸⁰ i.e. at the moment of death, when the soul undergoes the particular Judgement.

⁸¹ The recent Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.) had prescribed in its XX constitution that all repositories for the Most Blessed Sacrament be secured with a lock.

⁸² St. Francis wanted the repository, where the Most Blessed Sacrament was kept, to be the most precious of all the places in the friary.

⁸³ This second "all" translates the Latin univversi, which means "all" in the sense of "each and every."

⁸⁴ lit. usque in finem. A favorite eschatological phrase of St. Francis to signify "until the day of death" for individuals; "until the end of time" for the community. This phrase is itself scriptural, cf. Ps 76:9; Is 13:20; 57:16; Am 1:11; Mt 24:13; 2 Cor 1:13; Heb 3:6; 6:11; Apoc 2:26.

⁸⁵ The first known copy of this Letter is from the Benedictine Monastery of Subiaco and dates before 1238 A.D.; cf. K. Esser, pp. 187, 200.

A Letter to Clerics

[EpCler II]

*Later Recension*⁸⁶

Let us attend, all clerics, to the great sin and ignorance, which certain men have over the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Most Holy Names and His written words, which sanctify the Body. · We know, that there cannot be a Body, unless first it is sanctified by the word. · For we have and see nothing corporally of the Most High Himself, in this age, except the Body and Blood, Names and words, through which we have been made and redeemed "from death to life" (1 Jn 3:14). · However let all those who minister such most holy ministries, consider within themselves—most of all those who minister indiscreetly—how vile are the chalices, corporals, and (altar) linens, where the Body and Blood of the Lord is sacrificed. · And by many in vile places He is abandoned, borne about in a wretched manner and received unworthily and ministered to others indiscreetly. · Even the Names and His written words are sometimes by feet trampled upon; · because "the bestial man does not perceive the things that are of God" (1 Cor 2:14). · Are we not moved in piety concerning all these things, when the pious Lord Himself offers Himself into our hands and we handle Him and receive Him each day by means of our mouth? · Or are we ignorant that we must (one day) come into His Hands? · Therefore let us quickly and firmly amend (ourselves) regarding all these things and the others; · and wherever the Most Holy Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ has been illicitly placed and abandoned, let Him be removed from that place and let Him be placed and sealed in a precious place. · Similarly let the Names and written words of the Lord, wherever they are found in unclean places, be gathered together and they ought to be placed together in an honorable place. · And we know, that we are bound above all to observe all these things according to the precepts of the Lord and the constitutions⁸⁷ of Holy Mother Church. · And those who have not done this, let them know, that they shall render "an account" before the Lord "on the Day of Judgement" (cf. Mt 12:36). · This having been written, so that it ought to be better observed, let them know themselves (to be) blest by the Lord God, who have had it copied.

The First Letter to the Custodes

[EpCust I]

In the religious Order founded by St. Francis there were eventually three levels of administration: the central government was directed by the Minister general; the regional governments by the Ministers provincial. Still smaller regions were governed by a Custos (pl. custodes), who could be assisted by guardians, and who had the care of one or more convents of friars, or later by guardians, who each had the care of a single convent.

As Minister general St. Francis addressed this letter to exhort the custodes to attend to those things

⁸⁶ For footnotes common to both recensions, see EpCler I.

⁸⁷ This is a reference to Pope Honorius III's *Sane cum olim* of Sept. 22, 1219 A.D., which reaffirmed the discipline imposed by the recent Fourth Lateran Council (cf. constitution XIX) regarding the honor due the Most Blessed Sacrament.

which he considered to be the most important duties of their administration. Its similarity with "A Letter to Clerics" [EpCler I] will be easily noticed. This letter was written sometime after March, 1220 A.D., when St. Francis returned from his trip to the Holy Land, and before Pope Honorius III granted the Friars the privilege of having chapels for the Blessed Sacrament in their own friaries, in 1224 A.D..⁸⁸

To all⁸⁹ the custodes of the Friars Minor, to whom these letters will have come, Friar Francis, your servant and tiny (brother) in the Lord God, (wishes) salvation with new signs⁹⁰ in Heaven and on Earth, which are great and most excellent before God and reputed least by many religious and other men.

I beg you more than from my very self, in so far as when it is fitting and you have seen that it is expedient, that you supplicate the clerics humbly, that they ought to venerate the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Names and His written words, which sanctify the Body, above all things. · That they ought to regard the chalices, the corporals, the ornaments of the altar and all things which pertain to the Sacrifice, as precious. · And if in any place the Most Holy Body of the Lord has been very poorly placed, by the mandate of the Church, that He be put in a precious place by them and sealed up and with great veneration borne about and with discretion ministered unto others. · That even the Names and written words of the Lord, wherever they be found in unclean places, be gathered together and that they ought to be placed together in a honorable place. · And in all the preaching, which you do, you are to warn the people concerning penance,⁹¹ and that no one can be saved, except him who receives the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord (cf. Jn 6:54), · and, when He is sacrificed by a priest upon the altar and borne about in any region,⁹² that all nations, upon bended knees, are to render praise, glory and honor to the Lord God living and true. · And you are to announce and preach about His praise in such a way, that at every hour and when the bells are struck,⁹³ praise and thanks may always be returned to the Omnipotent God by all people throughout the earth.

And, to whomever of my friar custodes this writing has come and (who) have both copied it and kept (a copy) with them and on behalf of the friars, who have the office of preaching and the custody of the friars, (and who) have made copies and have preached all the things, which are

⁸⁸ cf. K. Esser, p. 206.

⁸⁹ lit. universis, "to each and every." This Latin word is used again in the last sentence of the following paragraph.

⁹⁰ The Latin word here, signum, can also mean "the seal" of wax on a letter or a "constellation" of stars. In Catholic theology, the word is also used to refer to the Sacraments. Hence, perhaps, St. Francis' usage of the term to introduce this letter. It may be, however, that this refers to some recent celestial phenomena, widely seen, such as a comet, nova or meteor shower, to which St. Francis is dramatically contrasting the Most Blessed Sacrament. On a possible scriptural allusion see Acts 2:19. On the use of "salvation" immediately prior to this, see fn. 68.

⁹¹ As Christ did: "For unless you do penance, you shall likewise perish." (Lk 13:3; cf. also Ez 18:30; Mt 3:2; 4:17; Act 2:32; 17:30; Apoc 2:5,16; 3:3,19).

⁹² i.e. when the priest brought Viaticum to the dying; eucharistic processions, as well as the Feast of Corpus Christi, had not yet been established in St. Francis' lifetime.

⁹³ i.e. at the moment of the consecration at Mass, when the church bells would be rung to announce the Mystery to the people in town and countryside. K. Esser sees this desire of St. Francis implemented later in the pious practice of the Angelus, which was soon to arise in the Order, cf. K. Esser, p. 211.

contained in this writing, until the end;⁹⁴ let them know that they have the blessing of the Lord God and of myself. · And let those things be for them a true and holy obedience. Amen.

The Second Letter to the Custodes

[EpCust II]

This second version of the "Letter to the Custodes" was preserved in a Spanish translation at Saragossa, made while John Parenti was the first Minister provincial of Spain (1227-1232 A.D.). The Latin text was reconstructed from this by Luke Wadding, O.F.M. in the 16th Century. K. Esser dates this version to the same period as that of the first, namely, shortly after March, 1220 A.D..⁹⁵

To all the custodes of the Friars Minor, to whom these letters will have come, Friar Francis, the least of the servants of God, (wishes) salvation⁹⁶ and holy peace in the Lord.

Know, that in the sight of God there are certain things exceedingly high and sublime, which are sometimes reputed among men as vile and abject; · and there are others dear and notable among men, which before God are held as the most vile and abject. · I beg you before the Lord Our God, as much as I can, to give those letters, which treat of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord, to bishops and other clerics; · and to retain with (your) memory, those (practices) which we have recommended to you concerning these (Mysteries). · Of the other letters, which I am sending you, to give them to magistrates,⁹⁷ consuls, and rulers, and regarding those things which it⁹⁸ contains, in order to publish the praises of God among the peoples and in the streets, immediately make many copies, · and with great diligence distribute these to those, to whom they ought to be given.

⁹⁴ For an explanation of this phrase, see fn. 84.

⁹⁵ cf. K. Esser, pp. 207-9.

⁹⁶ cf. fn. 68.

⁹⁷ Fr. Luke Wadding, O.F.M., when translating this word from the Spanish, wrote gubernatoribus, which K. Esser takes as signifying a mistranslation into the Spanish of the original potestatibus (Italian: "podestà," mayor); cf. K. Esser, p. 208.

⁹⁸ A reference to the parchment containing these writings.

A Letter to the Faithful

[EpFid I]

First recension

An Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance

What St. Francis means here by "the Faithful" are the members of the faithful, who moved by the preaching of the early Franciscans, began a penitential life under their direction. Within a few years the great number of these led St. Francis to found the Third Order of Penance. This Letter, therefore can be seen as one of the earliest and most authentic sources for the rule and spirituality of the Third Order. Comprising as it does a short summary of the necessary practices of the Christian life, it speaks poignantly to all Christendom. This Former Recension was written sometime before 1221 A.D..⁹⁹

In the Name of the Lord!

Chapter I

On those who do penance

All who love (dilectio) the Lord "with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with all their virtue" (cf. Mk 12:30) and love their neighbors as (they do) themselves (cf. Mt 22:39), · and hold their bodies in hatred¹⁰⁰ together with (their) vices and sins, · and receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, · and produce fruits worthy of penance: · O how blessed and blest are those men and women, while they do such things and persevere in them, · since "upon" them "rests the Spirit of the Lord" (Is. 11:2), and He will make His little dwelling "and mansion among" them (cf. Jn 14:23),¹⁰¹ · and they are sons of (their) Heavenly Father (cf. Mt 5:45), whose works they do, and they are spouses, fathers and mothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Mt 12:50). · We are spouses, when by the Holy Spirit the faithful soul is joined with Our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰² · We are His brothers, when we do "the Will of the Father who is in Heaven" (Mt 12:50). · Mothers, when we carry Him in our heart and body (cf. 1 Cor 6:20) by means of divine love (amor) and a pure and sincere conscience; we give birth to Him through holy work, which ought to shine upon others as an example (cf. Mt 5:16). · O how glorious it is,

⁹⁹ cf. K. Esser, pp. 219-221.

¹⁰⁰ The Latin idiom here, habere odio, is customarily rendered "to regard with hatred;" yet, considering the importance in St. Francis' mind of mortification, and the literal meaning of the idiom (to hold with hatred), the translation above has been chosen to manifest more clearly St. Francis' understanding of the urgency and necessity of constant vigilance and self-restraint.

¹⁰¹ cf. RegNB XXII,27.

¹⁰² St. Francis, shifting from the third person to the first person, outlines briefly the stages of the mystical life: the way that leads through the night of the senses (brothers), the way that leads through the night of the soul (spouses), the way that begins the life of heaven upon earth (mothers); cf. St. John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, I, iv, 6; Dark Night of the Soul, II, iii, 3; xiv,1; The Spiritual Canticle, xxxix,2, respectively.

to have a Holy and Great Father in Heaven! · O how holy, consoling,¹⁰³ beautiful and admirable, to have such a Spouse! · O how holy and how beloved (dilectio), well pleasing, humble, peaceable, sweet, lovable (amor) and desirable above all things, to have such a Brother and such a Son: Our Lord Jesus Christ, · who laid down His life on behalf of His sheep (cf. Jn 10:15) and prayed to His Father saying: "Holy Father, guard them in Thy Name" (Jn 17:11), "whom Thou has given Me" in "the world; Thine they were and Thou has gave them to Me" (Jn 17:6). · And "the words which Thou has given Me, I have given to them, and they have accepted (these) and" have believed "truly, that I have come forth from Thee, and" they have known, "that Thou has sent Me" (Jn 17:8). · I pray on their behalf and "not on behalf of the world" (cf. Jn 17:9). · Bless and "sanctify" them (Jn 17:17) "and on their behalf I sanctify My very self" (Jn 17:19). · "Not on their behalf only do I pray, but on behalf of those who are going to believe in Me through" their "words" (cf. Jn 17:20), "so that all" may be sanctified "in one" (cf. Jn 17:23) even as We are" (Jn 17:11). · And I wish, Father, "that where I am, they also may be with Me, to see My splendor"¹⁰⁴ (Jn 17:24) "in Thy Kingdom" (Mt 20:21). Amen.

Chapter II

On those who do not do penance

However all those men and women, who are not in penance, · and do not receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, · and work vices and sins and who walk after wicked concupiscence and the wicked desires of their flesh, · and do not observe, what they have promised the Lord,¹⁰⁵ · and serve the world bodily by carnal desires and anxious concerns (sollicitudo) for the world (saeculum) and by the cares of this life: · (these) held back by the devil, whose sons they are and whose works they do (cf. Jn 8:41),¹⁰⁶ are blind, · because they do not see the True Light, Our Lord Jesus Christ. · They do not have spiritual wisdom, because they do not have the Son of God who is the True Wisdom of the Father, · of whom it is said: "Their wisdom is swallowed up" (Ps 106:27 - Rom. Ps.); and "Cursed are they who turn away from Thy mandates" (Ps 118:21). · They see and acknowledge, they know and work wicked things and they themselves knowingly loose their souls. · See, blind ones, deceived by your enemies: by the flesh, the world, and the devil; that it is sweet to the body to work sin and bitter to work to serve God; · because all vices and sins come forth and "proceed from the heart of man," just as the Lord says in the Gospel (cf. Mk 7:21). · And you shall have nothing in this age nor in the one to come. · And you think you will possess the vanities of this generation (saeculum) for a long time, but you have been deceived, since there shall come the day and hour, of which you do not think, know or pay attention; the body weakens, death approaches and thus one dies a bitter death. · And wherever, whenever, however a man dies in culpable sin, without penance and satisfaction, if he can make satisfaction and does not make satisfaction, the devil tears his soul from his body with such anguish and tribulation, that no one can know it, except him who experiences it. · And all the talents and power and "knowledge and wisdom" (2 Chron 1:12), which they thought they had, is borne away from them (cf. Lk 8:18; Mk 4:25). · And he bequeathed (these) to neighbors

¹⁰³ lit. paraclitum, an allusion to the Holy Spirit's Name.

¹⁰⁴ lit. claritatem, "brightness, fame, glory;" a reference to the Beatific Vision.

¹⁰⁵ i.e. the vows of Baptism, or of religious life; or votive promises.

¹⁰⁶ cf. RegNB XXI,8.

and friends and these bore off and divided his substance,¹⁰⁷ and said afterwards: "Cursed be his soul, since he could have given us more and acquired what he did not acquire." · Worms eat the body, and thus perished body and soul in this short age and they shall go into Hell, where they will be tortured without end.

All those to whom these letters will have come, we beg in the Charity which God is (cf. 1 Jn 4:16), that they receive kindly those abovesaid sweet-smelling words of Our Lord Jesus Christ with divine love. · And let those who do not know how to read, have them read often; · and let them keep (these letters) with them with holy work even until the end,¹⁰⁸ because they are "spirit and life" (Jn 6:64). · And he who will not have done this, will be bound to render "an account on the Day of Judgement" (cf. Mt 12:36)¹⁰⁹ "before the tribunal of" Our Lord Jesus "Christ" (cf. Rm 14:10).

A Letter to the faithful

[EpFid II]

Later recension

Although very similar to the previous version, the incipits of the medieval manuscripts, as well as the text itself, identify this recension as an exhortation sent by St. Francis to all the Christian faithful.¹¹⁰ This Letter was written sometime between 1216 and 1226 A.D..¹¹¹

In the Name of the Lord, Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

To all¹¹² Christians, religious, clerics and laymen, men and women, to all who dwell in the entire world, Friar Francis, their servant and subject, (offers) submission with reverence, true peace from Heaven and sincere charity in the Lord.

Since I am the servant of all, I am bound to serve all and administer the sweet-smelling words of my Lord. · Whence considering in mind, that since personally on account of the infirmity and debility of my body I cannot visit each of you, I have proposed by these present letters and announcements to repeat to you the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, which "are spirit and life" (Jn 6:64).

This Word of the Father—so worthy, so holy and glorious—the Most High Father of Heaven has announced through Saint Gabriel, His angel, into the womb of the holy and glorious

¹⁰⁷ i.e. his property and possessions.

¹⁰⁸ see fn. 84.

¹⁰⁹ cf. RegNB IV,6.

¹¹⁰ K. Esser sees this recension as another version of the letter to the brothers and sisters of penance [EpFid I]; cf. K. Esser, p. 260. In either case, this work is important in the history and development of the Third Order.

¹¹¹ cf. K. Esser, pp. 259-60. Note that the phrase "In the Name of the Lord . . ." is not enumerated among the verses of the Letter; verse one begins "To all Christians . . .".

¹¹² lit. *universis*, "to each and every" considered as one group.

Virgin Mary, of whose womb He¹¹³ received the true flesh of humanity and of our fragility. · Who, "although He was rich" (2 Cor 8:9) above all things, He willed in the world with the Most Blessed Virgin, His Mother, to chose poverty. · And near His passion He celebrated the Passover with His disciples and taking bread gave thanks and blest it and broke it saying: "Take and eat, this is My Body." (Mt 26:26) · "And taking the chalice" He said: "This is My Blood of the New Testament, which" on your behalf¹¹⁴ and "on behalf of the many will be poured out in remission of sins." (Mt 26:27) · Then He prayed to the Father saying: "Father, if it can be done, let this chalice pass from Me."¹¹⁵ · "And His sweat became as drops of blood flowing down upon the earth" (Lk 22:44). · Nevertheless, He placed His own will in the Will of the Father, saying: "Father, Thy Will be done" (Mt 26:42); "not as I will, but as Thou" (Mt 26:39). · Of whose Father such was the Will, that His Son, blest and glorious, whom He gave to us and who had been born on our behalf, offer His very self through His very own Blood as a Sacrifice and Victim upon the altar of the Cross, · not for His own sake, through whom all things were made (cf. Jn 1:3), but on behalf of our sins, · leaving us an example, so that we may follow His footsteps (cf. 1 Pet 2:21). · And He wants¹¹⁶ all to be saved through Him and that we receive Him with a pure heart and our own chaste body. · But there are few, who want to receive Him and be saved through Him, though His "yoke is sweet" and His "burden light" (cf. Mt 11:30).

Those who do not want to taste how "sweet the Lord" is (cf. Ps 33:9) and (who) love (*dilectio*) "shadows more than the Light" (Jn 3:19) not wanting to fulfill the mandates of God, have been cursed; · of whom it is said through the prophet: "Cursed are they who turn away from Thy mandates." (Ps 118:21). · But, oh how blessed and blest are those who love God and do as the Lord Himself says in the Gospel: "Love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart" and "with thy whole mind" and "thy neighbor as thy very self" (Mt 22:37,39).

Let us therefore love God and adore Him with a pure heart and a pure mind, since He Himself, seeking (such) above all, has said: "True adorers will adore the Father in spirit and in truth." (Jn 4:23) · For "it is proper" that all, "who adore Him, adore" Him "in the spirit" of truth (cf. Jn 4:24). · And let us offer¹¹⁷ Him praises and prayers "day and night" (Ps 31:4) by saying: "Our Father who art in Heaven" (Mt 6:9), since "it is proper that" we "always pray and not fail to do what we might" (Lk 18:1).

Since we ought to confess all our sins to a priest; let us also receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ from him. · He who does not eat His Flesh and does not drink His Blood (cf. Jn 6:55,57), "cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5). · Nevertheless let him eat and drink worthily, because he who receives "unworthily eats and drinks judgement for himself, not dejudicating the Body of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:29), that is, he does not discern it. · In addition let us produce "fruits worthy of penance" (Lk 3:8). · And let us love (our) neighbors as our very selves (cf. Mt 22:39). · And if one does not want to love (*amor*) them as his very self, at least he does not bring evils upon them, but does good (to them).

¹¹³ i.e. the Son of God. The Latin here is *ex cuius utero . . . recepit . . .*: God assumed the true flesh of humanity by taking a share of the Virgin's humanity, which She offered to Him from Her womb. This phrase recalls that of the Nicene Creed, "*who was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary...*". For scriptural parallels, cf. Ps 21:10; 70:6; Is 44:24; 49:5; Lk 1:15.

¹¹⁴ This recalls the Roman Canon: *qui pro vobis et pro multis.*

¹¹⁵ cf. *Breviarum Romanum* (1961): Responsorum I ad Matut. Feriae V hebdomadae sanctae.

¹¹⁶ St. Francis refers to what God wants of man, in creating man with a free will; however, man is thus free to accept this will of God or reject it, by sin.

¹¹⁷ lit. "speak to."

Moreover let those, who have received the power of judging others, exercise judgement with mercy, just as they themselves want to obtain mercy from the Lord. · "For" there shall be "judgment without mercy" for those "who" have shown "no mercy" (James 2:13). · And so let us have charity and humility; and let us give alms, because this washes souls¹¹⁸ from the filth of their sins (cf. Tob 4:11; 12:9). · For men lose everything, which they abandon in this age; yet they carry with them the wages of charity and the alms, which they have given, because of which they will have from the Lord a reward and worthy recompense.

We also ought to fast and abstain from vices and sins (cf. Sir 3:32) and from a superfluity of food and drink and we must be Catholics. · We also ought to frequently visit churches¹¹⁹ and venerate clerics and revere them, not so much for their (own) sake, if they be sinners, but on account of (their) office and administration of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, which they sacrifice upon the altar and receive and administer to others. · And let us all know firmly, that no one can be saved, except through the words and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which the clerics speak, announce and minister.¹²⁰ · And they alone ought to minister and not others.¹²¹ · Moreover the religious especially, who have renounced the world (saeculum), are bound to do more and greater things, but not to give up these (cf. Lk 11:42).

We ought to hold our bodies in hatred¹²² together with (our) vices and sins, because the Lord says in the Gospel: All wicked things, vices and sins, "come forth from the heart." (Mt 15:18-19; Mk 7:23) · We ought to love (dilectio) our "enemies" and do good "to them, who" regard us with hatred (cf. Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27). · We ought to observe the precepts and counsels of Our Lord Jesus Christ. · We also ought to deny our very selves (cf. Mt 16:24) and place our bodies under the yoke of servitude¹²³ and holy obedience, just as each one has promised the Lord. · And let no man be bound out of obedience to obey anyone in that, where crime or sin is committed.¹²⁴

However to him whom obedience has been committed and "who" is held (to be) "greater,

¹¹⁸ This is the teaching of Christ (cf. Lk 11:41) and of Sacred Scripture (cf. Tob 4:7,11-12; 12:8-9; Eccles 3:33; 7:36; 29:15-17; Is 58:7-11; Dan 4:24; Heb 13:16). The Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages offered indulgences in exchange for monetary alms, given for the building of churches and other pious works, so as to foster the practice of this very work of satisfaction, which Christ Jesus Himself had taught and commanded. For some examples of early grants of indulgences in exchange for alms cf. William E. Lunt, Papal Revenues in the Middle Ages, Octagon Books. Vol II. pp. 448-485. New York, 1965. For an explanation and list of indulgences which the Church offers today, cf. Enchiridion Indulgentiarum (1968).

¹¹⁹ In order to worship Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and to pray to Him, to Our Lady, and to the Saints for the graces to persevere in virtue.

¹²⁰ A reference to the necessity of Faith in the teachings (words) of Christ and the acceptance of the Sacraments (blood) He instituted. St. Francis uses the metonym "Blood" for the Sacraments, since it is by the shedding of Christ's Blood on Golgotha, that He merited for us the grace of the Sacraments. Note too, that for St. Francis, both the teaching of Christ and His Sacraments are inseparable from the Sacred Hierarchy, which He instituted.

¹²¹ see fn. 43.

¹²² see fn. 100.

¹²³ i.e. in humble service.

¹²⁴ Thus St. Francis excludes that error arising from voluntarism, which holds that a superior should be obeyed even when he commands something sinful.

let him be as the lesser" (Lk 22:26) and the servant of the other brothers.¹²⁵ · And toward each of his brothers let him show and have mercy, as he would want done to himself, if he were in an exactly similar situation. · Nor from the crime of a brother is he to grow angry against a brother, but with all patience and humility let him kindly admonish and support him.

We ought not be wise and prudent according to the flesh, but rather we ought to be simple, humble and pure. · And let us hold our bodies in opprobrium and contempt, since through our own fault we are all wretched and putrid, fetid and worms, just as the Lord says through the prophet: "I am a worm and no man, the opprobrium of men and the abject of the people." (Ps 21:7) · We ought to never desire to be above others, but rather we ought to be slaves and subjects "to every human creature for God's sake" (1 Pt 2:13). · And all those men and women, while they do such things and persevere (in them) until the end, "may the Spirit of the Lord rest upon" them (Is 11:2) and make a little dwelling and mansion in them (cf. Jn 14:23). · And they shall be the sons of the Heavenly Father (cf. Mt 5:45), whose works they do. · And they are spouses, brothers and mothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Mt 12:50). · We are spouses,¹²⁶ when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ. · For we are brothers, when we do the Will of His Father, who is in Heaven (cf. Mt 12:50); · mothers when we bear Him in our heart and body (1 Cor 6:20) by means of love (amor) and a pure and sincere conscience; we give birth to Him through holy work, which ought to shine upon others as an example (cf. Mt 5:16).

O how glorious and holy and great to have in Heaven a Father! · O how holy, consoling,¹²⁷ beautiful and admirable, to have (such) a Spouse! · O how holy and how beloved (dilectio), well pleasing, humble, peaceable, sweet and lovable (amor) and above all things desirable to have such a Brother and Son, who laid down His life on behalf of His sheep (cf. Jn 10:15) and besought¹²⁸ the Father on our behalf saying: "Holy Father, save those in Thy Name, whom Thou has given Me" (Jn 17:11). · Father, all (those), "whom Thou has given Me" in "the world, were Thine and Thou has given them to Me." (Jn 17:6) · And "the words, which Thou has given to Me, I have given to them; and they have accepted these and know truly, that I have gone forth from Thee and they have believed, that Thou has sent Me" (Jn 17:8); I beg on their behalf and "not on behalf of the world" (cf. Jn 17:9); Bless and "sanctify them" (Jn 17:17). · "And on their behalf I sanctify My very self, so that they may be sanctified in" (Jn 17:19) "one just as We" are (cf. Jn 17:6). · And I wish, Father, "that where" I am "they also may be with Me, to see My splendor"¹²⁹ (Jn 17:24) "in Thy Kingdom" (Mt 20:21).

Moreover, to Him who endured such great things on our behalf, conferred all good things and (who) will confer them in the future, let every creature, which is in Heaven, on earth, in the seas, and in the abyss render praise, glory, honor, and blessing to God (cf. Apoc 5:13), · since He Himself is our virtue and fortitude, who alone is good, alone the Most High, alone the Omnipotent, admirable, glorious and alone holy, worthy of praise and blest throughout the infinite ages of ages. Amen.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Here "brothers" refers to the Christian faithful; "lesser" (Latin: minor) recalls the name of the Franciscan Order: the Friars Minor.

¹²⁶ cf. EpFid I,51, fn. 102.

¹²⁷ cf. EpFid I, 55, fn. 103.

¹²⁸ lit. oravit Patrem, "prayed the Father," a usage still admissible in English, if not already obsolete.

¹²⁹ lit. claritatem, "brightness, fame, glory;" a reference to the Beatific Vision.

¹³⁰ cf. Breviarum Romanum (1961): Hymnus: *Ubi caritas et amor*, Ferae V hebdomadae sanctae.

However all those, who are not in penance and do not receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, · and who work vices and sins, and who walk after wicked concupiscence and wicked desires, and do not observe, what they have promised, · and serve the world bodily by carnal desires, cares and anxious concerns (sollicitudo) for this world (saeculum) and by the cares of this life, · having been deceived by the devil, whose sons they are and whose works they do (cf. Jn 8:41), are blind, because they do not see the True Light, Our Lord Jesus Christ. · They do not have spiritual wisdom, because they do not have the Son of God in themselves, He who is the True Wisdom of the Father; of whom it is said: "Their wisdom has been swallowed up." (Ps 106:27) · They see, they acknowledge, they know and they do wicked things; and they knowingly loose (their) souls. · See, blind ones, deceived by our enemies, namely, by the flesh, by the world, and by the devil, that it is sweet to the body to work sin and bitter to serve God, because "all wicked things," vices and sins come forth and "proceed from the heart of men" (cf. Mk 7:21,23), just as the Lord says in the Gospel. · And you shall have nothing in this age nor in the one to come. · You think you will possess the vanities of this generation (saeculum) for a long time, but you have been deceived, since there shall come the day and hour, of which you do not think or know or pay attention.

The body weakens, death approaches, neighbors and friends come, saying: "Dispose of your things." · Behold his wife and his sons and neighbors and friends feign weeping. · And looking back he sees them weeping, (and) he is moved by a wicked emotion;¹³¹ thinking within himself he says: "Behold my soul and body and all my things I place in your hands." · Truly, has that man been cursed, who confides and exposes¹³² his soul and body and all his things to such hands; · whence the Lord (says) through the prophet: "Cursed (be) the man who confides in man." (Jer 17:5) · And immediately they make the priest come; the priest says to him: "Do you want to receive a penance because of all your sins?"¹³³ · He answers: "I do wish it." "Do you wish to make satisfaction because of (the sins you) committed and these things of which you have defrauded and deceived men, as you are able from your substance?"¹³⁴ · He answers: "No." And the priest says; "Why not?" · "Because I have disposed of everything into the hands of my neighbors and friends." · And he begins to loose speech and so that (man) dies a wretch.

But let all know, that wherever and however a man die in culpable sin without satisfaction and he can make satisfaction and he has not made satisfaction, the devil tears his soul from his body with so much anguish and tribulation, that no one can know how much, except him who experiences it. · And all the talents and power and knowledge, which he thought he had (cf. Lk 8:18), "is borne away from him" (Mk 4:25). · And he abandons neighbors and friends, and they bear off and divide his substance and say afterwards: "Cursed be his soul, since he could have given us more and acquired what he did not acquire." · Worms eat the body; and so perishes body and soul in that brief life-span (saeculum) and he shall go into Hell, where he will be tortured without end.

¹³¹ lit. "movement," that is of the soul under the influence of the habit of vice and/or diabolic suggestion.

¹³² lit. exponit, "to put out," "to cast out," "to expose" to the elements or to danger.

¹³³ In the drama that St. Francis unfolds, it is understood that the priest is called to hear the confession of a dying man who has committed certain sins which require material satisfaction (e.g. sins of theft, or cheating), which cannot be forgiven unless the guilty, if he has the means, makes material satisfaction, that is, repay the victims, or if they cannot be located, gives an equivalent alms to charity.

¹³⁴ i.e. of your property and possessions.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. · I, Friar Francis, your lesser servant, beg and entreat you earnestly in the Charity, which God is (cf. 1 Jn 4:16), and with the desire to kiss your feet,¹³⁵ that with humility and charity you ought to receive and put into practice and observe these words and the others of Our Lord Jesus Christ. · And all those men and women, who will kindly receive, understand and send copies of these to others, and if "they have persevered" in these "until the end" (Mt 24:13), may the Father and Son and Holy Spirit bless them. Amen.

The Letter to Friar Leo

[EpLeo]

Friar Leo was one of St. Francis's close companions. In this letter St. Francis gives him some simple advice regarding his frequent questions concerning the Rule and the pursuit of perfection. He also grants him permission to travel to speak with him, so that wherever he may be assigned, the local superior might allow him to do so.

The text of this letter was long kept in the Convent of St. Simon, at Spoleto, Italy, in the form of an autograph (identified by K. Esser as authentic) and preserved today in the Cathedral of that city. The translation here follows the structure of the autograph; the punctuation, that of the Latin text of K. Esser.¹³⁶ The autograph is a mixture of Latin and early Italian.

Friar Leo, friar Francissco tuo¹³⁷ (wishes you) sal-
 vation and peace. · I say to you thus,
 my son, as a mother:¹³⁸ since
 all the words which we have spoken
 on the road, briefly in this (writing as) words
 I arrange and counsel, and if
 afterwards it is proper [for you] for the sake of
 counsel to come to me,
 that I thus counsel you: · "In what-
 ever manner it better seems¹³⁹
 to you

¹³⁵ The "kissing of the foot" was the Medieval sign of complete submission due one's highest lord. At the beginning of this sentence, "lesser" translates the Latin minor, which recalls the name of the Franciscan Order, "The Friars Minor," cf. RegB I,1.

¹³⁶ cf. K. Esser, pp. 264 and 268, respectively.

¹³⁷ St. Francis uses Italian at this point: "Francissco tuo" means "your Francis." St. Francis' spelling of his own name differs from the official form adopted later (Francesco); but then again he was, according to Bl. Thomas of Celano, the first to bear it; and it is up to him how to spell it.

¹³⁸ i.e. with a chaste, affectionate compassion.

¹³⁹ In the autograph the Latin word here, videtur, is divided between the end of this verse and the beginning of the next; the English "to you" corresponds to the Latin words that have been written between these two lines; cf. K. Esser, pp. 264, 266.

to please the Lord
 God and to follow His footsteps¹⁴⁰ and pov-
 erty, do (so)
 with the blessing of the Lord
 God and my obedience.
 · And, if for you it is necessary that
 your soul on account of another¹⁴¹
 consolation—and you want,
 Leo —come to me; come."¹⁴²

A Letter to a certain Minister provincial

[EpMin]

As head of the Order, St. Francis's duty was not only to see to the welfare of all the friars but especially to that of the other superiors. In this letter, written sometime between the Pentecost Chapters of 1218 and 1221 A.D.,¹⁴³ St. Francis exhorts a beleaguered regional superior to persevere in his administration with charity. He also suggests to him a method for resolving public scandals in the community with mercy and justice.

Friar N., minister, may the Lord bless you, (cf. Num 6:24a). · I tell you, as I can, regarding the state of your soul, that those things which impede you to love (amor) the Lord God, and whoever has caused you an impediment or if other friars (have done the like), even if they have whipped you, all (these) you ought to regard as a grace. · And want it so and not something else. · And let this be your (duty) in virtue of a true obedience to the Lord God and to myself, because I know firmly, that this is a true obedience. · And love (dilectio) them who do those things to you. · And do not want something else from them, except as much as the Lord has given you (to desire it). · And in this love them; and do not wish that they be better Christians. ·

¹⁴⁰ St. Francis uses an accusative form of the early Italian vestigia, a collective noun; cf. K. Esser, p. 266.

¹⁴¹ K. Esser reconstructs the phrase thus: "if for you it is necessary / on account of your soul (or) another / consolation ...", cf. K. Esser, p. 266. It should be noted that the phrase can suitably be interpreted as an accusative-infinitive construction, i.e. "necessary that your soul ... come to me" without having recourse to transposition or addition of words. In this case, St. Francis' use of "soul" would be ironic: a gentle reminder to Brother Leo that spiritual difficulties are not solved by traveling, but by grace and interior penitence. After "consolation" the Latin text has tuam (your), signifying that the consolation is personally for Friar Leo.

¹⁴² After "Leo" there is an illegible word ending, apparently, in the letter "t"—perhaps for "et", which would render the verse: "Leo, also—come to me, come"; there is also another illegible word written between the lines above the same, which Fr. Luke Wadding, O.F.M., read as "mi" in the 16th Century (which would render the phrase "my Leo—come to me, come"); cf. K. Esser, p. 267.

¹⁴³ cf. K. Esser, pp. 282-4.

And let that be more to you than a hermitage.¹⁴⁴ · And in this I want to know, if you love the Lord and myself, His servant and yours, if you have done this, namely, that there be no friar in the world,¹⁴⁵ who has sinned, as much as one could sin, that, after he has seen your eyes, never leaves without your mercy, if he seeks mercy. · And if he would not seek mercy, you are to ask him, if he wants mercy. · And if afterwards he would have sinned a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me for this, so that you draw him to the Lord; and you are to always pity such ones. · And you are to announce this to the guardians,¹⁴⁶ when you will be able, that as far as you are concerned you are resolved to act thus.

Moreover from all the chapters, which are in the Rule, which speak of mortal sins, with the Lord assisting (us) in the Chapter at Pentecost,¹⁴⁷ with the counsel of the friars, we shall make a chapter such as this:¹⁴⁸

If one of the friars at the instigation of the enemy has sinned mortally, he is bound by obedience to have recourse to his own guardian. · And let all the friars, who know he has sinned, not shame him nor utter detraction, but let them have great mercy upon him and keep very private the sin of their brother; "because a doctor is not needed" by the healthy, "but by those who have a malady." (Mt 9:12) · Similarly they are bound by obedience to send him to their custos¹⁴⁹ with a companion. · And let the custos himself mercifully provide for him, just as he himself would want to be provided for, if he was in an exactly similar situation. · And if he has fallen into any venial sin, let him entrust the friar to his priest.¹⁵⁰ · And if there is not a priest there, let him entrust him to his brother (companion), until he will find a priest, to absolve him canonically, just as has been said. · And those¹⁵¹ (friars) are to have entirely no power of enjoining any penance except

¹⁴⁴ A reference to the desire to take refuge in a hermitage for the sake of the contemplative life; which in some persons is mixed with a desire to flee a cross which entails the practice of charity towards one's neighbor(s).

¹⁴⁵ Here, in contrast, St. Francis uses mundum, the Latin term for "world" in the spatial sense; it is equivalent to the Greek word "cosmos," which means "the world or universe."

¹⁴⁶ see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust I] for an explanation of the office of Guardian.

¹⁴⁷ The General Chapter of the Friars Minor is held at Pentecost; cf. RegB VIII,2 and 5.

¹⁴⁸ K. Esser does not indent the paragraph which follows; this has been done by the English translator for clarity. The reader will want to compare this proposed chapter to RegNB XX and RegB VII. Indeed the affinity of this proposal to the cited chapter of the Regula Bullata, inclines to the conclusion that either this letter was written after 1221 A.D., or, if it was written before 1221, as K. Esser holds, that despite this proposal's lack of approval by the Pentecost Chapter of that year, St. Francis chose to refer to it when he composed the Regula Bullata in 1223 A.D..

¹⁴⁹ see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust I] for an explanation of the office of Custos.

¹⁵⁰ i.e. his chaplain.

¹⁵¹ The Latin word iste, translated here as "those," refers to the general subject (s) of the paragraph or to the antagonist: in this case: the guardian, the friars, and the custos. Unlike the Latin term hic, it does not necessarily refer to the protagonist, which in this case is "the friar who sinned," or to the specific subject of the immediately prior phrase or clause, which in this case is "the priest." Hence St. Francis is suggesting that neither the superiors nor the community impose

this: "Go and" do not "sin" any more. (cf. John 8:11)

This having been written, so that it ought to be better observed, you are to keep it with you until Pentecost; you are to be there with your friars. · And this and all other things, which are lesser in the Rule, with the Lord God assisting, you shall take care to fulfill.

The Letter sent to the whole Order

together with the prayer "Omnipotent eternal..."

[EpOrd]

At the end of his life St. Francis was too sick to travel and had recourse to letters to address his religious brothers. In this letter, which he intended to be kept and read in the Order until the end of time, he exhorts them at length to implement Pope Honorius III's letter Sane cum olim, which had been sent to nearly all the Bishops in the West in the autumn of 1219 A.D., and to many of the Bishops of the East in March of 1220 A.D. St. Francis probably acquainted himself with the papal letter when he visited Honorius III (Feb.—Mar.) upon his return from the Holy Land in that same year. He wrote this letter sometime between March, 1220 and November of 1223 A.D.¹⁵²

In the Name of the Most High Trinity and Holy Unity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

To all the reverend and much beloved (dilectio)¹⁵³ friars, to friar A.,¹⁵⁴ Minister general¹⁵⁵ of the religion¹⁵⁶ of the Friars Minor, (and) their lord, and to the other Ministers general who will be after him, and to all the ministers and custodes and humble priests in Christ of the same fraternity and to all the simple and obedient friars, first and last, · Friar Francis, a vile and fallen man,¹⁵⁷ your tiny little servant, (wishes) salvation¹⁵⁸ in Him who redeemed and "washed us in

a public penance upon any brother who sins, but that they should only admonish him gently, after the example of Our Lord; leaving penance up to the priests.

¹⁵² cf. K. Esser, pp. 318-20.

¹⁵³ Here the Latin term, which is related to the root word dilectio, indicates more precisely that the friars are "to be loved much," not just that they have been. Also, the word translated "all" at this point means more exactly, "each and every" considered as one.

¹⁵⁴ The manuscripts have various abbreviations at this point in the text: N, B, T, Ro, H, G; therefore the identity of the Minister general to which St. Francis intended this letter was addressed cannot be readily identified on this basis. However the abbreviations that appear at this point and elsewhere in the manuscripts (H., He., and he.) can signify Brother Elias, who was one of St. Francis' more controversial disciples, cf. fns. 189, 193 and 202.

¹⁵⁵ For an explanation of this and the other offices in the Order of Friars Minor, see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust I].

¹⁵⁶ In the Middle Ages, a religious order was called "a religion" and the members of non-Catholic religions were called infidels, cf. RegB XII.

¹⁵⁷ Here St. Francis emphasizes that like his confreres, he too was conceived with the stain of original sin. Hence, they too, by cooperating with grace can become as holy, as they repute him to be.

His" Most Precious "Blood" (cf. Apoc 1:5), · upon hearing whose Name, adore Him with fear and reverence "prostrate upon the ground" (cf. 2 Esdr 8:6), the Lord Jesus Christ, "Son of the Most High" (is) His Name (cf. Lk 1:32), "who is blest throughout the ages" (Rm 1:25).

Listen, sons of the Lord¹⁵⁹ and brothers mine, "and turn your ears to my words" (Acts 2:14). · "Incline the ear" (Is 55:3) of your heart and obey the voice of the Son of God. · Keep with all your heart His mandates and fulfill His counsels with a resolute mind.¹⁶⁰ · "Confess" Him "since (He is) good" (Ps 135:1), and "exalt" Him "in your works" (Tob 13:6); · "since for this reason" He sent you (cf. Tob 13:4) into the entire world,¹⁶¹ to give testimony to His voice by word and work and make all know, that "there is no Omnipotent One besides Him" (cf. Tob 13:4). · "In discipline" and holy obedience "persevere" (Heb 12:7) and fulfill what you have promised¹⁶² Him with a good and firm resolution. · May the Lord "God" offer Himself to us, "as to sons" (cf. Heb 12:7).

And so I beseech all of you friars with a kiss upon (your) feet¹⁶³ and with that charity, of which I am able, to exhibit every reverence and every honor, as much as you will be able, to the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, · in whom those (things) which are in the heavens and which are on the earth, have been pacified and reconciled to the Omnipotent God (cf. Col 1:20)

I beg also in the Lord that all my friar priests, who are or will be or desire to be priests of the Most High, that whenever you want celebrate Mass, (being) pure,¹⁶⁴ you faultlessly perform with reverence the True Sacrifice of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, with a holy and clean intention, not on behalf of any earthly thing, nor out of fear or love (amor) for any man,¹⁶⁵ as pleasers of men (do) (cf. Eph 6:6; Col 3:22); · but let every will, as much as grace helps it, be directed to God, desiring for that reason to please solely the Most High Lord Himself, because He alone is at work there, just as it pleases Him; · since just as He himself says "Do this in My commemoration"¹⁶⁶ (Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24), if anyone has done otherwise,¹⁶⁷ he makes himself out to be Judas, the traitor, and is made "answerable for the Body and Blood of

¹⁵⁸ cf. fn. 68.

¹⁵⁹ The friars are "sons of the Lord" by the grace of Baptism, wherein there were reborn in Christ as the adopted sons of the Father. They are also "sons" in a special manner, in as much as they observe the evangelical perfection of the Gospel as Franciscans.

¹⁶⁰ lit. perfecta mente, "with a perfect mind," that is with an efficacious resolve to accomplish what one has set out to do.

¹⁶¹ A reference not a historical sending of the Friars Minor by Christ Jesus Himself, but to the mission entrusted to them by the Holy Spirit through the grace of their Franciscan vocation; regarding this phrase "into the entire world," cf. Breviarium Romanum (1961): Antiphon ad Magnificat II Vespers Pentecostes.

¹⁶² i.e. the observance of the Rule.

¹⁶³ see fn. 135.

¹⁶⁴ lit. puri. By using the substantive adjective for "pure," St. Francis is indicating that the condition for offering the Sacrifice of the Mass is first of all being in the state of grace.

¹⁶⁵ lit. hominis, "man" in the sense of any human being.

¹⁶⁶ A commemoration is a ceremony characterized by remembrance. Hence, from those who wish to honor Christ, He Himself asks for that re-presentation of His Sacrifice of Calvary, which is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (cf. Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19-20; I Cor 11:23-25); cf. also the Council of Trent, session II, iv, 3.

¹⁶⁷ i.e. for some reason other than that which Christ proposed.

the Lord"¹⁶⁸ (cf. 1 Cor 11:27).

Remember my friar priests, what has been written concerning the law of Moses,¹⁶⁹ how one transgressing even in corporals things used to die "without any pity" by the sentence of the Lord (cf. Heb 10:28). · "How much" greater and "more worse (are) the torments" one merits to suffer, who has trampled upon¹⁷⁰ the Son of God and reckoned the Blood of the Testament,¹⁷¹ in which he has been sanctified,¹⁷² (to be) defiled, and has insulted the Spirit of grace" (Heb 10:29). · For a man despises, defiles, and tramples upon the Lamb of God, when, as the Apostles says, "not dejudicating" (1 Cor 11:29) and discerning Christ's Holy Bread from other foods¹⁷³ or works, or eating unworthily or even, if he was worthy, eating vainly and as one unworthy, since the Lord says through the Prophet: "Cursed be" the man, "who" does the work of God "fraudulently" (cf. Jer 48:10). · And the priests, who do not want to keep this at heart, He in truth condemns saying: "I shall curse your blessings" (Mal 2:2).

Listen, my friars: if the Blessed Virgin is so honored, as is right, because She carried Him in (Her) most holy womb;¹⁷⁴ if the blessed Baptist trembled and did not dare to touch the holy crown of the head of God;¹⁷⁵ if the Sepulcher,¹⁷⁶ in which He laid for some time is venerated, · how holy, just and worthy ought he be, who handles with hands¹⁷⁷ and receives with heart and

¹⁶⁸ For the Body and Blood of the Lord are what is made present by the transubstantiation of the bread and wine at Mass. It was the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.), in its constitution De Fide Catholica, that had recently defined the Dogma of Transubstantiation.

¹⁶⁹ The "law of Moses" is the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. They are called the Law of Moses because Moses was their author, as both Jesus and His Apostles, as well as the Jewish Rabbis, testify, (cf. Lk 24:44; Jn 1:17; 1:45; 5:46; 7:19,23; 8:5; Act 13:38; 28:3; 1 Cor 9:9). This is the Old Testament teaching as well (cf. 1 Reg 2:3; 2 Para 23:18; 31:3; 1 Esdr 3:2; 7:6; 2 Esdr 10:34; Bar 2:2).

¹⁷⁰ i.e. desecrates the Most Blessed Sacrament by treating It with contempt, or profanes it by treating it in any other manner than one would Christ Jesus Himself, True God and True Man.

¹⁷¹ Christ's Blood, which by its shedding purchased the redemption offered in the New Covenant (Testament) established by Christ, is the same Blood offered by the priest at Mass, and received by him and the faithful.

¹⁷² St. Francis is referring to the Blood of Christ as the instrument of the sanctification of each believer, in so far as It's shedding is the meritorious cause of the grace of the Sacraments, especially that of Baptism, to which St. Francis is directly referring here. The Latin of the following phrase, translated here as "has insulted," means more exactly, "has spoken contumely against." Contumely is rude, offensive and insulting language.

¹⁷³ cf. Glossa interlinearis regarding the previous scriptural citation.

¹⁷⁴ Which as a member of the immaculate body of the Virgin, was assumed into Heaven, cf. Sermones of St. Anthony of Padua, who would soon become the chief champion of the doctrine of the Bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary throughout Italy and France.

¹⁷⁵ When Christ came forward to be baptized in the river Jordan (cf. Mt 4:11-17). The Latin here is sanctum Dei verticem: thus "crown of the head" is used anatomically. On this phrase cf. Bernard of Cluny, Instructio sacerdotis, X,26; PL 184,787.

¹⁷⁶ The Holy Sepulcher—the empty tomb of Jesus Christ—was at that time the destination of all the pilgrims to the Holy Land, as well as the military objective of the Crusades.

¹⁷⁷ On account of such reverence for the hands of a priest, St. Francis often kissed these when he met a priest, and even went so far as to kiss the hooves of their horses, when he would meet them on the road.

mouth¹⁷⁸ and offers to others to be received Him, who will die no more, but who will forever conquer and has been glorified,¹⁷⁹ upon whom "the angels long to gaze" (1 Pt 1:12)?

"See your" dignity, "brother" (cf. 1 Cor 1:26) priests, and be holy, because He himself is Holy (cf. Lv 19:2). · And just as above all others on account of this ministry the Lord God has honored you,¹⁸⁰ in this manner also love (dilectio), revere, and honor Him above all others. · Great miseries and miserable infirmity, when you hold Him so present and you care for anything else in the whole world.¹⁸¹ · Let the whole man tremble with fear, let the whole world begin to completely quake, and let heaven exult, when upon the altar in the hand of the priest is "Christ, the Son of the living God" (Jn 11:27)! · O admirable height and stupendous esteem! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity, that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself, to hide Himself on behalf of our salvation under the limited, little form of bread! · See, friars, the humility of God and "pour out your hearts before Him" (Ps 61:9); humble also yourselves, so that you may be exalted by Him (cf. 1 Pt 5:6; Jm 4:10). · Therefore keep nothing of yourselves for yourselves, so that He may receive you whole, He who manifests Himself wholly to you.

I warn you on that account and exhort (you) in the Lord, that in the places, in which the friars are lingering, only one Mass be celebrated during the day according to the manner of Holy Church.¹⁸² · If indeed there are very many priests in the place, let each be content by means of the love (amor) of charity to hear the celebration of the other priest; · because Our Lord Jesus Christ fills¹⁸³ those present and absent, who are worthy of Him. · Who, though He seems to be in very many places,¹⁸⁴ nevertheless remains indivisible and "knows no loss," but as One everywhere,¹⁸⁵ as it pleases Him, works with the Lord, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

¹⁷⁸ lit. corde et ore sumit. On this phrase cf. Bernard of Cluny, loc. cit., VIII,22; PL 184,787; cf. also fn. 78. By the phrase "heart and mouth" St. Francis is referring to the two manners of receiving the Sacrament: spiritually and sacramentally. For a discussion of this distinction, cf. St. Bonaventure, Commentarium in Quattor Libros Sententiarum, Book IV, d. 9, a. 1, q. 1.

¹⁷⁹ A reference to the present glorified reality of the Humanity of Christ, who is received in the Sacrament; regarding this phrase cf. Bernard of Cluny, loc.cit., IX,25-26; PL 184,786-7.

¹⁸⁰ cf. Bernard of Cluny, loc. cit., VIII,21; PL 184, 784.

¹⁸¹ The traditional teaching in Catholic moral theology is that it is a mortal sin of profanation for a priest to intentionally distract himself during the Sacrifice; it is to this that St. Francis is referring here. Hence the congruity of the universal Tradition of facing east (away from the people) during the Canon of the Mass.

¹⁸² What St. Francis means by this has been debated. Some refer it to a desire that only one Mass be celebrated each day in a single friary, and that no so-called "private" Masses be offered. Others refer it to a desire that only one Mass be celebrated according to the Roman Rite, which was more ornate and lengthy; perhaps it reflects St. Francis' desire too, that the other priests exercise that apostolic charity which would move them to say mass for the people in public churches rather than multiply them inside the friary. For a discussion cf. K. Esser, pp. 321-2.

¹⁸³ By grace.

¹⁸⁴ According to His Humanity, by means of the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

¹⁸⁵ According to His Divinity. On the previous phrase "knows no loss" cf. Missale Romanum (1961): Praeconium Paschale Exsultet Sabbato sancto de Vigilia Paschali, "Qui licet sit divisus in partes, mutuati tamen luminis detrimenta non novit."

And, because "he who is" from God "hears the words of God" (cf. John 8:47), we¹⁸⁶ consequently, who have been more especially charged with the divine services, ought not only to hear and do, what the Lord says, but also, (so as) to instill in ourselves the height of Our Creator and our subjection to Him, to guard the vessels and the other appurtenances,¹⁸⁷ which contain His holy words. · On that account I warn all my friars and in Christ I encourage them, to this extent, that wherever they have found the divine words written, they venerate them, as they are able, · and, in as much as it pertains to them, if they have not been stored well or if they lie dishonorably scattered in some place, they gather them together and store them once again, honoring in their sermons the Lord, "who spoke these things" (3 Kg 2:4). · For many things are sanctified by the words of God (cf. 1 Tm 4:5), and in virtue of the words of Christ the Sacrament of the Altar is confected.¹⁸⁸

Furthermore I confess all my sins to the Lord God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, to the Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin and to all the saints in Heaven and on Earth, to friar H.,¹⁸⁹ the minister of our religion,¹⁹⁰ as to my venerable lord, and to the priests of our Order and to all my other blest friars. · In many things I have offended out of my own grave fault, especially that I have not kept the Rule, which I have promised the Lord, nor have I said the Office, as the Rule precepts,¹⁹¹ either out of negligence or the occasion of my infirmity¹⁹² or because I am ignorant and an idiot. · And for this reason by all means I pray, as I am able, that friar H.,¹⁹³ my lord Minister General, have the Rule inviolably observed by all; · and that the clerics say the office with devotion before God, not attending to melody of voice, but to a consonance of mind, so that voice agrees with mind, and mind indeed agrees with God,¹⁹⁴ · so that they may be able through purity of heart to appease¹⁹⁵ God and not with playfulness of voice to tickle the ears of the people.¹⁹⁶ · For I promise to guard¹⁹⁷ these things firmly, as the Lord will give me the grace; and that I will teach¹⁹⁸

¹⁸⁶ St. Francis includes himself, because he was a deacon. The liturgical duty of the deacon is to be the immediate assistant of the priest during the Sacrifice of the Mass.

¹⁸⁷ i.e. in the Missal and any other liturgical books.

¹⁸⁸ i.e. produced by the Holy Spirit by means of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine.

¹⁸⁹ The manuscripts again have differing abbreviations at this point: A, T, Ro. N; cf. fn. 154, 193 and 202.

¹⁹⁰ see fn. 156.

¹⁹¹ For the meaning of "to precept" see fn. 7.

¹⁹² St. Francis suffered from several illnesses; these are considered to have been tuberculosis of the bones, lungs, and intestines, as well as a parasitic infection of the eyes.

¹⁹³ The manuscripts have differing abbreviations at this point: H, T, R, N. cf. fns. 154, 189 and 202.

¹⁹⁴ cf. the Rule of St. Benedict, XIX,7; Ps. Bernard, Liber de modo bene vivendi, 52; PL 184,1274.

¹⁹⁵ lit. placare. In Catholic theology the liturgies of the Church are for the appeasement and propitiation of God not men, cf. for example Pope Pius XII, Mediator Dei, nn. 3 and 81. For St. Francis, this work of appeasement is a work of the Holy Spirit and the Church united with Him, as can be seen from his use of placere in RegNB XXIII,5 and 6.

¹⁹⁶ A common tendency in religious life, cf. K. Esser, p. 323. Here the Latin word translated "to tickle" is the same used to describe the milking of a cow; on this phrase cf. Conrad of Eberbach, Exordium magnum Cisterc., Dist. V, cap. XX; PL 185, 1174-5.

¹⁹⁷ i.e. see to it that these things are observed by himself and the members of his Order.

¹⁹⁸ lit. tradere, "to hand down" to posterity.

the friars, who are with me, that these things must be observed regarding the Office and the other things established by the Rule.¹⁹⁹ · Whoever of the friars, however, does not want to observe these things, I do not consider them Catholic²⁰⁰ nor my friars; I do not want even to see them nor speak with them,²⁰¹ until they have done penance. · I say this also concerning all the others, who go about wandering, after having put aside the discipline of the Rule; · since Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His own life, rather than squander His obedience to (His) Most Holy Father (cf. Phil 2:8).

I, Friar Francis, a useless man and unworthy creature of the Lord God, by means of Our Lord Jesus Christ tell friar H.,²⁰² the Minister of our whole religion²⁰³ and all the Ministers General, who will be after him, and the rest of the custodes and guardians of the friars, who are and will be, to keep this writing with themselves, to study it and to studiously commit it to memory. · And I entreat them to solicitously guard and have those things, which are written in this (writing), observed more diligently according to the good pleasure of the Omnipotent God, now and always, as long as this world²⁰⁴ shall be.

"May you be blest by the Lord" (Ps 113:13), who made those things,²⁰⁵ and may the Lord be with you forever.²⁰⁶ Amen.

Prayer

Omnipotent, Eternal, just and merciful God, grant to us wretches that doing for Thy very own sake, what we know Thou wants, and always wanting, what pleases Thee, · as ones interiorly cleansed, interiorly illumined, and inflamed with the fire of the Holy Spirit, we may be able to follow the footsteps of Thy Beloved (*dilectio*) Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, · and attain to Thee, Most High, by Thy grace alone,²⁰⁷ who in perfect Trinity and simple Unity lives and reigns and is glorified as the Omnipotent God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

¹⁹⁹ more exactly, "in all other things that have been established as regular."

²⁰⁰ Since dissent from the liturgical tradition of the Roman Church is essentially opposed to Catholicism, on account of the necessary indefectibility of that Church from Christ.

²⁰¹ Since visiting and speaking with a superior is a natural sign of approbation and communion; cf. Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.), constitution III.

²⁰² The manuscripts have differing entries at this point: Elias, T., Ro., N., H., he.; cf. fns. 154, 189, and 193.

²⁰³ see fn. 156.

²⁰⁴ see fn. 145.

²⁰⁵ i.e. heaven and earth; a reference to the passage just quoted.

²⁰⁶ i.e. may you never fall into mortal sin and attain eternal salvation.

²⁰⁷ It was the error of the British monk Pelagius (c. 354—c. 418 A.D.) that man could attain to God by his own powers.

A Letter to the Rulers of the nations

[EpRect]

In this letter St. Francis exhorts the civil officials of his time to fulfill their responsibility to foster the True Religion. St. Francis thus exhibits that authentic Catholic notion of the State's duty towards Jesus Christ, as King of Creation, and its duty to His Church.

Like "The Second Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust II] this letter preserved in a Spanish translation at Saragossa, made while John Parenti was the first Minister provincial of Spain (1227-1232 A.D.). The Latin text was in turn reconstructed from this by Luke Wadding, O.F.M. in the 16th Century. St. Francis wrote this letter sometime during or after his visit to the papal court at Viterbo, Italy in Feb./ Mar. of 1220 A.D..

To all the magistrates and consuls, judges and rulers of lands everywhere and to all others, to whom these letters will have come, Friar Francis, your tiny and despised servant in the Lord God, wishes you all salvation²⁰⁸ and peace.

Consider and see, that the day of death approaches (cf. Gen 47:29). · I beg you therefore with reverence, as I am able, lest on account of the cares and the anxious concerns (sollicitudo) for this world (saeculum), which you have, you surrender the Lord to forgetfulness²⁰⁹ or turn away from His mandates, because all those, "who" surrender Him to forgetfulness and "turn away from" His "mandates" have been "cursed" (cf. Ps 118:21) and by Him "they will be surrendered to oblivion" (Ez 33:13). · And when the day of death will have come, everything, which they thought they had, shall be borne away from them (cf. Lk 8:18). · And, in as much as they will have been wiser and more powerful in this world (saeculum), so much greater shall be the torments²¹⁰ they will endure in Hell (cf. Ws 6:7).

Whence I firmly counsel you, my lords, to consider of less account every care and anxious concern (sollicitudo), and to kindly receive the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ during His Holy Commemoration.²¹¹ · And to confer upon the people committed to you by the Lord such an honor, that every evening there be announced by a messenger, or by another sign, at which praises and thanks are to be returned to the Omnipotent Lord God by all the people.²¹² · And to know that, if you have not done this, you are obliged to render "an account

²⁰⁸ cf. fn. 68.

²⁰⁹ lit. oblivio, which means "forgetfulness, oblivion." Medieval Latin had two connotations for this term, both which are preserved in modern English, the former regarding a temporal forgetting, and the latter regarding being forgotten forever. St. Francis uses both of these to make his point; but whereas the latter connotation has almost completely eradicated the former in English, the translation adopted above has been employed to manifest St. Francis' point: to surrender God to forgetfulness (i.e. what is called "practical atheism" nowadays) is to guarantee one's personal damnation.

²¹⁰ of both body and soul.

²¹¹ i.e. the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

²¹² Having recently returned from the Holy Land, this exhortation of St. Francis recalls the practice of the Islamic muezzin, calling the people to prayer; cf. K. Esser, pp. 327-8. It also significantly expresses that conception of the duty of civil authorities, shared by the Franciscan Tertiaries such as St. Louis IX (King of France 1226-1270 A.D.), St. Ferdinand III (King of Castile 1217-1252 A.D.; King of León 1230-1252 A.D.), St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Langravers

on the Day of Judgement" before your Lord God, Jesus Christ (cf. Mt 12:36).

Let those who have kept this writing with them and observed it, know themselves to have been blest by the Lord God.

An Exhortation to praise God

[ExhLD]

St. Francis considered the praise of God a solemn duty, arising from the truth that God alone is Good, and that rejoicing in God is the expression of the recognition and confession of His Goodness.

That this characteristic of the Saint's spirituality arose early in his religious life is evidenced by this "Exhortation to praise God." Preserved on an antependium of wood in the Hermitage at Cesi di Terni, Italy, the autograph came to light at the beginning of the 16th Century. Inspired, perhaps, on account of the chapel's dedication to the Mother of God, which was built to resemble the Portiuncula, at Assisi, St. Francis wrote these spontaneous praises as a dedication of the place. The date of composition is sometime between 1213 and 1223 A.D..²¹³

"Fear the Lord and give Him honor" (Apoc. 14:7).

Worthy is the Lord "to accept" praise and "honor" (cf. Apoc 4:11).

All "who" fear "the Lord, praise Him" (cf. Ps 21:24).

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee" (Lk 21:24).

Praise Him Heaven and Earth (cf. Ps 68:35; Rom. Psalter).

Praise the Lord all you rivers (cf. Dan 3:78).

"Bless the Lord you sons" of God (cf. Dan 3:82)

This is the day which the Lord has made, let us exult and be glad in it (Ps. 117:24; Rom. Psalter).

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! "King of Israel!" (Jn 12:13)

"Every spirit praise the Lord" (Ps. 150:6).

"Praise the Lord, since He is Good" (Ps. 146:1). All you who read this, "bless the Lord" (Ps. 102:21).

All you creatures bless the Lord (cf. Ps. 102:22).

"All you birds of heaven" praise the Lord (Dan 3:80; cf. Ps 148:7-10).

All "you children" praise the Lord (cf. Ps 112:1).

"You youths and virgins" praise God (cf. Ps 148:12).

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain," to receive praise, glory and honor (cf. Apoc 5:12).

'Blest be the Holy Trinity and undivided Unity.'²¹⁴

'St. Michael the Archangel defend us in battle.'²¹⁵

of Thuringia 1221-1231 A.D.), St. Thomas More (Lord Chancellor of England 1529-1532), and the cordbearer, St. Joan of Arc (1412-1431 A.D.), which includes the civil duty to promote the True Religion; on this cf. Pope Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei* (Nov. 1, 1885 A.D.) n. 6.

²¹³ cf. K. Esser, pp. 332-5, 339-40. The arrangement of this Exhortation follows the verse structure and punctuation of the Latin text.

²¹⁴ cf. Mass for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity.

²¹⁵ cf. Mass for the Feast of St. Michael, the Archangel. By "battle" the daily spiritual struggle to

The Exposition of the Our Father

[ExpPat]

Expositions or commentaries on the Our Father were very common in the Middle Ages as an aid to meditation. For St. Francis the Our Father was a very important prayer, since it was his decision to take God as his Father that led him to dramatically renounce his own inheritance in the piazza of the Episcopal residence at Assisi. St. Francis' exposition of the Our Father manifests more clearly than any of his writings the clarity and profundity of his grasp of spiritual realities.

According to some sources, St. Francis taught his friars to recite this prayer.²¹⁶ Indeed, it is most useful as an aid to recollection. The date of composition is unknown.²¹⁷

O Most Holy "Our Father:" Creator, Redeemer, Consoler and Our Savior.²¹⁸

"Who art in Heaven:" in the Angels and in the Saints; enlightening them unto knowledge, because Thou, Lord, art Light; inflaming them unto love (amor), because Thou, Lord, art Love; indwelling and filling them unto blessedness, because Thou, Lord, art the Highest Good, the Eternal One, from whom is every good, without whom nothing is good.

"Hallowed be Thy Name:" may the knowledge of Thee in us be made bright, so that we may know, what is the breadth (cf. Ep 3:18) of Thy benefactions,²¹⁹ the length of Thy promises, the sublimity of Thy Majesty and the depth of Thy judgments.

"Thy Kingdom come:" so that Thou may reign in us by grace and makes us come unto Thy Kingdom, where vision of Thee is made manifest, love (dilectio) of Thee made perfect, company with Thee blessed, enjoyment of Thee everlasting.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven:" so that we may love Thee with (our) whole heart (cf. Lk 10:27) by thinking of Thee always, with (our) whole soul by desiring Thee always, with (our) whole mind directing unto Thee all our intentions, by seeking Thy honor in all things and with all our strength by expending all our strength and sense of soul and body in submission to Thy love (amor) and not in anything else; and may we love our neighbors even as our very selves by drawing all to Thy love to the extent of (our) strength, by rejoicing over the good things of others just as over our own and by compassionating (them) in evils and by giving offense to no one (cf. 2 Cor 6:3).

"Give us this day," Thy Beloved (dilectio) Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, "our daily Bread:" to remember and understand and reverence the love (amor), which He had for us, and those things, which He said, did, or endured on our behalf.

"And forgive us our debts:" by Thy ineffable mercy, through the virtue of the Passion of

observe the moral law is signified.

²¹⁶ cf. K. Esser, pp. 342. It should be noted that the association of this prayer with "The Praises to be said at every hour" [LaudHor] is very doubtful, cf. ibid. pp. 352-4.

²¹⁷ K. Esser, p. 352. This Exposition is divided by K. Esser into verses according to its respective paragraphs.

²¹⁸ St. Francis addresses the Father with the titles "Redeemer, Consoler and Our Savior," because all the work of God in creation is rooted in the unified action of the Persons of the Trinity, and thus can be attributed to each. Properly speaking, however, the Son is called "Redeemer, and Our Savior," and the Holy Spirit, the "Consoler."

²¹⁹ i.e. gifts; "benefaction" is the customary term for a gift given to a religious community by a benefactor.

Thy Beloved (dilectio) Son and by the merits and intercession of the Blessed Virgin and all Thy elect.

"As we also forgive our debtors:" and what we do not fully forgive, Lord make us fully forgive, so that we may truly love (our) enemies for the sake of Thee and intercede devoutly on their behalf with Thee, rendering to none evil for evil (cf. 1 Thes 5:15) and striving in all things to advance unto Thee.

"And lead us not into temptation:" hidden or manifest, sudden or importune.²²⁰

"But deliver us from evil:" past, present, and future. Glory to the Father,²²¹

The Form of living given to Saint Clare

[FormViv]

St. Clare was the first woman to follow St. Francis in the observance of the Apostolic Life. He himself cut her hair and gave her the habit at St. Mary of the Angels. Soon other courageous and devout women were joining St. Clare. To them St. Francis addressed this short note. It is the most ancient expression of his understanding of the vocation of St. Clare and her daughters in religion, and has been preserved in the Rule of St. Clare for the last 750 years.²²² Both Bl. Thomas of Celano and Pope Gregory IX make reference to it.²²³ This note was written sometime between 1212 and the beginning of 1213 A.D.²²⁴

Because you have by divine inspiration made yourselves daughters and handmaids of the Most High, the Highest King, the Heavenly Father, and have betrothed yourselves to the Holy Spirit by choosing to live according to the perfection of the Holy Gospel: · I want and promise that I and my friars will always exercise a diligent care and special solicitude for you as for them.²²⁵

²²⁰ What is "importune" is inconvenient and obstructing.

²²¹ After the custom of adding a doxology at the end of the recitation of each psalm in the Divine Office, St. Francis closes his exposition with the Gloria.

²²² Rule of St. Clare, VI,2; cf. K. Esser, p. 355.

²²³ cf. K. Esser, pp. 355-6; 2 Celano 204, and the letter of Gregory IX (pope 1227-1242 A.D.), Angelis gaudium, of May 11, 1238 A.D..

²²⁴ cf. K. Esser, pp. 358-9.

²²⁵ lit. de vobis tamquam de ipsis. Because St. Clare and her spiritual sisters, the Poor Clares, were cloistered in their monasteries; they required the pastoral care of the friars so as to be able to attend Mass and receive the other Sacraments. This is what St. Francis is promising here. It will be useful to compare what St. Francis says in this writing of the Poor Clares to what he says of the Blessed Virgin in the Marian Antiphon from the "Office of the Passion" [OffPass: Antiphon 1-2].

The Praises to be said at every hour

[LaudHor]

These praises formed part of a short para-liturgical ceremony which St. Francis introduced for the purpose of recollecting the friars before the recitation of the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since Our Lady had only recently given St. Dominic the Holy Rosary,²²⁶ the daily recitation of this office was still the most popular Marian devotion. The habit St. Francis had both of praising God and honoring the Blessed Virgin is a characteristic of his authentic Catholic spirit. The date of composition is uncertain, at least some years before his death in 1226 A.D..²²⁷

Rubric: (Here) begin the praises which (our) most blessed Father Francis ordained and used to say at all the hours of the day and night and before the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, beginning thus: 'Most Holy, Our Father who art in heaven,'²²⁸ etc.. with the 'Glory be.' Then the praises are to be said:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Omnipotent, who *is* and who *was* and who *is to come* (cf. Apoc 4:8):

And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.

Worthy are Thee, Lord Our God, to accept *praise*, glory and honor, *and blessing* (cf. Apoc 4:11):

And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.

Worthy is the Lamb, who has been slain to accept virtue and divinity²²⁹ and wisdom and fortitude and honor and glory and blessing (Apoc 5:12):

And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.

'Let us bless the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit.'²³⁰

And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.

All you works of the Lord bless the Lord (Dan 3:57):

And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.

Recite praise to Our God all you His servants and you who fear God, the very little and the great (cf. Apoc 19:5):

And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.

Praise Him, *the Glorious One*, you heavens and earth (cf. Ps 68:35; Rom. Psalter):

²²⁶ cf. Pope Leo XIII Magnae Dei Matris, n. 8 (Sept. 8, 1892 A.D.); and Octobri Mense, n. 8 (Sept. 22, 1891 A.D.).

²²⁷ cf. K. Esser, p. 394. K. Esser divides these praises into verses according to their structure, with the final prayer counted as verse 11, and the initial rubric omitted in the enumeration altogether. Words in italics are those peculiar to St. Francis' quotation of the verse.

²²⁸ It should be noted that it was St. Francis' habit to begin the recitation of the Our Father by adding the word "Most Holy," cf. K. Esser, p. 394.

²²⁹ At this point the Vulgate reads divinitatem, whereas the Greek reads pluton (riches). In Hebrew, Greek and Latin this pair of words had linguistic affinities, and for this reason in Latin divinitas (divinity) and divitias (riches) were on occasion used interchangeably; Likewise the Greek word means both "riches" and "Pluto," the god of wealth. In the West this reading was understood as Christ's reception of the divine honor due Him from men; for a discussion of this reading of the text cf. Cornelius à Lapide, Commentarii in Sacram Scripturam, Apoc. 5:12.

²³⁰ A direct citation from the Breviarium Romanum ad Laudes Dominicae vel e precibus Completorii.

*And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.
And every creature, which is in Heaven and upon the earth and which is beneath the earth and
the sea and those which are in it (cf. Apoc 5:13):
And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:
And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
And let us praise and exalt Him above all throughout the ages.*

Prayer: Omnipotent, Most Holy, Most High, and Highest God, all good, Highest Good, wholly good, who alone is good (cf. Lk 18:19), to Thee do we render every praise, every glory, every thanks, every honor, every blessing and all goods. Let it be. Let it be. Amen.

The Office of the Passion of the Lord

[OffPass]

Despite the customary title of this work, this Office was composed by St. Francis as a praise and meditation on the entire Mystery of Redemption, from the Incarnation, through the Passion and Resurrection, to the second coming of Christ in glory at the end of time.²³¹ Indeed, as can be seen from the psalms of this Office of the Passion, the central subject is Christ's prayer to the Father during the Redemption. In this St. Francis is merely reiterating that Patristic understanding of the psalms that the Catholic Church preserves today.

Similar to the liturgical Offices of the Breviary, this work comprises a short selection of verses, arraigned in "psalms" and to be recited after each hour of the Office of Our Lady, throughout the days of the year. The date of this Office' composition is unknown.²³² To provide the English reader with a continuity of understanding St. Francis' thought, this translation follows the Latin texts used by St. Francis, taken from the Psalters of his day, rather than contemporary translations or those of the Douay-Rheims edition of the Bible. Items, within each psalm, in italics, indicate words inserted by St. Francis. The rubrics, included with this Office, though not written by St. Francis, are those chosen by Fr. Esser from the most ancient manuscript tradition.²³³

²³¹ cf. K. Esser, p. 396. That "Passion" was understood by St. Francis, Alcuin, and some of the Fathers, as a metonym for the entire Mystery of Redemption, cf. K. Esser, p. 397.

²³² cf. K. Esser, pp.447-8. K. Esser divides the psalms into verses according to their natural structure. The plus "+" symbol marks the mid-verse hiatus, the tilde "~" symbol marks the secondary hiatus. This latter symbol has been added by the translator to mark those verses which K. Esser identifies as having a secondary hiatus. The Marian Antiphon, which is enumerated separately from Psalm I, is counted as having two verses; the final prayer, as well as all rubrics, are not counted. Capitalization in this Office follows St. Francis' approach of finding in these biblical texts the words of Christ Himself; thus I, Me, My, and Mine are capitalized as referring to the Person of Christ.

²³³ cf. K. Esser, p. 412.

Introduction

(Here) begin the psalms, which our most blessed Father Francis ordained for the reverence and memory and praise of the Passion of the Lord. Which are to be said throughout every hour²³⁴ of the day and night as one (single Office). And (these psalms) begin from Compline of Good Friday, for the reason that on that night Our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed and seized. And note, that blessed Francis used to say this office thus: First he used to say the prayer, which the Lord and Master taught us: *Most Holy Our Father etc.* with the praises, namely: *Holy, Holy, Holy*, as is contained above. With the praises finished, with the prayer he used to begin this antiphon, namely: *Holy Virgin Mary*. He used to say the psalms of Holy Mary first; afterwards he used to say other psalms which he had selected, and at the end of all the psalms, which he used to say, he used to say the psalms of the Passion. With the psalm finished, he used to say this antiphon, namely: *Holy Virgin Mary*. With the antiphon finished, the Office had been completed.²³⁵

Part I: For the Sacred Triduum of Holy Week and weekdays throughout the year

At Compline

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm I

God, My life have I announced to Thee + Thou has set My tears in Thy sight (Ps 55:8-9).

All My enemies against Me were thinking evil things for Me (Ps 40:8a - Rom. Ps.) + *and* they took counsel together (cf. Ps 70:10c - Gal. Ps.).

And they set against Me evil in place of *You* + and hatred in place of My love (dilectio) (cf. Ps 108:5).

In as much as they loved Me, they were disparaging Me + however I was praying (Ps 108:4). My Holy Father (Jn 17:11), *King of Heaven and Earth*, do not withdraw from Me + since tribulation is (My) neighbor and there is none to help (Ps 21:12 - Rom. Ps.).

Let My enemies be turned (Rom. Ps.) in retreat + on whatever day I will have invoked Thee, behold I know that Thou art My God (Ps 55:10 - cf. Rom. Ps.).

My friends and My neighbors against Me drew near and stood + and My neighbors stood from afar (Ps 37:12 - Rom. Ps.)

Afar Thou has made My acquaintances (to stand) from Me + they have set Me as an abomination to themselves, I have been betrayed and I used to go not out (Ps 87:9 - cf. Rom. Ps.)

Holy Father (Jn 17:11), do not distance Thy help from Me (Ps 21:20) + My God look back *to* help Me (cf. Ps 70:12).

Stretch to My assistance + Lord God of My salvation (Ps 37:23).

²³⁴ i.e. every liturgical hour, beginning with Matins; for an explanation of these cf. fn. 283.

²³⁵ i.e. that hour of the Office had been finished. Here the rubrics omit mention of the Final Prayer, which is to be said after the final repetition of the Marian Antiphon, as can be seen from Psalm I. The psalms which follow Psalm I proceed in the same manner as Psalm I, with the Gloria, Marian Antiphon, and Closing prayer.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary, there is none like unto Thee born in the world among women, · Daughter and Handmaid of the Most High, the Highest King, the heavenly Father, Mother of Our Most Holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit: pray on our behalf with St. Michael the Archangel and all the Virtues²³⁶ of Heaven and all the Saints before Thy Most Holy Beloved Son, the Lord and Master. — Glory to the Father. As it was.

Note, that this abovesaid antiphon is said at all hours; and it is said in place of the antiphon, chapter, hymn, versicle and prayer; and similarly at Matins and at all the hours. Nothing other did he used to say at these (hours) except this antiphon with these psalms.

To conclude the Office blessed Francis used to say:

Let us bless the Lord God, living and true; let us always return unto Him praise, glory, honor, blessing and all good things. Amen. Amen. Let it be. Let it be.

At Matins

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm II

Lord God of My salvation + at day I shout and at night before Thee (Ps 87:2).
Let there enter into Thy sight My pleading + incline Thy ear to My prayer (Ps 87:3).
Stretch to My soul and free her + on account of My enemies rescue Me (Ps 68:19).
Since Thou art He who have drawn (Rom. Ps.) Me from the womb ~ My hope from My
mother's breasts + upon Thee have I been cast forth from the womb (Ps 21:10).
From My mother's womb Thou art My God + do not withdraw from Me (Ps 21:11).
Thou know My reproach and My confusion + and My reverence (Ps 68:20).
In Thy sight are all, who oppress Me + reproach did My heart expect and misery (Ps 68:21a-b).
And I endured, (one) who would be made sad at the same time and he was not + and (one) who
would console (Me), and I (him) found not (Ps 68,21c-d).
God, the iniquitous have risen up against (Rom. Ps.) Me + and the synagogue²³⁷ of powers sought

²³⁶ The Virtues are one of the nine choirs of angels. St. Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologiae: pars. I, q. 108, a. 5) writes, "Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. viii) that the "name 'virtues' signifies a certain virile and immovable strength"; first, in regard of those Divine operations which befit them; secondly, in regard to receiving Divine gifts. Thus it signifies that they undertake fearlessly the Divine behests appointed to them; and this seems to imply strength of mind." The Latin here, virtutibus, can also signify "the Powers" of Heaven, i.e. all the Angels.

²³⁷ synagoge means a "gathering;" the Rabbis who compiled the Septuagint translation of the Old

My soul and they did not set Thee forth in their own sight (Ps 85:14).
I have been reckoned with those (who are) descending into the lake + I have been made free as a
man without assistance among the dead (Ps 87,5-6a).
Thou art My Most Holy Father + My King and My God (cf. Ps 43:5a).
Stretch to My assistance + Lord God of My salvation (Ps 37:23).

At Prime

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm III

Have mercy on Me, God, have mercy on Me + since in Thee does My soul trust (Ps 56:2).
And in the shadow of Thy wings shall I hope + until iniquity passes over (Ps 56:2a).
I shall shout to *My Most Holy Father* the Most High + Lord (Rom. Ps.), who does good to Me
(cf. Ps (56:3)
He sent from Heaven and He freed Me + and He gave up to opprobrium those trampling upon
Me (Ps 56:4a-b).
God sent His mercy and His truth + He rescued My soul (Ps 56:4c-5a - Rom. Ps.) from My
strongest enemies and from those, who hate Me, who had been comforted on My account
(Ps 17:18).
A snare they have prepared for My feet + and they have bent My soul over (Ps 56:7a-b).
They dug before My face a ditch + and they fell into it (Ps 57:7c-d).
My heart has been prepared, God, My heart has been prepared + I will sing and speak a psalm
(Ps 56:8).
Rise up, My Glory, rise up psaltery and kitara + I will rise up at the dawn (Ps 56:10).
I will confess Thee among the peoples, Lord + and I will speak a psalm to Thee among the
nations (Ps 56:10).
Since magnified unto the heavens is Thy mercy + and unto the clouds Thy truth (Ps 56:11).
Be exalted above the heavens, God + and above every land Thy glory (Ps 56:12).

Note, that the abovesaid psalm is always said at Prime.

At Terce

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm IV

Have mercy on Me, God, since man has trampled upon Me + attacking all the day, he has

Testament used this term to distinguish the society of the wicked from the Church (ekklesia:
Greek for "assembly" convoked by lawful authority) of the just.

oppressed Me (Ps 55:2)
They have trampled upon Me, My enemies, all the day + since many (were) warring against Me (Ps 55:2).
All My enemies against Me were thinking evil things for Me + a iniquitous word did they established against Me (Ps 40:8b-9c - cf. Rom. Ps.).
Those who were guarding My soul + took counsel together (Ps 70:10b).
They used to go outside + and they were speaking (Ps 40:7 - Rom. Ps.) for that very purpose (Ps. 40:8 - Gal. Ps.).
All seeing Me derided Me + they spoke with lips and moved (their) head (Ps 21:8).
However I am a worm and no man + the reproach of men and the outcast of the people (Ps 21:7).
Above all My enemies I have been made a strong reproach to My neighbors + and (an object of) fear to My acquaintances (Ps 30:12a-b).
Holy Father (Jn 17:11) do not distance Thy help from Me + look thoroughly to My defense (Ps 21:20).
Stretch to My assistance + Lord God of My salvation (Ps 37:23).

At Sext

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm V

With My voice I shouted to the Lord + with My voice I have beseeched the Lord (Ps 141:2).
I pour out in Thy sight My pleading + and My tribulation I pronounce before Him (Ps 141:3).
Poised to desert²³⁸ Me (is) My spirit + and Thou knew My path (Ps 141:4a-b).
In this way in which I used to walk + the proud hid a snare for Me (Ps 141:4c-d - cf. Rom. Ps.).
I was surveying the right and looking + and there was none who knew Me (Ps 141:5a-b).
Flight perished from Me + and there is none who looks after My soul (Ps 141:5c-d).
Since for Thy sake I have endured reproach + confusion covers My face (Ps 68:8).
A stranger have I been made to My brothers + and a pilgrim to My mother's sons (Ps 68:9).
Holy Father (Jn 17:11), zeal for Thy house consumes Me and the reproaches of those upbraiding Thee have fallen upon Me (Ps 68:10).
And against Me they have been glad and have come together + gathered together over Me are whips and I did not know it (Ps 34:15).
They have been multiplied more than the hairs of My head + those who hate Me without cause (Ps 68:5a-b).
They have been comforted, who persecuted Me, My enemies, unjustly + those whom I did not plunder I then unbound (Ps 68:5c-d).
Iniquitous witnesses rising (up) + who did not know (Me), were interrogating Me (Ps 34:11).
They were paying Me back evil things for good (Ps 34:12a) *and* they were disparaging Me + since I was pursuing goodness (Ps 37:21).
Thou art *My Most Holy Father* + My King and My God (Ps 43:5).
Stretch to My assistance + Lord God of My salvation (Ps 37:23).

²³⁸ lit. in deficiendo ex Me, or more exactly "in the act of being about to desert from Me."

At Nones

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm VI

O all you, who pass by the way + attend and see, if there is a sorrow like My sorrow (Lam 1:12a-b).

Since many dogs have surrounded Me + a council of the malignant besieges Me (Ps 21:17). They indeed have considered and inspected Me + they have divided for themselves My vestments and upon My garment they have cast lots (Ps 21:18b-19).

They have pierced My hands and My feet + and they have numbered out all My bones (Ps 21:17c-18a - Rom. Ps.).

They have opened above Me their mouth + as a lion seizing and roaring (Ps 21:14).

As water have I been poured out + and all My bones have been dispersed (Ps 21:15a-b).

And My heart has become like molten wax + in the middle of My belly (Ps 21:15c - Rom. Ps.).

Dried up as an earthen pot is My virtue + and My tongue adhered to My throat (Ps 21:16a-b).

And they gave (Me) gall for My food + and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink (Ps 68:22).

And into the dust of death *they have lead* Me (cf. Ps 21:61c) + and upon the sorrow of My wounds they have added (sorrow) (Ps 68:27b).

I slept and I rose (Ps 3:6 - Rom. Ps.) + and *My Most Holy Father took Me up* with glory (cf. Ps 72:24c).

Holy Father (Jn 17:11) Thou has held My right hand ~ and in Thy will Thou has led Me + and with glory Thou has assumed Me (Ps 72:24 - Rom. Ps.).

For what is there for Me in Heaven + and apart from Thee what have I wanted on earth? (Ps 72:25)

See, see that I am God, *says* the Lord + I shall be exalted among the nations and I shall be exalted on the Earth (cf. Ps 45:11).

Blest (be) *the Lord God of Israel* (Lk 1:68a), who redeems the souls of His servants *from*²³⁹ *His very own Most Holy Blood* + and does not forsake all who hope in Him (Ps 33:23 - Rom. Ps.).

And we know, that He comes + that He comes to judge with justice²⁴⁰ (cf. Ps 95:13b - Rom. Ps.).

At Vespers

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm VII

All nations clap (your) hands + raise a shout of joy to God in a voice of exultation (Ps 46:2).

²³⁹ To "redeem" is to pay a ransom for another from one's own treasury of possessions.

²⁴⁰ lit. venit iustitiam iudicare, "he comes to declare justice" by means of judgment.

Since the Lord (is) exalted + the terrible great King over every land (Ps 46:3).

Because the Most Holy Father of Heaven, Our King before the ages + sent His Beloved (dilectio) Son from on high and He wrought salvation in the midst of the Earth (Ps 73:12).

Let the heavens be glad and the earth exalt ~ let the sea be shaken and its fullness + the fields will rejoice and all, which is in them (Ps 95:11-12a).

Sing to Him a new song + sing to the Lord every land (Ps 95:1).

Since the Lord is great and exceedingly praiseworthy + terrible above all gods (Ps 95:4).

Bring to the Lord you fatherlands of the nations ~ bring to the Lord glory and honor + bring to the Lord the glory of His Name (Ps 95:7-8a).

Lift up your bodies ~ and bear His Holy Cross + and follow until the end His most holy precepts (cf. Lk 14:27; 1 Pt 2:21).

Let all the Earth be shaken by His face + tell among the nations, that the Lord reigned from a tree (Ps 95:9b-10a - Gal. & Rom. Ps.).

Thus far is said each day from Good Friday until the Feast of the Ascension. But on the feast of the Ascension these verses are to be added:

And He ascended to heaven and He sits at the right hand of the Most Holy Father in Heaven,²⁴¹ be exalted above the heavens, God + and above every land Thy glory (Ps 56:12).

And we know that He comes + that He will come to judge with justice.²⁴²

And note, that from the Ascension to the Advent of the Lord this psalm is to be said each day in the same manner, namely: *All nations* with the abovesaid verses by saying the *Glory be* there where the psalm finishes, namely (after) *that He will come to judge with justice.*

Note that these abovesaid psalms are to be said from Good Friday till the Sunday of the Resurrection. In the same manner they are to be said from the octave of Pentecost till the Advent of the Lord and from the octave of Epiphany till the Sunday of the Resurrection, excepting the Sundays and principle feasts, on which they are not said; but on other days they are to be said daily.

Part II: For the Paschal Season

On Holy Saturday, namely with the day of Saturday completed

At Compline

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm VIII

God stretch to My assistance + Lord make haste to help Me.

Let²⁴³ them confounded and reverent + who seek My soul.

²⁴¹ On this phrase cf. the Apostles Creed.

²⁴² cf. fn. 240.

Let them be turned backwards and blush + who will evil things for Me.
Let them be turned away on the spot, those blushing + who say to Me: Well done, well done.
Let them exult and be glad in Thee, all who seek Thee + and let them always say: May the Lord
be magnified: who love (dilectio) Thy salvation.
But I am destitute and poor + God, help Me.
My helper and liberator are Thee + Lord do not delay (Ps 69:2-6).

At Matins on the Sunday of the Resurrection

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm IX

Sing to the Lord a new song + because He has worked wonders²⁴⁴ (Ps 97:1a-b).
He has sacrificed His Beloved (dilectio) Son with his right hand + and holy (is) His arm (Ps
97:1c-d).
The Lord has made known His salvation + in the sight of the nations He has revealed His justice
(Ps 97:2).
On *that* day the Lord commanded His mercy + and at night His song (Ps 41:9a-b).
This is the day, which the Lord has made + let us exult and be glad in it (Ps 117:24).
Blest (is) He who comes in the Name of the Lord + the Lord God, and He has shined upon us (Ps
117:26a-27a).
Let the heavens be glad and the earth exult ~ let the sea be shaken and its fullness + the fields
will rejoice and all which is in them (Ps 95:11-12a).
Bring to the Lord you fatherlands of the nations ~ bring to the Lord glory and honor + bring to
the Lord the glory of His Name (Ps 95:7-8a).

Thus far is said each day from the Sunday of the Resurrection till the Feast of the Ascension at all hours besides
Vespers and Compline and Prime. But on the night of the Ascension these verses are added:

Kingdoms of the Earth sing to God + sing a psalm to the Lord (Ps 67:33a).
Sing a psalm to God, who ascends above the heaven of heavens + to the east (Ps 67:33b-34a).
Behold He will give His voice a voice of virtue ~ give glory to God over Israel + His
magnificence and His virtue (are) in the clouds (Ps 67:34b-35).
God is wonderful in His saints + the God of Israel Himself shall give virtue and fortitude to His
people, blest (be) God (Ps 67:36). Glory.

And note, that this psalm is said each day from the Ascension of the Lord till the octave of Pentecost with the
abovesaid verses at Matins and Terce and Sext and Nones, by saying the Glory be there where the *Blest (be) God* is
said and not elsewhere.

Likewise note, that in the same manner it is to be said only at Matins on Sundays and the principle feasts from the
octave of Pentecost till the Advent of the Lord, and from the octave of Epiphany till the Thursday of the Lord's
Supper, because on that very day the Lord ate the Passover with His disciples; or another psalm can be said at

²⁴³ In accord with St. Francis' approach to these texts, the Latin subjunctive here is taken as
indicating a command rather than a wish.

²⁴⁴ on "wonders" see fn. 57.

Matins or at vespers, when one wants, namely: *I will exalt Thee, Lord* (Ps. 29), as is had in the Psalter; and this from the Sunday of the Resurrection till the Feast of the Ascension, and not further.

At Prime

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm: Have mercy on Me, God, have mercy on he **as above** *Ps III*

At Terce, Sext and Nones

is said the Psalm: Sing **as above** *Ps IX*

At Vespers

The Psalm: All nations **as above** *Ps VII*

Part III: For Sundays and the principal festivities

(Here) begins the other psalms, which our most blessed Father Francis ordained, which are to be said in place of the abovesaid psalms of the Passion of the Lord on Sundays and on the principal festivities from the octave of Pentecost till Advent and from the octave of Epiphany till the Thursday of the Lord's Supper; you are to understand correctly, that they are said on that day, because it is the Passover of the Lord.

At Compline

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm God stretch to My assistance **as is had in the Psalter** *Ps VIII*

At Matins

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm: Sing **as above** *Ps IX*

At Prime

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm: Have mercy on Me, God, have mercy **as above** *Ps III*

At Terce

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm X

Raise a shout of joy to the Lord every land ~ speak a psalm to His Name + give glory as His praise (Ps 65:1-2).

Say to God, how terrible are all Thy works, Lord + in the multitude of Thy virtue Thy enemies will lie to Thee (Ps 65:3).

Let every land adore Thee and sing a psalm to Thee + let it speak a psalm to Thy Name (Ps 65:4).

Come, hear and I will tell, all you who fear the Lord + how great the Lord made My soul (Ps 65:16).²⁴⁵

To Him with My mouth I shouted + and I exulted with My tongue (Ps 65:17 - Rom. Ps.).

And He listened from His holy temple to My voice + and My shout (was) in His sight (Ps 17:7c-d).

Bless Our *Lord*, you nations + and make (your) voice heard as His *praise* (Ps 65:8).

And blest in Him shall be all the tribes of the Earth + all nations shall magnify Him (Ps 71:17c-d).

Blest (be) the Lord God of Israel + who alone works great wonders²⁴⁶ (Ps 71:18 - Rom. Ps.).

And blest (be) the Name of His majesty forever + and with His majesty every land shall be filled, let it be, let it be (Ps 71:19).

At Sext

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm XI

May the Lord listen to you on the day of tribulation + may the Name of the God of Jacob protect you (Ps 19:2).

May He send you help from the Holy (Place) + and from Sion may He keep you safe (Ps 19:3).

²⁴⁵ cf. Missale Romanum (1961): Offertorium Dominicæ II post Epiphaniam.

²⁴⁶ on "wonders" see fn. 57.

May He be mindful of your every sacrifice + and may your holocaust be made fatty (Ps 19:4).
May He grant unto you according to your heart + and may He confirm your every counsel (Ps 19:5).

We shall be glad in Thy salvation + and in the Name of the Lord Our God we shall be magnified (Ps 19:6 - Rom. Ps.).

May the Lord fulfill all your petitions ~ now I know, that (Ps 19:7a-b) *the Lord has sent Jesus Christ His Son + and* that He will judge the peoples in justice (Ps 9:9b).

And the Lord has been made the refuge of the poor ~ the Helper in the occasions of tribulation + and let them hope in Thee who know Thy Name (Ps 9:10-11a - Rom. Ps.).

Blest (be) the Lord my God (Ps 143:1b) ~ because He *has* become my supporter and my refuge + on the day of my tribulation (Ps 58:17c-d).

My helper, to Thee will I sing a psalm ~ because God my supporter + (is) my God, my mercy (Ps 58:18).

At Nones

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm *XII*

In Thee, Lord, have I hoped, I shall not be confounded forever + in Thy justice free Me and rescue Me (Ps 70:1b-2a).

Incline Thy ear to Me + and save Me (Ps 70:2b).

Be for Me as God the protector ~ and as a fortified place + to save Me (Ps 70:3a-b).

Since Thou art My patience Lord + Lord, My hope from My youth (Ps 70:5).

In Thee I have I been strengthened from the womb ~ from the womb of My mother Thou art My protector + in Thee (is) My singing always (Ps 70:6).

May My mouth be filled with praise ~ that I may sing Thy glory + all the day Thy greatness (Ps 70:8).

Listen to Me, Lord, since kind is Thy mercy + according to the multitude of (the acts of) Thy mercy look back upon Me (Ps 68:17).

And do not turn Thy face from Thy boy + since I am oppressed, quickly listen to Me (Ps 68:18).

Blest (be) the Lord My God (Ps 143:1b) ~ because He *has* become My supporter and My refuge + on the day of My tribulation (Ps 58:17c-d).

My helper, to Thee will I sing a psalm ~ because God My supporter + (is) My God, My mercy (Ps 58:18).

At Vespers

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm: All nations as above *Ps VII*

Part IV: For the season of the Advent of the Lord

(Here) begin the other psalms, which our most blessed Father Francis similarly ordained, which are to be said in place of the abovesaid psalms of the Passion of the Lord from the Advent of the Lord till the vigil of the Nativity and not further.

At Compline

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm *XIII*

Until when, Lord, will Thou forget Me to the end? + until when will Thou turn Thy face from Me?

How long will I set counsels in My soul + sorrow in My heart throughout the day?

Until when will My enemy be exalted above Me? + Look back, and listen to me, Lord, My God. Illumine My eyes, so that I may never fall asleep in death + so that My enemy may never say: I have prevailed against Him.

They who oppress Me, will exult if I will have moved + however I in Thy mercy have hoped.

My heart shall exalt in Thy salvation; I will sing to the Lord, who grants good things to Me + and I will sing a psalm to the Name of the Lord, the Most High (Ps 12:1-6).

At Matins

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm *XIV*

I will confess, Thee, Lord, *the Most Holy Father, King of Heaven and Earth* + since Thou has consoled Me (cf. Is 12:1).

Thou art God My savior + I will go faithfully and I will not fear (cf. Is 12:2a-b).

My fortitude and My praise (is) the Lord + and He has made into My salvation (Is 12:2c).

Thy right hand, Lord, has been magnified in fortitude ~ Thy right hand, Lord, has struck the enemy + and in the multitude of Thy glory Thou has deposed My adversaries (Ex 15:6-7a).

Let the poor see and be glad + seek God and may thy soul live (Ps 68:33).

Let them praise Him, heavens and Earth + the sea and all creeping things in them (Ps 68:35).

Since God shall save Sion + and they will rebuild the cities of Judah (Ps 68:36a-b - Rom. Ps.).

And they will inhabit that place + and as an inheritance they will acquire her (Ps 68:36c).

And the seed of His servants shall possess her + and those who love (*dilectio*) His Name shall dwell in her (Ps 68:37).

At Prime

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm: Have mercy on me, God, have mercy **as above Ps III**

At Terce

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm: Raise a shout of joy to God **as above Ps X**

At Sext

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm: May the Lord listen to you **as above Ps XI**

At Nones

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm: In Thee, Lord, have I hoped **as above Ps XII**

At Vespers

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

The Psalm: All nations **as above Ps VII**

Note also, that the entire psalm is not said, but (only) as far as the verse, namely: *Let all the Earth be shaken by His face*; you are to understand correctly, that the entire verse is said: *Lift up your bodies*. With this verse finished there is said: *Glory to the Father* and so (this psalm) is said daily at Vespers from Advent till the vigil of the Nativity.

Part V: For the season of the Nativity of the Lord until the octave of Epiphany

At Vespers on the Nativity of the Lord

Antiphon: Holy Virgin Mary

Psalm XV

Exult God our helper (Ps 80:2a) + raise a shout of joy *to the Lord God living and true* in a voice of exultation (Ps 46:2b).

Since the Lord (is) exalted + the terrible great King over every land (Ps 46:3).

Because the Most Holy Father of Heaven, Our King before the ages (Ps 73:12a) ~ sent His

Beloved (dilectio) Son from on high + and He was born of the Blessed Virgin, Holy Mary.

He Himself invoked Me: Thou art My Father (Ps 88:27a) + and I will set Him as (My) firstborn, exalted before the kings of the Earth (Ps 88:28).

On *that* day the Lord commanded His mercy + and at night His song (cf. Ps 41:9a-b).

This is the day, which the Lord has made + let us exalt and be glad in it (Ps 117:24).

Because the Most Holy Beloved Boy has been given to us ~ and He has been born on our behalf

(cf. Is 9:6) on the road and placed in the manger + because there was no place in the inn
(cf. Lk 2:7).

Glory in the highest *to the Lord God* + and on earth peace to men of good will (cf. Lk 2:14).

Let the heavens be glad and the earth exalt ~ let the sea be shaken and its fullness + the fields will rejoice and all, which is in them (Ps 95:11-12a).

Sing *to Him* a new song + sing to the Lord every land (Ps 95:1).

Since the Lord is great and exceedingly praiseworthy + terrible above all gods (Ps 95:4).

Bring to the Lord you fatherlands of the nations ~ bring to the Lord glory and honor + bring to the Lord the glory of His Name (Ps 95:7-8a).

Lift up your bodies ~ and bear His Holy Cross + and follow until the end His most holy precepts (cf. Lk 14:27; 1 Pt 2:21).

Note, that this psalm is said from the Nativity of the Lord until the octave of Epiphany at all hours. If one wants to say this Office of blessed Francis, let him say it thus: first say the Our Father with the praises, namely: *Holy, Holy, Holy*. With the praises finished with the prayer as above the antiphon is begun: *Holy Virgin Mary* with the psalm, which has been established for each hour of the day and night. And let it be said with great reverence.

A Prayer before the Crucifix

[OrCruc]

According to the historical record, St. Francis was inspired to compose this prayer after an extraordinary revelation that occurred in the little church of San Damiano, just outside the walls of Assisi. On that occasion Our Lord, depicted in the large iconic Crucifix above the altar, spoke and commanded St. Francis with the words: "Francis, go and rebuild My Church, which as you can see, is falling into ruin."²⁴⁷ This was in January of 1206 A.D. and this prayer was written down shortly afterwards.²⁴⁸

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the shadows of my heart, and grant unto me right faith, certain hope and perfect charity, sense and understanding, Lord, so that I may accomplish Thy holy and true mandate.

The Regula Bullata

[RegB]

Of all the rules of religious orders in the Roman Catholic Church the Rule of St. Francis has been the subject of the most controversies and the most Papal interventions and declarations. Indeed Pope Nicholas III went so far as to censure its detractors.²⁴⁹ The reason for this lies in the Rule's perfect conformity to the highest standards of the Gospel. Yet the demands it places on the one who promises to observe it in this life are nothing in comparison to the glory to be won by him from Christ in the life to come.

The official text of the Rule of St. Francis was approved on November 29, 1223 A.D. by Pope Honorius III in the Bull Solet Annuere. Hence it is customary to present the text of the Rule within that of the papal decree (as is done below within square brackets). The original of the Bull is kept at the Sacro Convento in Assisi.²⁵⁰ K. Esser holds that, in all probability, St. Francis wrote the text of the Rule, which it requotes, in his own hand, sometime between Pentecost and November of 1223 A.D..²⁵¹

[Honorius,²⁵² bishop, servant of the servants of God, to (Our) beloved sons, Friar Francis and the other friars from the Order of Friars Minor, health and apostolic benediction. The Apostolic See is accustomed to agree²⁵³ to the pious wishes and upright desires of those asking to share in (Her) benevolent favor. On that account, beloved (dilectio) sons in the Lord, having yielded to your pious prayers, We confirm for you, by (Our) apostolic authority, the Rule of your

²⁴⁷ cf. 2 Celano 10; and St. Bonaventure's Legenda maior, II,1. There is a great variety and diversity among the ancient Italian translations of this prayer, cf. K. Esser, pp. 453-4.

²⁴⁸ K. Esser, p. 458. K. Esser does not divide this prayer into verses.

²⁴⁹ cf. Exiit qui seminavit (Aug. 14, 1279 A.D.), n. 10, where the Pope declares the Rule to be "observable, possible, licit ... meritorious and perfect."

²⁵⁰ K. Esser, p. 459. The text of this Bull is thus not counted in the verse structure of the Rule in K. Esser's Latin edition.

²⁵¹ K. Esser, pp. 460-1 and 476 respectively.

²⁵² Honorius III (pope 1216-1227 A.D.).

²⁵³ lit. annuere, "to nod, to give assent by a nod."

Order, approved by Our predecessor, Pope Innocent,²⁵⁴ of good memory, quoted herein, and We thoroughly fortify it with the patronage of (this) present writing. Which is such:]

Chapter I

In the Name of the Lord! begins the life of the Friars Minor.²⁵⁵

The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience,²⁵⁶ without anything of one's own,²⁵⁷ and in chastity.²⁵⁸ · Friar Francis promises obedience and reverence to the lord Pope Honorius and to his canonically elected successors and to the Roman Church. · And the other friars are bound to obey Friar Francis and his successors.²⁵⁹

Chapter II

On those who want to adopt²⁶⁰ this life, and how they ought to be received.

If any want to adopt this life and have come to our friars, let them send them to their Ministers provincial, to whom alone, and not to others, is the permission to receive friars conceded. · Let the ministers indeed examine them diligently concerning the Catholic Faith and the Sacraments of the Church.²⁶¹ · And if they believe all these things and want to observe them faithfully and firmly until the end,²⁶² · and they have no wives or, if they do have them, their

²⁵⁴ Innocent III (pope 1196-1216 A.D.) had approved the first version of the Rule orally more than a decade earlier.

²⁵⁵ lit. fratres minores, "the lesser brothers." St. Francis was inspired to give this name to his Order after the saying of Jesus Christ: "Inasmuch as you did it to the least of My brothers, you did it to Me." (Mt 28:40b)

²⁵⁶ The practice of obedience is counseled by Christ (Mt 16:24-25; 22:21; Jn 8:51; Lk 10:16) and taught by His example, (Mt 26:39-42; Lk 2:51; Jn 4:34,38; 14:30-31); and also taught by the Apostles (Rm 10:9; Ph 2:8; Heb 5:8; 10:5-7; 13:17; 1 Pt 5:5). As a vow it obliges the religious to obey his superior in accordance with his rule; however the Rule of St. Francis obliges also obedience in all things that are lawful and upright (cf. Chapter X).

²⁵⁷ The practice of poverty is counseled by Christ, (Mt 19:21,29; Lk 12:33; 14:33; 18:22); and taught by His example, (Mt 8:19-20; Lk 2:7,12; 18:22-25; 2 Cor 8:9) and lived by the Apostles, (Mt 19:27; Lk 18:29-30; Phil 3:8) As a vow it obliges a religious to renounce all personal ownership; however the Rule of St. Francis also obliges the community to this same renunciation (cf. Chapter VI).

²⁵⁸ The practice of chastity is counseled by Christ, (Mt 5:8; 19:12,29; Lk 16:26), taught by His example, (Lk 9:58) and practiced by the Apostles (1 Cor 7:7-8). As a vow it obliges a religious to forego marriage and to abstain from everything against the Sixth and Ninth Commandments.

²⁵⁹ This obedience to the Successor of St. Peter, the Rock upon which Christ founded His Church, is likewise evangelical (cf. Mt 16:13-19).

²⁶⁰ lit. accipere, "to accept," cf. fn. 293.

²⁶¹ lit ecclesiasticis sacramentis, the Sacraments as they are in the Church.

²⁶² see fn. 84.

wives have already entered a monastery,²⁶³ or they have given them permission (to do so) by authority of the diocesan bishop, a vow of continence already having been promised, and the wives are of that age, that suspicion cannot arise concerning them, · let them say unto these the word of the Holy Gospel (cf. Mt 19:21), that they are to go and sell all their things and strive to pay²⁶⁴ them out to the poor. · Which if they could not do, a good will suffices for them. · And let the friars and their ministers beware, lest they be solicitous concerning their temporal things, so that they may freely do with their own things, whatever the Lord has inspired them. · Nevertheless if counsel is required, let the ministers have permission to send them to other God fearing (men), by whose counsel their goods may be paid out to the poor. · Afterwards let them grant them the clothes of probation,²⁶⁵ that is, two tunics²⁶⁶ without a capuche,²⁶⁷ and a cord,²⁶⁸ and breeches,²⁶⁹ and a caparone²⁷⁰ (extending down) to the cord, · unless at any time something else seems to the same ministers (to be) according to God. · With the year of probation truly finished, let them be received to obedience,²⁷¹ promising to observe always this life and Rule. · And in no manner shall it be licit for them to go forth from this religion,²⁷² by the mandate of the lord Pope,²⁷³ · because according to the Holy Gospel "No one putting a hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Lk 9:62). · And let those who have already promised obedience have one tunic with a capuche, and those, who want to have it, another (tunic) without a capuche. · And let those who are driven by necessity be able to wear footwear.²⁷⁴ · And let all

²⁶³ A "monastery" does not mean a "religious house for men." but rather a place in which a religious Rule is observed, which obliges the members as a penance to remain in that place for the rest of their lives. In St. Francis' day women religious lived exclusively in monasteries.

²⁶⁴ lit erogare; St. Francis understood alms as a thing that was owed to the poor out of justice, because Christ commands his disciples to care for the poor (cf. Mt 25:31-46).

²⁶⁵ New members of the order are instructed and tested during their first year. This first year is called "the novitiate" today, but in St. Francis' day it was called the year of "probation," i.e. "the year of testing."

²⁶⁶ A tunic is a long garment hanging down to the ankles, with two arms and a hole for the head. Christ and the apostles wore tunics (cf. John 19:23; Mt 10:10; Lk 9:3).

²⁶⁷ A capuche is a hood. It was originally sewn to the Franciscan tunic; but latter was separated and joined to a small cape, so that it could be more ceremoniously granted at the time of profession, as well as removed during sleep.

²⁶⁸ lit. cingulum, a cord used to gird the tunic at the waist. The cord recalls the rope with which Jesus Christ was bound in the Garden of Gethsemane (cf. John 18:12).

²⁶⁹ i.e. pants that extend to the knees.

²⁷⁰ A caparone is a short cape.

²⁷¹ i.e. to the profession of the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity. A vow is a promise made to God to do some good work (cf. Nm 29:39; Ps 49:14-15; 55:12-13; 64:2; 75:12; 131:1-5; Prov 15:8; Is 19:21). In this case it involves the lifetime consecration of the individual to the service of God (cf. Nm 6:1-4; Lk 9:62; Rm 12:1; Apoc 14:3-5).

²⁷² see fn. 156.

²⁷³ St. Francis refers here to the recently promulgated bull of Pope Honorius III, Cum secundum concilium (Sept. 22, 1220 A.D.), which prescribed for his Order a year of novitiate in preparation for a permanent decision upon entering religious life, according to this teaching of Christ.

²⁷⁴ lit. calcimēta, "what covers the heel." Pope Bl. Innocent XI, in Sollicitudo pastoralis (Nov. 20, 1679 A.D.), explains this as any footwear that covers the top of the foot; permission to wear sandals, is thus already assumed. That Christ himself went barefoot was understood by the

the friars wear cheep clothing and let them be able to patch these with sacks and other pieces (of cloth) with the blessing of God. · Which (friars) I warn and exhort, not to despise nor judge men, whom they see clothed with soft and colored clothes, using dainty²⁷⁵ food and drink, but rather let each one judge and despise his very self.

Chapter III

Concerning the divine office and fasting, and in what manner the friars ought to go through the world.²⁷⁶

Let the clerics perform²⁷⁷ the Divine Office²⁷⁸ according to the Ordo²⁷⁹ of the Roman Church, except for the Psalter,²⁸⁰ · for which they can have beviaries.²⁸¹ · Let the lay (brothers) indeed say twenty-four Pater Nosters²⁸² for Matins;²⁸³ for Lauds five; for Prime, Terce, Sext and Nones, for each of these seven, however for Vespers twelve; for Compline seven; · and let them pray on behalf of the dead.²⁸⁴ · And let them fast from the Feast of All Saints until the Nativity of

medievals on account of the absence of footwear in John 19:23, and is depicted frequently in Catholic art. Christ Himself had commanded His Apostles to wear only one tunic (cf. Mt 10:10 and Lk 9:3).

²⁷⁵ lit. delicatis, luxurious, refined; i.e. "gourmet."

²⁷⁶ see fn. 145.

²⁷⁷ lit. faciant, "perform," in the sense of "accomplish"; the requirement of daily recitation of the Office was reaffirmed at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.), constitution XVII.

²⁷⁸ The Divine Office is the traditional, daily, recitation of the psalms. It originated as a devotion among the Jewish people. Christ and the Apostles themselves are said to have practiced it. It became the characteristic daily duty of monastic life in Egypt during the third century A.D.. By St. Francis' day it had long been embellished with antiphons, readings, hymns and prayers fitted to the liturgical calendar, and had been the customary daily prayer of the clergy of the Roman Church for centuries.

²⁷⁹ i.e. according to the liturgical books of the Roman Rite. St. Francis specifies this because by his own day, the Gallican Rite, which grew out of the liturgical reforms of the Carolingian period was celebrated nearly everywhere, while the celebration of the Roman Rite had been reduced to the Pope's private chapel. Out of devotion to St. Peter, who originated the liturgical traditions of the Roman Church, St. Francis chose the Roman Rite for his Order.

²⁸⁰ A Psalter was a book containing the psalms recited during the Divine Office. In St. Francis' day the use of the Gallican Psalter prevailed over that of the Roman Psalter; the difference being principally in the translation of the Psalms.

²⁸¹ lit. ex quo, "for which purpose." A "breviary" is a portable book for the recitation of the liturgy of the hours. In St. Francis' day they had just become popular, and were a necessity for clergymen who traveled often.

²⁸² i.e. "Our Fathers;" the Our Father was to be said in Latin, as is the ancient custom of the Roman Church.

²⁸³ Matins is the liturgical ceremony at the beginning of the morning, i.e. before sunrise; Lauds, at sunrise. The next ceremonies are named according the Roman custom of numbering the hours of the day from the time of sunrise: Terce (3 hours), Sext (six hours), Nones (9 hours). Vespers was prayed at sunset; Compline before retiring for the night.

²⁸⁴ Normally this meant the Requiem aeternum, cf. RegNB III, 10.

the Lord.²⁸⁵ · Indeed the holy lent, which begins from Epiphany throughout the forty following days, which the Lord consecrated by His own holy fast (Mt 4:2), let those who voluntarily fast it be blest by the Lord, and let those who do not want (to do so) not be constrained.²⁸⁶ · But let them fast the other (lent)²⁸⁷ until the Resurrection of the Lord. · However at other times let them not be bound to fast, except on Fridays.²⁸⁸ · Indeed in time of manifest necessity let the friars not be bound to the corporal fast. · Indeed, I counsel, warn and exhort my friars in the Lord Jesus Christ, that when they go about through the world,²⁸⁹ they not quarrel nor contend in words (cf. 2 Tim 2:14), nor judge others, · but be mild, peaceable and modest, meek and humble, speaking uprightly to all, as is fitting. · And that they ought not ride (horseback),²⁹⁰ unless they are driven (to do so) by manifest necessity or infirmity. · "Into whatever house" they have entered, let them "first" say: "Peace to this house" (cf. Lk 10:5). · And according to the Holy Gospel let it be licit to eat of all the foods, which are placed before them (cf. Lk 10:8).

Chapter IV

That the brothers are not to receive money.

I firmly precept²⁹¹ all²⁹² the friars, that in no manner are they to receive²⁹³ coins²⁹⁴ or

²⁸⁵ This is the Fast of Advent (sometimes called "the fast of St. Martin"), a season of penance in preparation for Christmas. Like Eastern-Orthodox today, the Roman Church in the Middle Ages observed the season of Advent as lenten-penitential season. The Feast of All Saints occurs on November 1.

²⁸⁶ In accord with the monastic traditions of the day, the first Rule had obliged fasting from Epiphany (January 6) to Easter, cf. RegNB III,11.

²⁸⁷ i.e. the Lent which begins with Ash Wednesday. This fasting season is derived from the ancient penitential traditions of the Church, East and West, in preparation for the most sacred celebrations of Holy Week and Easter.

²⁸⁸ Friday is the traditional day of fasting throughout Christendom, in memory of Christ's bloody Sacrifice on Golgotha..

²⁸⁹ see fn. 145.

²⁹⁰ lit. equitare, "to ride (horseback)" or any other animal, such as a mule or donkey. Christ and the Apostles had traveled throughout Judea by foot (cf. Lk 9:3-5). As in the days of Christ, the ownership or use of a pack-animal was a sign wealth and even status in the Middle Ages, cf. RegNB XV,1-2.

²⁹¹ see fn. 7. Christ, who condemned the love of money (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13-15), had Himself forbidden His Apostles the use and reception of money during their preaching (Mt. 10:9; Lk. 9:3); St. Peter and St. John continued this practice after the Resurrection (cf. Acts 3:6). The Apostles also warned against the love of money (cf. Acts 8:20; 1 Tm 3:8; 6:9-10; Jm 5:2-3).

²⁹² lit. universis, each and every.

²⁹³ The Latin word used here, recipere, "to receive" is to be distinguished from accipere "to accept;" the former signifies appropriation as a real act, whereas the latter signifies appropriation as a legal or moral act. Thus the Popes have explained the Rule of St. Francis as obliging not only the non-appropriation of money, but also the non-use of money. cf. Pope Nicholas III's bull Exiit qui seminatur (Aug. 14, 1279 A.D.) n. 13, and Pope Clement V's bull Exivi de paradiso (May 8, 1305 A.D.) n. 9.

²⁹⁴ lit. denarios, the common silver coin of the day.

money²⁹⁵ through²⁹⁶ themselves or through an interposed person. · Nevertheless on behalf of the necessities of the infirm and the clothing²⁹⁷ of the other friars, let only the ministers and the custodes conduct a solicitous care, by means of spiritual friends,²⁹⁸ according to places and seasons and cold regions, as they have seen expedites necessity;²⁹⁹ · with this always preserved, that, as has been said, they do not receive coins nor money.

Chapter V

On the manner of working.

Let those friars, to whom the Lord has given the grace to work, work faithfully and devoutly,³⁰⁰ · in such a way that, having excluded idleness, the enemy of the soul, they do not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion,³⁰¹ which all other temporal things must serve zealously.³⁰² · Indeed concerning the wages of labor, let them receive on their (own) behalf and that of their brothers the things necessary for the body, excepting coins or money, and this humbly, · as befits the servants of God and the followers of most holy poverty.

Chapter VI

That the friars are to appropriate nothing for themselves, and on the begging of alms, and on sick³⁰³ friars.

Let the friars appropriate nothing for themselves, neither house nor place nor any thing. · And as pilgrims and exiles (cf. 1 Pt 2:11) in this age, as ones serving the Lord in poverty and humility, let them go about for alms confidently, nor is it proper that they be ashamed, · because the Lord made Himself poor in this world³⁰⁴ on our behalf (cf. 2 Cor 8:9). · This is that loftiness of the highest poverty, which has established you, my most dear friars, as heirs and kings of the Kingdom of Heaven, has made you poor in things, (and) has raised you high in virtues (cf. Jm 2:5). · Let this be your "portion", which leads (you) through "to the land of the living" (cf. Ps 141,6). · Cleaving totally to this, most beloved (dilectio) friars, may you want to have nothing

²⁹⁵ lit. pecuniam, what is used as a means of financial exchange.

²⁹⁶ i.e. by actual means of.

²⁹⁷ i.e. here used as a gerundive; in the sense of "to clothe the other friars."

²⁹⁸ i.e. benefactors; often members of the Third Order of St. Francis. For an explanation of the offices in the Order see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust I].

²⁹⁹ lit. sicut necessitati viderint expedire, that is in the manner in which past experience has taught them to make provision in time of need.

³⁰⁰ lit. devote, which in Latin means both "devoutly" and "devotedly."

³⁰¹ Here "prayer" means more exactly "praying." In this precept St. Francis obliges his friars to foster the virtue of devotion, which virtue disposes one to do what is good and just, with a holy joy. Christ infuses this virtue in those who practice mental prayer perseveringly each day, cf. Pope Pius XII, Mediator Dei, n.32 and St. Peter of Alcantara, Treatise on Mental Prayer.

³⁰² lit. deservire, "to serve zealously," "to be a slave to."

³⁰³ On the use of "sick" see Note in the Translators forward..

³⁰⁴ see fn. 145.

else under heaven in perpetuity, on behalf of the Name³⁰⁵ of Our Lord Jesus Christ. · And, wherever the friars are and have come upon one another, let them mutually show themselves (to be) members of each other's family.³⁰⁶ · And let one without fear³⁰⁷ manifest to the another his own need, since, if a mother nourishes and loves her own son (cf. 1 Th 2:7) according to the flesh, how much more diligently³⁰⁸ ought he love and nourish his own spiritual brother? · And, if any of them has fallen into infirmity, the other friars ought to serve him, as they would want to be served themselves.

Chapter VII

On the penance to be imposed on friars who are sinning.

If any of the friars, at the instigation of the enemy,³⁰⁹ has sinned mortally,³¹⁰ for those sins, concerning which it had be ordained among the friars, that one have recourse to the Ministers provincial³¹¹ alone, the aforesaid friars are bound to have recourse to them as soon as they can, without delay. · Indeed let the Ministers themselves, if they are priests, with mercy enjoin upon them a penance;³¹² if indeed they are not priests, let them have it enjoined by other priests of the order, as it will seem to them to better expedite (the matter) according to God.³¹³ · And they³¹⁴ ought to beware, not to grow angry and be distressed on account of the sin of anyone, since anger and distress impede charity in themselves and in others.

Chapter VIII

On the election of the Minister general of this fraternity; and on the Chapter at Pentecost.

Let all³¹⁵ the friars be bound to always have one of the friars of this religion³¹⁶ as Minister

³⁰⁵ lit. pro nomine, i.e. in the service of the honor and love due His Person.

³⁰⁶ lit. ostendant se domesticos invicem inter se.

³⁰⁷ lit. secure, "without care or worry," just as brothers in a family do.

³⁰⁸ lit. diligentius, which literally means both "more diligently" and "more lovingly."

³⁰⁹ i.e. of a devil.

³¹⁰ This section refers not to private sins nor to the Sacrament of confession, but regards public offenses, for which there must be public restitution and satisfaction so as to restore fraternal charity (cf. 1 Jn 5:16-17) and justice. The following phrase "it had been ordained" refers to what would have been determined in these matters by the Order, prior to the incident's occurrence.

³¹¹ For an explanation of the offices in the Order see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust I].

³¹² i.e. some sacrificial act to make satisfaction for the wrong they have done.

³¹³ The requirement that the penance be given by a priest, both manifests the role of Christ and His Church in the work of reconciling a fallen friar with his confreres, and entrusts this work of reconciliation to Christ and His Church, to which St. Francis desired his Order to be forever bound.

³¹⁴ i.e. the ministers.

³¹⁵ lit. universi, "each and every."

³¹⁶ see fn. 156.

general³¹⁷ and servant of the whole fraternity and let them be bound firmly to obey him. · When he dies, let the election of a successor be made by the Ministers provincial and the custodes in the Chapter at Pentecost, in which the Ministers provincial are always bound to convene at once, wherever it had been determined by the Minister general; · and this once³¹⁸ every three years or at another interval greater or less, as had been ordained by the aforesaid Minister. · And if at any time it appears to the whole body of the Ministers provincial and custodes, that the aforesaid Minister is not sufficient for the service and common utility of the friars, the aforesaid friars, to whom the election has been given, are bound in the Name of the Lord³¹⁹ to choose another as their guard.³²⁰ · Indeed, after the Chapter at Pentecost, let the ministers and custodes each be able, if they will have wanted and if it will seem to them to be expedient, to convoke their friars to a chapter in their own custodies once in the same year.³²¹

Chapter IX

On preachers.

Let the friars not preach within the jurisdiction³²² of any bishop, when (their preaching) has been contradicted by him.³²³ · And let no friar at all dare preach to the people, unless he has been examined by the Minister general of this fraternity and approved, and there has been conceded to him by the same the office³²⁴ of preaching. · I also warn and exhort these same friars, that in the preaching, that they do, their "expressions" be "considered"³²⁵ and "chaste" (cf. Ps 11:7; 17:31), for the utility and edification of the people, · by announcing to them vices and virtues, punishment and glory with brevity of speech;³²⁶ "since a brief word" did "the Lord speak upon the Earth" (cf. Rm 9:28).

³¹⁷ For an explanation of the offices in the Order see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust I].

³¹⁸ Triennial chapters had been prescribed by the XII constitution of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.).

³¹⁹ i.e. by a grave obligation.

³²⁰ lit. custos, here used in its proper sense and not in reference to the office of Custos.

³²¹ Local chapters were comprised of the Guardians (superiors) of each place and the senior friars of the region. Their purpose was to assist the Custos or Minister provincial in the local government and to implement the decisions of the General Chapter at Pentecost, cf. VI constitution of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.).

³²² lit. episcopatu, the territory over which a bishop presides.

³²³ i.e. he has done something to contradict them or their preaching, cf. III constitution of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.).

³²⁴ The duty of preaching has always required special license from Christ or one commissioned personally by Him, cf. Acts 10:42 and Tit 1:9-11; cf. X constitution of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.).

³²⁵ lit. examinata, weighed, tested.

³²⁶ lit. cum brevitate sermonis, that is, in a manner that is to the point.

Chapter X

On the admonition and correction of the friars.

Let the friars, who are the ministers and servants of the other friars, visit and warn their³²⁷ friars and humbly and charitably correct them, not precepting³²⁸ them anything, which may be contrary to their soul³²⁹ and our Rule. · Indeed let the friars, who are subjects, remember, that for the sake of God they have denied³³⁰ their own wills. · Whence I firmly precept them, to obey their ministers in all the things which they have promised the Lord to observe and which are not contrary to their soul or to our Rule. · And that wherever the friars are, who know and understand, that they themselves are not able to observe the Rule spiritually, they ought to and can have recourse to their ministers. · Indeed let the ministers receive them charitably and kindly and regard them with so much familiarity,³³¹ that (these) can speak to them and act as lords with their servants; · for so it ought to be, because the ministers are to be the servants of all the friars. · Indeed I warn and exhort the friars in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they beware "of all" pride, vain glory, envy, "avarice" (cf. Lk 12:15), care and solicitude for this world (saeculum) (cf. Mt 13:22), detraction and murmuring, and that those ignorant of letters³³² not care to learn letters; · but let them attend to that which they ought to desire to have above all, the Spirit of the Lord and His holy operation,³³³ · to pray always to Him with a pure heart and to have humility, patience in persecution and in infirmity, · and to love those who persecute and reprehend³³⁴ and accuse³³⁵ us, because the Lord says, "Love your enemies, pray on behalf of those who are persecuting and calumniating you" (Mt 5:44). · "Blessed (are) those who suffer persecution on account of justice, since theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 5:10). · "However he who will have persevered until the end, this one shall be saved" (Mt 10:22).

³²⁷ i.e. those who are under their jurisdiction; cf. VII constitution of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.).

³²⁸ see fn. 7.

³²⁹ i.e. contrary to the moral law. Note that here St. Francis uses the subjunctive to indicate conditionality, whereas in the nearly identical phrase following in the same paragraph, he uses the indicative, thus distinguishing the care the superiors should have in commanding from the care the subjects should have in obeying.

³³⁰ lit. abnegaverunt, to deny by separating from a thing.

³³¹ The Latin word familiaritas, "familiarity" signifies the affection and informality of a personal friendship.

³³² i.e. how to read and write.

³³³ i.e. that manner of acting which in all things seeks what is pleasing to God: the practice of virtues and the avoidance of all sin.

³³⁴ i.e. rebuke, reprove, censure.

³³⁵ lit. arguere, to put in a clear light; to accuse, blame, expose, or convict.

*Chapter XI*³³⁶

That the friars are not to enter the monasteries of nuns.

I firmly precept³³⁷ all the friars not to have suspicious partnerships³³⁸ or consultations with women, · and not to enter the monasteries of nuns, except those (friars) to whom special permission has been conceded by the Apostolic See; · nor are they to become godfathers of men or women nor is scandal³³⁹ to arise on this account among the friars or concerning the friars.

Chapter XII

On those going among the Saracens³⁴⁰ and other infidels.³⁴¹

Let whoever of the friars who, by divine inspiration, wants to go among the Saracens and other infidels, seek permission for that reason from their Ministers provincial. · Indeed let the ministers grant permission to go to none, except those whom they see to be fit³⁴² to be sent. · For which I enjoin the ministers through obedience,³⁴³ to ask from the lord Pope one of the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, to be the governor, protector, and corrector of this fraternity, · so that always subject and prostrate at the feet of the same Holy Church, stable in the Catholic Faith³⁴⁴ (cf. Col 1:23) we may observe, what we have firmly promised: the poverty and humility and the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Therefore let it be licit to entirely no man to infringe upon this page³⁴⁵ of our confirmation or by temerarious³⁴⁶ daring to contravene the same. However, if anyone has presumed to attempt this, let him know that he shall incur the indignation of the Omnipotent God and of His blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. Given at the Lateran on the third day before the Calends of December, in the

³³⁶ St. Francis reiterates the common ecclesiastical laws on this matter, cf. Second Council of Nicea (787 A.D.), canon XX.

³³⁷ see fn. 7. Also, the word translated "all" at this point means more exactly "each and every."

³³⁸ lit consortia, the partnerships and mutual sharing of things among brothers and sisters in a family.

³³⁹ St. Francis had a very great horror and hatred for scandal, and he stringently corrected those friars who caused it through imprudent and indiscreet behavior.

³⁴⁰ lit. saraceni, from the Arabic word for "easterner;" Saracen was a common term in the Middle Ages for a follower of Islam.

³⁴¹ i.e. any non-believer; a non-Catholic.

³⁴² lit. idoneos, that is not just "fit" in the sense of health, but "suitable" to the tasks and challenges of the missions.

³⁴³ i.e. in virtue of their vow of obedience to St. Francis and the Rule. Here "which" refers to the matters mentioned in the first half of this paragraph.

³⁴⁴ i.e. firm and steady in that faith which has been believed throughout all times and places.

³⁴⁵ The papal bull containing St. Francis' Rule was written on a single large page, as was the custom of the time.

³⁴⁶ i.e. rash.

eighth year of Our Pontificate.^{347]}

The Regula non-Bullata

[RegNB]

As St. Francis' many illnesses increased in severity, Pope Honorius III (1216-1227 A.D.) urged him to codify the Rule of his Order and submit it for formal approval. The Regula non-Bullata was St. Francis' first attempt. Parts of this Rule date before 1216 A.D., when Pope Innocent III, who is mentioned in its first chapter, passed to his reward. It is certain that Friar Caesar of Speyer assisted St. Francis in ornamenting it with numerous scriptural citations. This former Rule was finalized in its present form by the time of the Pentecost Chapter of 1221 A.D..³⁴⁸

Though it was not approved on account of its rambling format, the Regula non-Bullata is a treasure-trove of texts regarding St. Francis' spirituality and thought. In part this writing reflects the manner in which the Rule was observed in the early years of the Order (1210-1221 A.D.); in part it represents also an accommodated observance (since in many places the Regula Bullata is much stricter: e.g. regarding the non-reception money). Indeed a comparison of the two Rules shows how much greater light and grace and simplicity shines forth in the Rule that was eventually approved in 1223 A.D..

Prologue

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! · This is the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which Friar Francis asked to be conceded and confirmed for him by the lord Pope. And he conceded and confirmed it for him and for his friars, (those he) had and (those) to come. Friar Francis and whoever will be head of this religion³⁴⁹ promises obedience and reverence to the lord Pope Innocent³⁵⁰ and to his successors. And all the other friars are bound to obey Friar Francis and his successors.³⁵¹

Chapter I

That the friars ought to live without (anything of) one's own and in chastity and obedience

The Rule and life of these friars is this, namely, to live in obedience, in chastity and without (anything of) one's own, and to follow the doctrine³⁵² and footsteps of Our Lord Jesus

³⁴⁷ i.e. November 29, 1223 A.D., the first day of the Novena in honor of the Immaculate Conception.

³⁴⁸ cf. K. Esser, p. 531.

³⁴⁹ see fn. 156.

³⁵⁰ Pope Innocent III had died in 1216 A.D., and thus this passage was composed prior to 1216 A.D.; see also fn. 254.

³⁵¹ in the office of Minister general. For an explanation of the offices in the Order see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust I].

³⁵² Hence loyalty to the Magisterium of Christ, perduring in the Roman Pontiff, is essential to the Franciscan charism. For an explanation of the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity see fns.

Christ, · who said: "If you want to be perfect, go" and "sell" all (cf. Lk 18:22) "that you have, and give it to the poor and you shall have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me" (Mt 19:21). · And "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny his very self and take up his cross and follow Me" (Mt 16,24). · Likewise: "If anyone wants to come to Me and does not hate father and mother and wife and sons and daughters, and moreover even his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (Lk 14:26) · And: All, who forsake father and mother, brothers and sisters, wife or sons, homes or fields for My sake, shall accept a hundredfold and shall possess eternal life (cf. Mt 19:29; Mk 10:29; Lk 18:29)

Chapter II

On the reception and clothing of the friars

If anyone, wanting to adopt³⁵³ this life by divine inspiration, has come to our friars, let him be received kindly by them. · And if he has been firm (in his resolution) to adopt our life, let the friars beware much of themselves, lest they allow themselves to enter into his temporal affairs, but let them present him before their Minister (provincial), as soon as they are able. · Let the minister indeed receive him kindly and encourage him and explain to him diligently the tenor³⁵⁴ of our life. · Which when done, let the aforesaid, if he wants and can spiritually³⁵⁵ (do so) without impediment, sell all his (possessions) and strive to pay³⁵⁶ them all out to the poor. · Let the friars and the minister of the friars beware of themselves, that they in no manner allow themselves to enter into his affairs · nor receive any money, neither through themselves nor through an interposed person.³⁵⁷ · If however they are in need, the friars can receive other necessities for the body, except money, for the sake of necessity as other poor (can). · And when he has come back, let the minister grant him the clothes of probation for one year, namely two tunics without a capuche and a cord and breeches and a caperone (which hangs) down to the cord.³⁵⁸ · With the year and end of probation indeed finished, let him be received to obedience.³⁵⁹ · Afterwards it shall not be licit for him to enter another religion³⁶⁰ nor 'wander outside of obedience' by the mandate³⁶¹ of the lord Pope and according to the Gospel; because "no one

256-258.

³⁵³ see fn. 260.

³⁵⁴ i.e. its austerity and demands.

³⁵⁵ i.e. moved by divine grace, and not self-coerced in order to please men.

³⁵⁶ see fn. 264.

³⁵⁷ The precept about money refers to Chapter VIII of this rule; the strictures regarding the reception of the new member are intended to both discourage unworthy candidates from joining and the ministers from accepting them.

³⁵⁸ For an explanation of these vestments see fns. 266-270.

³⁵⁹ i.e. to the profession of the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity; cf. fn. 271.

³⁶⁰ cf. fn. 156. Since religious life is a pursuit of perfection, the Church rarely permitted religious to change from stricter orders to less strict ones. St. Francis includes this regulation because the observance of the religious life taught by Our Lord cannot possibly, in itself, be less perfect than any other form. For a fuller treatment of this see St. Bonaventure's *Apologia Pauperum*.

³⁶¹ This is a reference to Pope Honorius III's *Cum secundum consilium* (Sept. 20, 1220 A.D.), which prescribed a one year probation prior to admission to vows, and a subsequent stability in the Order; it thus serves to date this Rule's final composition after this date; cf. K. Esser, p. 531.

putting the hand to the plow and looking backwards is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Lk 9:62). · If however anyone has come who cannot give his own (possessions) without impediment³⁶² and he has a spiritual will,³⁶³ let him forsake³⁶⁴ these, and (this) suffices for him. · Let no one be received against the form and arrangement of Holy Church.³⁶⁵

Indeed let the other friars, who have promised obedience, have one tunic with a capuche and another without a capuche, if the necessity has arisen,³⁶⁶ and a cord and breeches. · And let all the friars wear cheep vestments, and let them be able to patch these with sacks and other pieces (of cloth) with the blessing of God; because the Lord says in the Gospel: "Those who are in precious garments and among delights" (Lk 7:25) and "those who are dressed in soft (clothes), are in the houses of kings" (Mt 11:8). · And though they be called hypocrites, let them not however cease doing good nor seek costly clothes in this world (saeculum), so that they can have (their) raiment³⁶⁷ in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Chapter III

On the Divine Office and fasting

The Lord says: "This kind" of demon "cannot go forth except in" fasting and prayer (cf. Mk 9:28); · and again: "When you fast do not make yourselves sad like hypocrites" (Mt 6:16).

On this account let all the friars, whether clerics or lay, perform³⁶⁸ the Divine Office,³⁶⁹ the praises and the prayers,³⁷⁰ in the manner they ought to perform it. · Let the clerics perform the Office and say on behalf of the living and the dead (what) is according to the custom of the clergy. · And for the failing and negligence of the friars let them say every day a Miserere mei Deus (Ps 50) with a Pater noster;³⁷¹ · and on behalf of the departed friars let them say the De profundis (Ps 129) with a Pater noster. · And let them be able to have only the books necessary to fulfill their office.³⁷² · And let it be licit for the lay (brothers, who) know how to read the Psalter, to have³⁷³ one for themselves. · Indeed let it not be licit to the other (brothers, who) do not know how to read, to have a book. · Let the lay (brothers) say the Credo in Deum³⁷⁴ and twenty-four

³⁶² e.g. in those cases in which property rights were shared with others.

³⁶³ i.e. good will.

³⁶⁴ i.e. renounce his own rights to them.

³⁶⁵ i.e. against ecclesiastical law.

³⁶⁶ St. Francis uses the perfect subjunctive si necesse fuerit, here translated as "if the necessity has arisen," to indicate that the second tunic should not be granted in view of future necessity, but only after such necessity has occurred.

³⁶⁷ A reference to the white stole of glory worn by the Saints in heaven (cf. Apoc 7:9-10,13-17).

³⁶⁸ see fn. 277.

³⁶⁹ see fn. 278.

³⁷⁰ A reference to the customary prayers of the Order, e.g. "The Praises to be said at every hour" [LaudHor].

³⁷¹ i.e. the Our Father.

³⁷² Whether that be only for the liturgical Office or also for the duties of preaching, teaching, or hearing confession, etc. is not clear; the use of eorum, (translated here as "their") in this context implies the latter.

³⁷³ i.e. to have the use of one; for the meaning of "Psalter" see fn. 280.

³⁷⁴ The Apostles Creed.

Pater Nosters with a Gloria Patri³⁷⁵ for Matins;³⁷⁶ indeed for Lauds five; for Prime the Credo in Deum and seven Pater nosters with a Gloria Patri; for Terce, Sext and Nones and for whatever hour (of these) seven; for Vespers twelve; for Compline the Credo in Deum and seven Pater nosters with a Gloria Patri; on behalf of the dead seven Pater nosters with the Requiem aeternam;³⁷⁷ and for the failing and negligence of the friars three Pater nosters every day.³⁷⁸

And similarly let every friar fast from the Feast of All Saints until Christmas and from Epiphany, when Our Lord Jesus Christ began to fast, until Easter.³⁷⁹ · Indeed at other times let them not be bound to fast according to this life, except on Fridays. · And let it be licit for them to eat of all the foods, which are placed before them, according to the Gospel (cf. Lk 10:8).

Chapter IV

How (things) are to be arraigned concerning the ministers and the other friars

In the Name of the Lord! · Let all the friars, who are constituted ministers and servants of the other friars, in the provinces and places in which they have been, arrange³⁸⁰ their own friars, whom they are to often visit and spiritually warn and encourage.³⁸¹ · And let all my other blest friars diligently obey them in those things which pertain to the salvation of the soul and are not contrary to our life.³⁸² · And let them act among themselves as the Lord says: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Mt 7,12); · and: What you do not want to be done to you, do not do to another.³⁸³ · And let the ministers and servants remember, what the Lord says: "I have not" come "to be ministered unto but to minister" (Mt 20:28) and that there has been committed to them the care of the friars' souls, of which, if any were lost on account of their fault and bad example, it will be proper that they "render an account on the Day of Judgement" (cf. Mt 12:36) before the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter V

On the correction of the friars in their failings

And for this reason guard your souls and those of your friars; because "it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hand of the living God" (Heb 10:31). · If, however, any of the ministers of

³⁷⁵ The doxology: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be unto the ages of ages. Amen."

³⁷⁶ For an explanation of these liturgical hours, see fn. 283.

³⁷⁷ i.e. the prayer for the faithful departed: "Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen."

³⁷⁸ It is part of Catholic belief that the fulfillment of one's daily duties are a moral obligation, something that God expects of every individual. Thus the necessity of making satisfaction even for such sins of omission.

³⁷⁹ November 1 and January 6 respectively; cf. RegB III,5-7.

³⁸⁰ i.e. assign them to the local houses.

³⁸¹ lit. confortent, "to strengthen, uphold."

³⁸² i.e. this Rule and the duties of a religious vocation.

³⁸³ cf. Rule of St. Benedict IV,9; LXI,14 and LXX,7; compare also Tob 4:16(15).

any of the friars would precept³⁸⁴ anything against our life or against his soul,³⁸⁵ let him not be bound to obey him; because that is not obedience, in which crime or sin is committed. · Nevertheless let all the friars, who are beneath ministers and servants, consider the deeds of (their) ministers and servants reasonably and diligently, · and if they have seen any of these walking carnally and not spiritually according the rectitude of our life, after the third admonition, if he has not amended himself, let them renounce him to the minister and servant of the whole fraternity in the Chapter at Pentecost, regardless of any contradiction.³⁸⁶ · If indeed anywhere among the friars there has been any friar wanting to walk carnally and not spiritually, let the friars, with whom he is, warn, instruct, and rebuke him, humbly and diligently. · But if after the third admonition he does not want to amend himself, as soon as they are able, let them send or point him out to their minister and servant, which minister and servant is to do with him as will seem to himself to be more expedient according to God.

And let all friars, the ministers and servants as much as the others, beware that on account of the sin or wickedness of anyone they be not distressed or grow angry, because the devil wants to corrupt many on account of the crime of one; · but spiritually, as best they can, let them help him who has sinned, because a doctor is not needed for the healthy, but for those who have a malady (cf. Mt 9:12 with Mk 2:17).

Similarly let all the friars have no power or rule in this (matter), most of all among themselves. · For just as the Lord says in the Gospel: "The princes of the gentiles rule over them, and those who are greater exercise (their) power upon them" (Mt 20:25), "not" so "shall it be among" the friars (cf. Mt 20:26a); · and whoever "wants to become the greater among" them, "let him be" their "minister" (cf. Mt 20:26b) and servant; · and "he who is greater" among them "let him become" the lesser (Lk 22:26).

And let no friar do evil or speak evil to another; · rather on the contrary let them voluntarily serve "through charity of spirit" and obey one "another" (cf. Gal 5:13). · And this is the true and holy obedience of Our Lord Jesus Christ. · And let all the friars, as often as "they have turned away from the mandates of the Lord" and have wandered about outside of obedience,³⁸⁷ as the prophet says (Ps 118:21), know that they are cursed so long as they have knowingly remained outside of obedience in such a sin. · And when they have persevered in the mandates of the Lord, which they have promised by means of the Holy Gospel and their life, let them know that they remain in true obedience, and may they be blest by the Lord.

³⁸⁴ see fn. 7.

³⁸⁵ i.e. against the moral law.

³⁸⁶ This is a duty of all subjects when necessary and possible. The Latin phrase that ends this sentence nulla contradictione impediante means literally "with no contradiction impeding," that is, without it being permitted that they be impeded in making their denunciation by any contradiction brought forward by any party.

³⁸⁷ i.e. who lose the habit of obeying their superiors. The Latin verb stare, translated in this and the next sentence as "remained" literally means "to stand, stay, or be" in a place or condition.

Chapter VI

*On the friars' recourse to their ministers and that no friar is to be called Prior*³⁸⁸

Let the friars, in whatever places they are, if they cannot observe our life, have recourse, as soon as they are able, to their minister, pointing this out to him. · Indeed let the minister strive to provide for them in such a wise, just as he would want to be done for himself, if he was in an exactly similar situation. · And let no one be called Prior, but let all be called in general 'Friars Minor.'³⁸⁹ · And let "one" wash "the feet of the other" (cf. Jn 13:14).

Chapter VII

On the manner of serving and working

Let all the friars, in whatever places they have stayed among others to serve or work, not be chamberlains nor chancellors nor preside in the houses in which they serve; nor let them receive any office, which generates scandal or "is detrimental to their soul" (cf. Mk 8:36); · but let them be lesser and subject to all, who are in the same house.

And let the friars, who know how to work, work and exercise the same art, which they know, if it has not been contrary to the salvation of (their) soul³⁹⁰ and one will be able to work at it honestly · For the prophet said: "Laborers, you shall eat of your own fruits ; blessed are you and well it shall be for you (Ps 127:2 — Rom. Psalter): · and the Apostle: "Let him who does not want to work," not "eat" (cf. 2 Th 3:10); · and: "Let each one remain continually" in that art and office, "in which he was called" (cf. 1 Cor 7:24). · And for (their) work let them be able to receive every necessary thing besides money. · And when the necessity has arisen,³⁹¹ let them go about for alms as the other poor (do). · And let it be licit for them to have iron tools and instruments suitable for their art.

Let all the friars 'strive to sweat'³⁹² at good works,' because it is written: · Always 'do something' good, 'so that the devil may find you occupied.' · And again: Idleness is the enemy of the soul. · For this reason the servants of God ought to always pursue prayer or some good work.

Let the friars beware of themselves, wherever they have been, in hermitages or in other places, that they appropriate no place for themselves nor defend it against another. · And whoever has come to them, friend or adversary, thief or brigand, let him be kindly received. · And wherever the friars are and in whatever place they have come upon one another, they ought to spiritually and diligently look upon themselves and honor "each other without murmuring" (1 Pet 4,9). · And let them beware of themselves, that they not show themselves to be sad outwardly

³⁸⁸ lit. "first." A "prior" was one of the offices in a monastic community immediately under an abbot. St. Francis wanted this title excluded from his Order so as to promote a spirit of humility among the friars.

³⁸⁹ For the meaning of this name see fn. 255.

³⁹⁰ i.e. so long as the work has not been the occasion of their moral degradation, cf. XVI constitution of the Fourth Lateran Council, (1215 A.D.).

³⁹¹ lit. cum necesse fuerit, "when it has been necessary." Here "necessity" refers to "alms."

³⁹² i. e. work up a sweat; "strive earnestly and generously." This quote is taken from Pope St. Gregory the Great, Hom. XIII in Ev., PL 76,1123; the next saying is taken from St. Jerome, Epistola 125,11; and the third is from the Rule of St. Benedict, XLVIII,1.

and gloomy hypocrites; but let them show themselves (to be) those (who are) rejoicing in the Lord (cf. Phil 4:4) and cheerful and suitably gracious.

Chapter VIII

That the friars are not to receive money

The Lord precepted in the Gospel: "See, beware of all" malice and "avarice" (cf. Lk 12:15); · and: "Turn yourselves" away from solicitude for this world (saeculum) "and" from "the cares of this life" (cf. Lk 21:34).

Whence let no friar, wherever he be and whithersoever he go, in any manner pick up or receive or cause to be received money or coins, neither for the opportunity of clothing nor of books nor as the price of any work, indeed for no opportunity, except on account of the manifest necessity of the sick friars, because we ought not have or repute more utility in regard to money and coins than in stones.³⁹³ · And the devil wants to make those blind, who grasp for it or repute it better than stones. · Let us therefore beware, we who have left everything (cf. Mt 19:27), lest for such a limited thing³⁹⁴ we lose the Kingdom of Heaven. · And if in any place we would find coins, let us not care for them, like (we do) for the dust, which we tread upon with (our) feet, · because (they are) "vanity of vanities and all vanity" (Eccl 1:2). And if perchance it has happened—and let it not—that any friar has collected or had money or coins, excepting only the aforesaid necessity of the infirm, let all of us friars hold him as a false brother and an apostate and a thief and a brigand and as one having a purse (cf. Jn 12:6), unless he has truly repented.³⁹⁵ · And let the friars in no manner receive nor cause to be received, nor seek nor cause to be sought, money for alms nor coins on behalf of any house or place; and let them not go about with a person seeking money or coins on behalf of such places; · on the other hand, the other services, which are not contrary to our life, the friars of the place can do with the blessing of God. · Nevertheless the friars, in (times of) the manifest necessity of the lepers, can seek alms on their behalf. · However let them beware much of money. · Similarly let all the friars beware, so that they do not go around (any) lands for any filthy lucre.

Chapter IX

On seeking alms

Let all the friars strive to follow the humility and poverty of Our Lord Jesus Christ and let them remember, that it is proper that we have nothing else of this world, except, as the Apostles (says), "as ones having food and that with which we are clothed," we are "content with these" (cf. 1 Tim 6:8). · And they ought to rejoice, when they conduct themselves among vile and despised persons, among the poor and weak and infirm and lepers and those begging along the

³⁹³ compare RegB IV,1-3.

³⁹⁴ lit. modico, "that which has a small measure or value."

³⁹⁵ It should be noted that the exception, which St. Francis grants here for the needs of the infirm, makes this chapter less strict than its counterpart, chapter VI, in the Regula Bullata [RegB], which admits of no such exception. The regimen prescribed here towards the friar who uses money, though not contained in the Regula Bullata [RegB], was however retained by St. Francis and his Order up until modern times.

road. · And when the necessity has arisen, let them go about for alms. · And let them not be ashamed but rather let them remember, that Our Lord Jesus "Christ, the Son of the living God" (Jn 11:27) Omnipotent, "set" His "face like flint"³⁹⁶ (Is 50:7), nor was He ashamed; · and He was poor and a guest and lived by alms, He and the Blessed Virgin and His disciples. · And when men shame them and are not willing to give them alms, let them return thanks to God on that account; that because of (this) shame they shall receive great honor before the tribunal of Our Lord Jesus Christ. · And let them know, that shame is imputed not to those who suffer it, but to those who bring it upon (others). · And alms are the inheritance and justice, which are owed to the poor, (and) which Our Lord Jesus Christ acquired for us. · And the friars, who labor in acquiring these, shall have a great wage and will make those (who) grant (these) profit and acquire (merit); because all things that men leave in the world will perish, but because of the charity and alms, which they give, they shall have a reward from the Lord.

And let one without fear³⁹⁷ manifest to the other his own need, so that (the latter) may find for him what is necessary and minister (it to him). · And let him love (*dilectio*) and nourish his brother, as a mother loves and nourishes her son (cf. 1 Th 2:7), in the manner³⁹⁸ that God bestows the grace upon him. · And "let him who does not eat, not judge him (who is) eating" (Rm 14:3b).

And whenever necessity has overtaken them, let it be licit for all the friars, wherever they have been, to use all foods,³⁹⁹ which men can eat, just as the Lord says of David, who "ate the bread of proposition" (cf. Mt 12,4), "which was not licit to eat except for the priests" (Mk 2:26). · And let them remember, what the Lord says: "Attend moreover to yourselves lest perchance your hearts grow heavy with stupor and drunkenness and the cares of this life and there overtake" you "that unexpected day; · for like a trap it shall spring upon all, who sit upon the face" of the globe "of the earth" (cf. Lk 21:34-35). · Also in the same manner, in times of manifest necessity let all the friars do concerning their needs, as the Lord bestows the grace upon them, because 'necessity has no law.'⁴⁰⁰

Chapter X

On the sick friars

If any of the friars has fallen into infirmity, wherever he has been, let the other friars not send him away,⁴⁰¹ rather let one or very many of the friars, if it is necessary, be appointed to

³⁹⁶ lit. *petram durissimam*, "the hardest rock," a thing fit to be struck.

³⁹⁷ cf. RegB VI,9.

³⁹⁸ The succinct Latin phrase *in quibus*, translated here as "in the manner" may also be translated "in those (things) that," "in regard to those whom", "at those (times) that", "in those (cases) that."

³⁹⁹ During times of fast, the friars abstained from eating meat, lard, fruit and other rich foods.

⁴⁰⁰ Normally the friars could only conduct their affairs with the permission of their superiors, in accord with their vows of obedience and poverty. St. Francis here explicitly grants a dispensation, as necessity demands. However, this dispensation is dropped from the Regula Bullata [RegB] because it is a general principle in ecclesiastical law, and thus need not be mentioned in a rule. On this principle see *Decretum Gratiani*, P. II. C. q. 1 the gloss before c. 40; William of St. Thierry *Commentatio ex Bernardo* 33: PL 184,433; and compare St. Bernard, *Liber de praecepto et dispensatione*, ch. 5; PL 182,867.

⁴⁰¹ It was and still is the custom in many religious orders to dismiss a member who becomes too

serve him, just as 'they would want to be served themselves';⁴⁰² · but in (times of) the greatest necessity they can send him to some person who ought to satisfy his infirmity. · And I beg the sick friar, to return thanks to the Creator because of all things; and as the Lord wants him, that such would he desire himself to be, healthy or infirm, because all, whom God "has preordained to eternal life" (cf. Act 13:48), 'He trains with the goads of whips' and infirmities 'and the spirit of compunction,'⁴⁰³ just as the Lord says: "Those whom I love (amor)," I correct "and chastise" (Apoc 3:19). · And if any is distressed or grows angry either against God or against the friars, or if perchance he has solicitously asked for medicines, desiring exceedingly to free the flesh (that is) swift to die, which is the enemy of the soul, it is turning out evil for him and he is a carnal (man), and he does not seem to be one of the friars, because he loves (dilectio) the body more than the soul.

Chapter XI

That the friars are not to blaspheme nor detract, but are to love one another

Let all the friars beware of themselves, so that they do not calumniate (others) nor contend with words (cf. 2 Tm 2:14), · on the contrary let them strive to keep silence, whenever God bestows (this) grace upon them.⁴⁰⁴ · Nor let them quarrel among themselves nor with others, but let them take care to humbly respond saying: I am a useless servant (cf. Lk 17:10). · And let them not grow angry, "because everyone who grows angry with his brother, shall be answerable to judgement; he who says to his brother 'Raca!', shall be answerable to the Council; he who will have said, 'Fool!'" shall be answerable to the fire of Gehenna" (Mt 5:22). · And let them love one another just as the Lord says: "This is My precept,⁴⁰⁵ that you love each other, just as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). · And let them show from their works (cf. Jm 2:18) the love, which they have for each other, just as the Apostle says: "Let us not love in word or tongue, but in work and truth" (1 Jn 3:18). · And "let them blaspheme no one" (cf. 1 Tt 3:2); · let them not murmur, let them not detract others, because it is written: "Whisperers and detractors are hateful" to God (cf. Rm 1:29). · And let them be modest "showing every gentleness to all men" (cf. Tt 3:2); let them not judge, let them not condemn. · And, just as the Lord says, let them not consider (even) the least sins of others (cf. Mt 7:3; Lk 6:41), · on the contrary let them recognize rather their own (sins) "in bitterness of their soul" (Is 38:15). · And let them strain "to enter through the narrow gate" (Lk 13:24), because the Lord says: "Narrow is the gate and crooked is the way, which leads to life; and few are they, who find it" (Mt 7:14).

sick to fulfill his duties. St. Francis here excludes this practice, thus manifesting not only a profound charity for the individual friar but and equally profound recognition that the vocation of a religious consists in being conformed to Christ Crucified, especially through bodily suffering.

⁴⁰² cf. St. Augustine, Epist. classis II, Ep. 40, IV, 4: PL 33,155.

⁴⁰³ Compunction is the habitual sorrow for one's sins, cf. St. Gregory, Homil. in Ev. 18,18: PL 76,1148.

⁴⁰⁴ i.e. when they are moved to be silent for a virtuous purpose.

⁴⁰⁵ see fn. 7.

*Chapter XII*⁴⁰⁶

On wickedly looking at and frequenting women

Let all the friars, wherever they are or go, themselves beware of wickedly looking at and frequenting women. · And let none take counsel with them or go about alone (with them) along the road or eat at table (with them) from the same dish. · Let the priests speak uprightly with them when giving a penance or other spiritual counsel. · And let no woman at all be received to obedience by any friar, but having given her spiritual council, let her do penance where she will. · And let us guard ourselves much and let us keep all our members clean, because as the Lord says "He who would look upon a woman to desire her, has already committed fornication with her in his heart" (Mt 5:28). · And the Apostle (says): Do you not know, that "your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit?" (cf. 1 Cor 6:19); and so "him" who "will have violated the temple of God, God will despoil" (1 Cor 3:17).

Chapter XIII

On avoiding fornication

If any of the friars at the instigation of the devil would commit fornication, let him be stripped of the habit, which he has lost on behalf of his own foul iniquity, and lay aside every thing and be entirely banished from our religion.⁴⁰⁷ · And afterwards let him do penance because of (his) sins (cf. 1 Cor 5:4-5).

Chapter XIV

*In what manner the friars are to travel through the world*⁴⁰⁸

When the friars go about through the world, let them carry "nothing" along the road "neither" (cf. Lk 9:3) a small bag (cf. Lk 10:4) "nor bread nor money" (cf. Lk 9:3) "nor a (walking) stick" (cf. Mt 10:10). · And "in whatever house" they have entered, let them say "first: Peace to this house" (cf. Lk 10:5). · And staying "in the same house" let them eat and drink "what is among them" (cf. Lk 10:7). · Let them "not" resist "the evil man" (cf. Mt 5:39), but (to him) who has struck them upon one cheek, let them offer "even the other" (cf. Mt 5:39 and Lk 6:29). · And from who "who bears off their vestment" let them not hold back even (their) "tunic" (cf. Lk 6:29). · Let them donate "to all (who are) asking them": "and (from him) who bears off what is theirs," let them not seek them back (cf. Lk 6:30).

⁴⁰⁶ For these regulations in regard to women see fn. 336; concerning the regulations of this chapter, cf. also XIV constitution of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.).

⁴⁰⁷ i.e. our religious order. Chastity is the infallible sign of a religious vocation; hence the severity of this chapter; cf. XIV constitution of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.).

⁴⁰⁸ see fn. 145.

Chapter XV

That the friars are not to ride (horseback)⁴⁰⁹

I enjoin all my friars, the clerics as much as the lay (brothers) (who are) going through the world⁴¹⁰ or dwelling in places, that they in no manner have among them nor among another, nor in any other manner, any animal. · And let it not be licit for them to ride (horseback), unless they be driven by infirmity or great necessity.

Chapter XVI

On traveling among Saracens⁴¹¹ and other infidels

The Lord says: "Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. · Therefore be prudent as snakes and simple as doves" (Mt 10:16). · Whence let whatever friar who wants to go among the Saracens and other infidels, go in accord with the permission of his minister and servant. · And let the minister give them permission and not forbid them, if he has seen that they are suitable to be sent; for he will be bound to render an account to the Lord (cf. Lk 16:2), if in this or in other things he will have proceed indiscreetly. · Indeed the friars, who go, can conduct themselves spiritually among them in two manners. · One manner is, that they cause no arguments nor strife, but be subject "to every human creature for God's sake" (1 Pt 2:13) and confess themselves to be Christians. · The other manner is, that, when they have seen that it pleases God, they announce the word of God, so that they may believe in God the Omnipotent, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator of all things, (and) in the Redeemer and Savior, the Son, and that they may be baptized and become Christians, because "he who has" not "been reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (cf. Jn 3:5).⁴¹²

These things and others, which have pleased the Lord, they can say to them and to others, because the Lord says in the Gospel: "Every man, who confesses Me before men, him I will confess also before My Father, who is in Heaven" (Mt 10:32). · And: "He who is ashamed of Me and My discourses, of him the Son of man will also be ashamed, when He will have come in His Father's majesty and (that) of the Angels" (cf. Lk 9:26).

And let all the friars, wherever they are, remember, that they have given themselves and surrendered their bodies to the Lord Jesus Christ. · And on behalf of His love (amor) they ought to confront their enemies both visible and invisible;⁴¹³ because the Lord says: "He who will have lost his life for My sake, shall save it (cf. Lk 9:24) for eternal life" (Mt 25:46). · "Blessed are those who suffer persecution on account of justice, since theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 5:10). · "If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also" (Jn 15:20). · And: If they

⁴⁰⁹ see fn. 290.

⁴¹⁰ see fn. 145.

⁴¹¹ see fn. 340.

⁴¹² Baptism is a necessary for salvation by a necessity of means (cf. Jn 3:5; Mk 16:16) and by a necessity of precept (cf. Mt 28:19); cf. Council of Trent's decrees on Baptism, Denzinger 791 and 861 (All citations of H. Denzinger's Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum are taken from the edition of C. Rahner, as quoted in Ludwig Ott, Grundriss der Katholischen Dogmatik, Verlag Herder, Friburg, 1952).

⁴¹³ i.e. those things or devils which are causes of temptation.

persecute you "in one city, flee to another" (cf. Mt 10:23). · "Blessed are you" (Mt 5:11), "when men have hated you" (Lk 6:22) "and cursed you" and do persecute you (cf. Mt 5:11) "and have separated you and reproached you and cast your name out as evil" (Lk 6:22) "and when they have said every evil against you, lying, on account of Me" (Mt 5:11). · "Rejoice on that day and exult" (Lk 6:23), "since your wage is great in heaven" (cf. Lk 12:4), and I "say to you My friends, do not be afraid of them" (cf. Lk 12:4), · "and do not fear those who kill the body" (Mt 10:28) · "and after" this "have nothing more to do" (Lk 12:4). · "See, that you are not disturbed" (Mt 24:6). · For "in your patience you shall possess your souls" (Lk 21:19), · and the one who "will have persevered until the end, he shall be saved" (Mt 10:22; 24:13).

Chapter XVII

On preachers

Let no friar preach against the form and arrangement of Holy Church nor unless it has been conceded to him by his minister.⁴¹⁴ · And let the minister beware of himself, lest he indiscreetly concede (this) to anyone. However let all the friars preach by works. · And let no minister or preacher appropriate to himself the office of minister or the office of preaching, but in whatever hour it has been enjoined upon him, let him without any contradiction surrender his office.

Whence I beseech in the Charity, which God is (cf. 1 Jn 4:16),⁴¹⁵ all my friar preachers, prayers, workers, clerics as much as lay (brothers), that they strive to humble themselves in all things, · not to glory nor rejoice in themselves nor to exalt themselves interiorly because of the good words and deeds, indeed because of no good thing, which God does or says⁴¹⁶ or works at any time in them and through them, according to what the Lord says: "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you" (Lk 10:20). · And let us know firmly, that nothing pertains to us, except vices and sins. · And we ought to rather rejoice, "when" we would fall "into various temptations" (cf. Jm 1:2) and when we would sustain whatever kind of difficulties of soul or body, or of tribulation in this world for the sake of eternal life.

Therefore let all the friars beware of all pride and vainglory; · and let us guard ourselves from the wisdom of this world and from "the prudence of the flesh" (Rm 8:6); · for the spirit of the flesh wants and strives much to have words, but little towards work, · and it seeks not religion and sanctity in the interior spirit, but wants and desires to have a religion and sanctity appearing outwardly to men. · And these are those, concerning whom the Lord says: "Amen I say to you, they have received their wage." (Mt 6:2). · But the spirit of the Lord wants the flesh to be mortified and despised, vile and abject. · And that it strive towards humility and patience and a pure and simple and true peace of spirit. · And always above all things (this spirit) desires the divine fear and the divine wisdom and the divine love of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And let us render all good things to the Lord God, the Most High and Highest, and let us recognize that all good things are His and because of all things let us return thanks to Him, from whom all good things proceed.⁴¹⁷ · And may He Himself, the Most High and Highest, the only

⁴¹⁴ see fns. 323 and 324 for the recent decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council in this regard.

⁴¹⁵cf. Ps. Alcuin, Sermo in Assumptione B.V.M. in Marianum 27 (1965) 29, l. 484s.

⁴¹⁶ cf. fn. 5.

⁴¹⁷ cf. Missale Romanum (1961): Oratio Dominicæ V p. Pascha.

True God have and let there be rendered unto Him and let Him receive all honors and reverences, all praises and blessings, all thanks and glory, of whom is every good, who alone is good. (cf. Lk 18:19).

And when we ourselves see or hear (anyone) speaking or doing evil or blaspheming God, let us speak well and do good and praise God (cf. Rm 12:21), "who is blest throughout the ages" (Rm 1:25).

Chapter XVIII

How the ministers are to assemble together

In any year whatsoever let the minister be able to assemble with his friars—wherever it has pleased them (to do so)—on the Feast⁴¹⁸ of Saint Michael the Archangel, to treat with those things which pertain to God. · For let all the ministers, who are overseas and beyond the Alps,⁴¹⁹ once in three years, and the other ministers once a year, come to the Chapter at Pentecost at the Church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula,⁴²⁰ unless it has been ordained otherwise by the Minister and servant of the whole fraternity.

Chapter XIX

That the friars are to live as Catholics

Let all the friars be Catholic, live and speak as Catholics. · If anyone indeed has wandered from the Faith and from Catholic life in what he has said or in what he has done and has not amended himself, let him be entirely expelled from our fraternity. · And let us regard all clerics and all religious as lords in those things which pertain to the salvation of the soul and do not deviate from our religion;⁴²¹ and let us venerate their state and office and ministry in the Lord.

Chapter XX

On (the Sacrament of) Penance and the reception of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ

And let my blest friars, clerics as much as lay (brothers), confess their sins to the priests of our religion. · And if they have not been able (to do this), let them confess to other discrete and Catholic priests, knowing firmly and mindful, that from whatsoever Catholic priests they will have received Penance and absolution, they shall without doubt⁴²² be absolved from their

⁴¹⁸ September 29; the end of the year in the Medieval, agricultural calendar; for annual chapters see. fn. 321.

⁴¹⁹ i.e. at the time of this Rule's composition this would refer respectively to the Near East and to Northern and Western Europe.

⁴²⁰ This little church, a mile south of Assisi, is where St. Francis was inspired to found the Order in 1208 A.D.; for triennial chapters see fn. 318.

⁴²¹ For the use of "religion" in this and the next paragraph, see fn. 156.

⁴²² The Latin phrase *procul dubio* translated here as "without doubt" means more precisely "far

sins, if they will have made the sacrifices necessary to observe humbly and faithfully the penance enjoined upon them. · If indeed they could not find a priest,⁴²³ let them confess to their brother, as the Apostle James says: "Confess your sins to one another" (Jm 5:16). · Nevertheless let them not on account of this leave off having recourse to a priest, because the power of binding and loosing has been conceded to priests alone.⁴²⁴ · And thus contrite and having confessed, let them receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ with great humility and veneration, remembering that the Lord said: "He who eats" My Flesh "and drinks" My Blood "has eternal life" (cf. Jn 6:54); · and: "Do this in My commemoration" (Lk 22:19).

Chapter XXI

On the praise and exhortation, which all friars can give

And this, or such an exhortation and praise, all my friars can announce whenever it will have pleased them, among whatever men, with the blessing of God: · Fear and honor, praise and bless, "give thanks" (1 Th 5:18) and adore the Lord God Omnipotent in Trinity and Unity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all. · Do penance (cf. Mt 3:2), produce fruits worthy of penance (cf. Lk 3:8), because soon we will die. · "Give and it shall be given unto you" (Lk 6:38). · "Forgive" and it shall be forgiven you (cf. Lk 6:37). · And "if you would not forgive men their sins" (Mt 6:14), the Lord shall not "forgive you your sins" (Mk 11:25); "confess" all "your sins" (cf. Jm 5:16). · Blessed are they who die in penance, because they shall be in the Kingdom of Heaven. · Woe to those who do not die in penance, because they shall be "the sons of the devil" (1 Jn 3:10), whose works they do (cf. Jn 8:41) and they shall go "into the eternal fire" (Mt 18:8; 25:41). · Beware of and abstain from every evil and persevere in good until the end.⁴²⁵

Chapter XXII

On the admonition of the friars

Let all of us friars attend to what the Lord says: "Love (dilectio) your enemies" and "do good to those who hate you" (cf. Mt 5:44), · because Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose footsteps we must follow (cf. 1 Pt 2:21), called His traitor 'friend' (cf. Mt 26:50) and He offered Himself willingly to His crucifiers. · Therefore our friends are all those who unjustly bring upon us tribulations and difficulties, shame and injuries, pains and torments, martyrdom and death; · whom we ought to love greatly, because from this which they bring upon us, we have eternal life.⁴²⁶

from any doubt."

⁴²³ St. Francis prescribes this humiliation to help dispose the friar to receive the extraordinary grace of a perfect contrition, which with a firm desire to receive the Sacrament of confession as soon as possible, can obtain the forgiveness of even mortal sins; concerning this final quote from the Apostle, see Peter Lombard, Sent. IV, dist. XVII, ch. IV: Quaracchi ed. (1916), p. 853.

⁴²⁴ cf. Mt 16:18-19; Jn 20:21-23; 2 Cor 5:18-19, as well as the Council of Trent, Denzinger 670, 753, 920.

⁴²⁵ On this final phrase, see fn. 84.

⁴²⁶ cf. Adm IX.

And let us hold our body in hatred⁴²⁷ together with its vices and sins; because by carnal living the devil wants to bear off from us the love (amor) of Jesus Christ and eternal life and to destroy himself in Hell together with everyone; · because⁴²⁸ we through our own fault are stinking, wretched and opposed⁴²⁹ to good, but prompt and willing to evils, because, as the Lord says in the Gospel: · From the heart proceeds and goes forth wicked thoughts, adulteries, fornications, homicides, thefts, avarice, iniquities, grief, incontinence, an evil eye, false testimonies, blasphemies, foolishness (cf. Mk 7:21; Mt 15:19). · "All these evils proceed" from inside the heart of a man (cf. Mk 7:23)⁴³⁰ and "it is these, which completely befoul a man" (Mt 15:20).

Now however, after we have abandoned the world,⁴³¹ we have nothing else to do, except to follow the Will of the Lord and to please Him ourselves. · Let us beware much, lest we be as the ground along the road or (as) the rocky or thorny (ground), according to what the Lord says in the Gospel: · "The seed is the word of God" (Lk 8:11). · That which however "fell along the road and was trampled upon" (cf. Lk 8:5), "are those who hear" (Lk 8:12) "the word and do not" understand it (cf. Mt 13:19); · and "very hastily" (Mk 4:15) "the devil comes" (Lk 8:12) "and snatches" (Mt 13:19), "what was sown in their hearts" (Mk 4:15) and "takes the word from their" hearts, "lest believing they be saved" (Lk 8:12). · That which "however fell upon rocky (ground)" (cf. Mt 13:20), "are those, who when they have heard the word, immediately with joy" (Mk 4:16) "receive" (Lk 8:13) "it" (Mk 4:16). · "However when tribulation and persecution arise on account of the word, they are at once scandalized" (Mt 13:21) and these have no root in themselves, "but last only for a time" (cf. Mk 4:17), because "they believe for a time and in the time of temptation they retreat" (Lk 8:13). · "However that which fell upon thorns, are those" (Lk 8:14) "who hear the word of God" (cf. Mk 4:18), "and the solicitude" (Mt 13:22) and "hardships" (Mk 4:19) "of this age and the deceit of riches" (Mt 13:22) "and the concupiscence concerning (what they) left behind, entering in, suffocates the word and" makes it "without fruit" (Mk 4:19). · "However that which upon good ground" (Lk 8:15), "was sown" (Mt 13:23) "are those, who hearing the word in a good and perfect heart" (Lk 8:15) understand it and (cf. Mt 13:23) "retain it and bring forth fruit in patience" (Lk 8:15). · And on that account let us friars, as the Lord says, leave "the dead to bury the dead" (Mt 8:22).

And let us greatly beware of the wickedness and subtlety of Satan, who wants, that man not keep his mind or heart on God.⁴³² · And going around he desires to seize the heart of man under the appearance of some wage or aid and to suffocate the word and precepts of the Lord from his memory and wanting to completely blind the heart of man by means of secular affairs and worry and to dwell in him, as the Lord says: · "When an unclean spirit has gone forth from a man, it walks through arid" (Mt 12:43) "and dry places seeking rest; and not finding it, it says: · I will go back to my house, whence I have come forth" (Lk 11:24). · "And coming it finds it empty, cleaned with a broom and decorated" (Mt 12:44). · "And it goes about and it calls in" seven other "spirits worse than itself, and having entered they dwell in him, and the last state of

⁴²⁷ For this idiom see fn. 100.

⁴²⁸ Here St. Francis returns to the reason why "one should hold his body in hatred."

⁴²⁹ By vice an individual is indisposed to receive and cooperate with God's graces.

⁴³⁰ K. Esser's text has Mk 7:73, incorrectly, at this point; cf. op.cit., p. 503.

⁴³¹ St. Francis uses "world" here in the geographic sense, to emphasize that the religious should have his heart set on God, who transcends time and space; cf. fn. 145.

⁴³² cf. the subsequent elaboration of this common theme in religious discipline, St. John of the Cross' "The Precautions," and "Counsels to a Religious on how to reach Perfection."

that man" is "worse than the first" (cf. Lk 11:26).

Whence, all friars, let us guard ourselves greatly, lest under the appearance of some wage or work or aid we perish or take our mind and heart off the Lord. · But in the holy Charity, which God is (cf. 1 Jn 4:16), I beg all the friars, the ministers as much as the others, that with every impediment removed and every care and anxious concern (sollicitudo) put behind, in whatever manner they can better serve, love, honor and adore the Lord God with a clean heart and a pure mind, that they do so, because He seeks this above all things, · and let us always make there a little dwelling and mansion (cf. Jn 14:23) for Him, who is the Lord God Omnipotent, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who says: "And so make vigil, praying at all times, so that you may be considered worthy to flee all" the evils, "which are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Lk 21,36). · "And when you will stand up to pray" (Mk 11:25) "say" (Lk 11:12): · "Our Father who art in Heaven" (Mt 6:9). And let us adore Him with a pure heart, "since it is proper to pray always and not to do less than one might" (Lk 18:1); · "for the Father seeks such" adorers. · "God is spirit and it is proper that those who adore Him, to adore Him in spirit and in truth" (cf. Jn 4:23-24). · And to Him let us have recourse as to "the Shepherd and Bishop of" our "souls" (1 Pt 2:25), who says: "I am the Good Shepherd, I who pasture My sheep and I lay down My life on behalf of My sheep. · You are all brothers; and do not" call (anyone your) "father on earth, for one is your Father, who is in Heaven. · Nor let yourselves be called teachers" ; for one is your Teacher, who is in Heaven (cf. Mt 23:8-10). · "If you will have remained in Me, and My word will have remained in you, whatever you want, you will ask for and it shall be yours" (Jn 15:7). · "Wherever two or three have gathered in My Name, there am I in their midst" (Mt 18:20). · "Behold I" am with you "even to the consummation of the age" (Mt 28:20). · "The words, which I have spoken to you, are spirit and life" (Jn 6:64). "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:6).

Let us therefore hold on to the words, the life and the doctrine and the Holy Gospel of Him, who deigned to beg His Father on our behalf and to manifest His Name saying: "Father glorify⁴³³ Thy Name" (Jn 12:28a) and "glorify Thy Son, so that Thy Son may glorify Thee" (Jn 17:1b). · Father, "I have manifested Thy Name to the men, whom Thou has given Me" (Jn 17:6); "because the words which Thou has given Me, I have given to them; and they have accepted (these) and have known, that I have come forth from Thee and they have believed that Thou has sent Me. · I beg on their behalf, not that of the world, but on behalf of those whom Thou has given Me, because they are Thine and all (that is) Mine is Thine" (Jn 17:8-10). · "Holy Father, protect in Thy Name those whom Thou has given Me, so that they may be one as even We (are)" (Jn 17:11b). · "These things I say in the world, so that they may have joy in themselves. · I gave them Thy teaching;⁴³⁴ and the world has regarded them with hatred, because there are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. · I do not ask that Thou take them from the world, but that Thou protect them from the evil one" (Jn 17:13b-15). · Astonish "them in the truth. · Thy teaching is truth. · As Thou has sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. · And on their behalf I sanctify Myself, so that they may be sanctified in the truth. · Not on their behalf only do I ask, but on behalf of those, who will believe in Me" on account of "their word" (cf. Jn 17:17-20), "so that they may be gathered into one (Body), and that the world know, that Thou has sent Me and has loved (dilectio) them, just as Thou loves Me" (Jn 17:23). · "And" I shall make "Thy Name known to them, so that the love, with which Thou has loved Me," may be

⁴³³ lit. clarifica, translated here and again in the second phrase as "glorify" means more exactly "to make bright," in this context "with splendor, fame, or renown."

⁴³⁴ lit. sermonem, a discourse, speech, instruction.

in them "and I in them" (cf. Jn 17:26). · "Father, those whom Thou has given Me, I want, that where" I am, "they also may be with Me, so that they may see Thy splendor"⁴³⁵ (Jn 17:24) in Thy kingdom. Amen.

Chapter XXIII

A prayer and thanksgiving

Omnipotent, Most Holy, Most High and Highest God, "Holy Father" (Jn 17:11) and Just One, "Lord" King "of Heaven and Earth" (cf. Mt 11:25), on account of Thee Thyself we give Thee thanks, because through Thy Holy Will and through Thy only Son with the Holy Spirit Thou has created all spiritual and corporal things and "Thou has placed" us, "made according to Thy image and likeness," "in paradise" (cf. Gen 1:26; 2:15). · And we fell through our own fault. · And we give Thee thanks, because just as Thou has created us through Thy Son, so through Thy sacred love, "with which Thou has loved" us (cf. Jn 17:26), Thou caused Him to be born True God and True Man from the glorious and ever-Virgin, Most Blessed, Holy Mary, and Thou willed that we captives be redeemed through His Cross and Blood and Death. · And we give Thee thanks, because Thy Son Himself is going to come in the glory of His Majesty to send the cursed, who do not do penance and who do not know⁴³⁶ Thee, into eternal fire, and to say to all, who know Thee and adore and serve Thee in penance: "Come, you blest of My Father," lay hold of "the Kingdom," which "has been prepared for you" from the origin "of the world" (cf. Mt 25:34).

And because all of us wretches and sinners are not worthy to mention Thee, we entreat Thee suppliantly, that Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy "Beloved Son, in whom" Thou "are well pleased" (cf. Mt 17:5), one with the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, may give Thee thanks, as pleases Thee and Him, on behalf of all things, He who for Thee is always sufficient for all things, through whom Thou has made so many things for us. Alleluia.

And we humbly beseech the glorious Mother, the Most Blessed Mary ever-Virgin, blessed Michael, Gabriel and Raphael and all the choirs of the blessed Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Angels, Archangels, blessed John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Peter, Paul and the blessed Patriarchs, Prophets, (Holy) Innocents, Apostles, Evangelists, Disciples, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, blessed Elijah and Enoch, and all the Saints, who were and will be and are, for the sake of Thy love (amor), to return thanks to Thee on behalf of these things, as pleases Thee, the Highest True God, eternal and living, with Thy most dear Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, "unto the ages of ages" (Apoc 19:3). "Amen. Alleluia" (Apoc 19:4).

And all of us Friars Minor,⁴³⁷ "useless servants" (Lk 17:10), humbly beg and supplicate⁴³⁸ all within the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, willing to serve the Lord God and all those pursuing orders, priests, deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, exorcists, lectors, doorkeepers and all clerics, all religious men and women, all the converts and children, poor and needed, kings and

⁴³⁵ lit. claritatem, "brightness, fame, glory;" a reference to the Beatific Vision.

⁴³⁶ lit. cognoscere, to know another person, to recognize through familiarity. Here used to signify "to know God by daily putting into practice His teaching and living for Him."

⁴³⁷ For an explanation of this name see fn. 255.

⁴³⁸ To "supplicate" is to entreat humbly on bended knee. The very next Latin word universos, translated here as "all," means more fully "each and every."

princes, laborers and farmers, servants and lords, all virgins and the continent and the married, the laity, men and women, all infants, adolescents, youth and elderly, the healthy and the infirm, all the small and great, and all peoples, clans, tribes and tongues (cf. Apoc 7:9), all nations and all men of whatever lands, who are and will be, that we may all persevere in the True Faith⁴³⁹ and in penance, because no one can be saved otherwise.⁴⁴⁰

Let us all love (dilectio) "with all (our) heart, with all (our) soul, with all (our) mind, with all (our) virtue" (cf. Mt 12:30) "and fortitude" (cf. Mk 12:33), with all (our) intellect, and "with all (our) powers" (of soul and body) (cf. Lk 10:27), with all (our) effort, with all (our) affection, with all (our) inmost being,⁴⁴¹ with all (our) desires and willings, "the Lord God" (Mk 12:30), who gave and gives all of us (our) entire body, (our) entire soul and (our) entire life, He who created, redeemed, and by His mercy alone will save us (cf. Tob 13:5), He who had worked and works all good things for us miserable and wretched, putrid and fetid, ungrateful and evil (men). · Therefore let us desire nothing other, let us want nothing other, may nothing other please and delight us except the Creator and Redeemer and Our Savior, the only True God, who is the Full Good, every good, wholly good, the True and Highest Good, who "alone" is "good" (cf. Lk 18:19), faithful, meek, gentle and sweet, who alone is holy, just, true, holy and right, who alone is kind, innocent, clean, from whom and through whom and in whom (cf. Rm 11:36) is all pardon, all grace, all the glory of all the penitents and the just, of all the blessed rejoicing together in Heaven. · Therefore let nothing impede, nothing separate, nothing come between (us and Him); · wherever all of us (are), in every place, at every hour and in every season, daily and continually, let us believe truly and humbly and hold in (our) heart and love (amor), honor, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and exalt above (all), magnify and give thanks to the Most High and Highest Eternal God, in Trinity and Unity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all and the Savior of all believing and hoping and loving (dilectio) Him, who is without beginning and without end, immutable, invisible, inexplicable, ineffable, incomprehensible, unsearchable (cf. Rm 11:33), blest, praiseworthy, glorious, exalted above (all) (cf. Dan 3:52), sublime, exalted, gentle, lovable (amor), delightful and wholly desirable above all

⁴³⁹ i.e. the Faith of the Catholic Church.

⁴⁴⁰ A reference to the Catholic Dogma *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, recently defined by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 A.D.), in its constitution De Fide Catholica. That all men of good will have the possibility of salvation cf. Pope Paul VI, "Credo of the People of God"; but that this possibility is only actualized by membership in the Catholic Church, cf. also Council of Florence, Denz. 714; Innocent III, Denz. 423; Boniface VIII, Denz. 468; Clement VI, Denz. 570b; Benedict XIV, Denz. 1473; Pius IX, Denz. 1647, 1677; Leo XIII, Denz. 1955; Pius XII, "Mystici Corporis", Denz. 2286, 2288. See also Pius IX, Denz. 1647. St. Alphonsus dei Liguori, along with many theologians, having considered the absolute necessity of the salvation offered by Christ, hold that those who die outside the Church and in invincible ignorance, are condemned not for their ignorance of the True Faith, but for the sins against the natural law which they could not avoid without the aid of the True Faith and the Sacraments of the Church. St. Francis includes the virtue of "penance" along with "the True Faith" among those things necessary for salvation, because the virtue of penance is inseparable from a living supernatural faith and is necessary to acquire that disposition need to receive the Sacraments worthily; cf. Roman Catechism, II, ii, q. 39; II, iii, q. 18; II, iv, q. 55; II, v, throughout; II, vi, 12; VII, 28; implicitly in VIII, 31.

⁴⁴¹ lit. visceribus, "guts, intestines;" a common biblical metaphor for "inmost being, heart; through and through."

things throughout the ages. Amen.

Chapter XXIV

Conclusion

In the Name of the Lord! I beg all the friars, that they in addition learn the tenor and sense of these things which have been written in this life⁴⁴² to save our soul and that they frequently recall these to memory. · And I entreat God, that He, who is Omnipotent, Triune and One, bless all those teaching, learning, having, remembering and putting these things into practice as often as they return to and do those things which have been written here for the salvation of our soul, · and I beseech all with a kiss on the foot, to love much, guard and remember these things. · And on the part of God Omnipotent and the lord Pope and through obedience I Friar Francis firmly precept⁴⁴³ and enjoin, that concerning these things, which have been written in this life, no one diminish or add in writing anything to what is above (cf. Dt 4:2; 12:32) nor are the friars to have another⁴⁴⁴ rule. · Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, and (is) now, and (shall be) always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The Rule given for those in hermitages

[RegEr]

St. Francis composed this brief regulation for the governance of the life of the friars who visited and/or lived in hermitages. The eremitic life was one of the central pillars of the early Franciscan Order. St. Francis himself is said to have spent 8 months every year in one hermitage or another. Indeed many of the most important graces which Christ gave him were associated with hermitages (e.g. the grace of the pardon of all his sins, the stigmata, the writing of the Regula Bullata.) And so it is not surprising that many of the reforms of the Franciscan order have also been closely associated with a return to the eremitic life. This reflects the predominance in the Franciscan vocation of prayer over external activity (cf. Regula Bullata [RegB] Chapter V). This rule was written sometime between the winter of 1217-18 and Pentecost of 1221 A.D..⁴⁴⁵

Let those friars, who wish to stay religiously in hermitages, be three or as much as four; let two of these be the mothers⁴⁴⁶ and let them have two sons or at least one. · Those two, who are mothers, let them observe the life of Martha and let the two sons observe the life of Mary (cf. Lk

⁴⁴² i.e. in this Rule; "life" is also used in this sense further on in this same paragraph.

⁴⁴³ see fn. 7.

⁴⁴⁴ Expecting the approval of this version of the Rule, St. Francis had added this stricture. On account of its rambling nature, which makes it unwieldy as a tool of government, this Rule was not approved by the Pope; however it does express faithfully the spirit and mind of St. Francis concerning the Order, and has always been held in high regard among his sons.

⁴⁴⁵ cf. K. Esser, p. 541.

⁴⁴⁶ So called, because their duty is to attend to the domestic duties, the traditional role of mothers.

10:38-42) and let them have one cloister,⁴⁴⁷ in which each one has his own cell, in which to pray and sleep. · And let them always say Compline⁴⁴⁸ of the day immediately after the setting of the sun; and let them strive to keep silence; and let them say their Hours;⁴⁴⁹ and let them rise for Matins and seek⁴⁵⁰ "first the Kingdom of God and His justice" (Mt 6:33). · And let them say Prime⁴⁵¹ at an hour that is suitable and after Terce let them be absolved from silence;⁴⁵² and let them be able to speak and go to their mothers. · And, when it pleases (them), let them seek alms from them just as poor children (do) for the sake of the love (amor) of the Lord God. · And afterwards let them say Sext and Nones; and let them say Vespers at an hour that is suitable. · And in the cloister, where they are lingering, let them not permit any person to enter nor let them eat there. · Let those friars, who are mothers, strive to remain far from every person; and in obedience to their minister⁴⁵³ let them guard their sons from every person, so that no one can speak with them. · And let those sons not speak with any person except their mothers and with the minister and their custos, when it pleases him to visit them with the blessing of the Lord God. · Indeed let the sons, whenever they assume the office of the mothers, at those times when it has seemed to them necessary to alternate,⁴⁵⁴ strive to observe solicitously and studiously what has been said above.

A Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary

[SalBMV]

St. Francis was and is a most ardent devotee of the Blessed Virgin Mary.⁴⁵⁵ He composed this salutation, which is modeled after the Angelic Salutation, to greet Her every day by recalling the mighty deeds that God had wrought in Her and for Her. Like St. Francis' other prayers, the date of the composition of this Salutation is unknown.⁴⁵⁶

Hail Lady, Holy Queen, Holy Mary Theotokos, who are the Virgin made church · and the one chosen⁴⁵⁷ by the Most Holy Father of Heaven, whom He consecrated with His Most Holy Beloved (dilectio) Son and with the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete; · in whom there was and is all

⁴⁴⁷ A cloister was that part of a monastery of hermitage which only the religious could enter.

⁴⁴⁸ The last hour in the Divine Office, after which the community goes to sleep.

⁴⁴⁹ i.e. of the Divine Office.

⁴⁵⁰ By meditation and contemplation on the life of Christ and His teachings.

⁴⁵¹ For an explanation of this and the other hours of the Office see fn. 283.

⁴⁵² The discipline of silence is to enable meditation; it is customary in religious houses, monasteries and hermitages, especially during the hours of the night and early morning.

⁴⁵³ For an explanation of offices in the Franciscan Order see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust I].

⁴⁵⁴ lit. sicut vicissitudinaliter eis pro tempore visum fuerit disponendum.

⁴⁵⁵ cf. 2 Celano 198.

⁴⁵⁶ cf. K. Esser, p. 550.

⁴⁵⁷ lit. electa, "the elect" woman: a reference to Mary's predestination. In the second part of this sentence, the Latin phrase in qua, translated here as "in whom," means more precisely in this context "Thou the woman in whom."

fullness of grace and every good. · Hail His Palace; Hail His Tabernacle; Hail His Home. · Hail His Vestment; Hail His Handmaid; Hail His Mother · and⁴⁵⁸ hail all you holy virtues, which through the grace and illumination of the Holy Spirit are infused into the hearts of the faithful, so that from those unfaithful you make them faithful to God.

A Salutation to the Virtues

[SalVirt]

A striking characteristic of St. Francis' spirituality is his devotion to virtue. He personified the virtues in speech so as to stir himself and his friars to their imitation in life. And he also commanded his friars to preach about them to the faithful (cf. Regula Bullata [RegB], Chapter IX). These praises are first mentioned in the historic record in Bl. Thomas of Celano's Vita Secunda written in the winter of 1246-7 A.D..⁴⁵⁹ The date of composition, however, is unknown.⁴⁶⁰

Hail, Queen Wisdom, the Lord salute thee with thy sister Holy-Pure Simplicity.⁴⁶¹ · Lady Holy Poverty, the Lord salute thee with thy sister Holy Humility. · Lady Holy Charity, the Lord salute thee with thy sister Holy Obedience. · Most holy virtues, the Lord salute all of you, He from whom you come and proceed.

There is scarcely no man in the whole world,⁴⁶² who can have one of you, before he dies. · He who has one and offends not the others, has all. · And he who offends one, has none and offends all. (cf. Jm 2:10). And any one whatever confounds vices and sins.

Holy Wisdom confounds Satan and all his wickednesses. · Pure Holy Simplicity confounds all the wisdom of this world (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6) and the wisdom of the body (cf. Rm 8:7). · Holy Poverty confounds cupidity and avarice and the cares of this age.⁴⁶³ · Holy Humility confounds pride and all the men, who are in the world, and likewise all the things, which are in the world. · Holy Charity confounds all the diabolic and carnal temptations and all carnal fears. · Holy Obedience confounds all things corporal, both carnal and one's own willings · and holds the body mortified in obedience of spirit⁴⁶⁴ and in obedience to one's brother · and is subject and submissive to all the men, who are in the world · and not to men alone, but even to all the beasts and wildlife, · so that they may do with him, whatever they will, as much as has been given them from above by the Lord (cf. Jn 19:11).

⁴⁵⁸ This conjunction of Mary's prerogatives and the mediation of grace is an explicit reference to Our Lady's intimate role in mediating the graces of the Holy Spirit, Her divine Spouse, cf. the Marian Antiphon from the "Office of the Passion of the Lord" [OffPass].

⁴⁵⁹ 2 Celano 189.

⁴⁶⁰ cf. K. Esser, p. 562, 550-2.

⁴⁶¹ cf. 2 Celano 189.

⁴⁶² see fn. 145 for St. Francis' usage of "world" here and in the next paragraph.

⁴⁶³ cf. RegB X,7.

⁴⁶⁴ i.e. an obedience that is in the heart, and not only in outward appearances.

The Testament of Saint Francis

[Test]

St. Francis dictated his last will and testament, at the Portiuncula, just a few days before he passed from this world to the Father, in the evening of the first Saturday of October, 1226 A.D..⁴⁶⁵ In this writing St. Francis strove to explain to his friar-sons the spirit of the Franciscan vocation, so that throughout the centuries they would have no doubts as to how to imitate him in his following of the poor Crucified Christ.⁴⁶⁶ Traditionally the Testament of St. Francis is read by Franciscans immediately after the reading of the Regula Bullata, as St. Francis himself requested at the end of this his Testament.⁴⁶⁷

I. Thus did the Lord grant to me, Friar Francis, to begin to do penance: that when I was exceedingly in (my) sins, to see the lepers seemed a bitter thing to me. · And the Lord Himself led⁴⁶⁸ me among them and I worked mercy with them. · And when I was fleeing from them, because that seemed to me a bitter thing, it was changed for me into sweetness of soul and body; and afterwards I stayed for a little while and (then) I went forth from the world (saeculum).⁴⁶⁹ · And the Lord granted me such faith in churches, that thus I would pray simply and say: · We adore Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, and for⁴⁷⁰ all Thy churches, which are in the whole world,⁴⁷¹ we also bless Thee, because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world. · Afterwards the Lord

⁴⁶⁵ cf. K. Esser, p. 583.

⁴⁶⁶ There was such a reverence for this last will and testament of St. Francis that the Order itself requested a papal decision regarding its status. Pope Gregory IX in Quo elongati (Sept. 28, 1230 A.D.) declared it to bind the friars spiritually, not canonically.

⁴⁶⁷ Although in the General Constitutions of 1506 A.D. the weekly reading of the Testament was prescribed, it had long been the custom; cf. K. Esser, p. 567.

⁴⁶⁸ lit. conduxit, "to lead" by one's personal presence; hence St. Francis is confessing that the Lord led him by traveling with him among the lepers. Similarly the Latin phrase cum illis translated here as "with them," is not an ablative of means, but of accompaniment; hence St. Francis is confessing that without the lepers he could not have practiced mercy.

⁴⁶⁹ "To forsake the world" is an ancient Christian theme referring to the abandonment of the manner of living common among human society and the setting out to follow Christ as a religious, by observing the evangelical counsels; in this regard cf. also the note in Translator's Forward regarding saeculum.

⁴⁷⁰ The Latin text of this prayer is: Adoremus te, Domine Jesu Christe, et ad omnes ecclesias tuas, quae sunt in toto mundo, et benedicimus tibi, quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum. Here the Latin preposition ad, can mean either: "facing" or "at". Likewise the Latin conjunction et, can mean "and", "even" or "also". Some manuscripts insert hic before the first et, while others omit the second et. The customary rendering of this prayer in English is *We adore Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, here and at all Thy churches which are in the whole world, and we bless Thee, because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world*. Other possibilities arise from the various usages of et and ad in this prayer: *We adore Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, (here) (even/and) (at/facing) all Thy churches, which are in the whole world, (and/also) we bless Thee, because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has redeemed the world*. The rich meaning of this prayer is thus very fruitful for devotion; cf. Breviarum Romanum (1961): Festo in Exaltatione sanctae Crucis, ad Matutinum, Antiphona VII.

⁴⁷¹ see fn. 145 for the usage of "world" in this prayer.

granted me and grants so much faith in priests, who live according to the form of the Holy Roman Church, on account of their state (in life), that if they would stir up a persecution against me, I want to have recourse to them. · Even if I would have as much wisdom, as Solomon had, and would come upon the little poor priests of this age, in the parishes, where they linger, I do not wish to preach beyond their will. · And they and all other (clerics) I want to fear, love (amor), and honor, as my lords. · And I do not want to consider sin in them, because I discern⁴⁷² in them the Son of God, and they are my lords. · And I do (that) on account of this, because I see nothing corporally in this age of the Most High Son of God Himself, except His Most Holy Body and Most Holy Blood, which they receive and which they alone minister to others. · And these Most Holy Mysteries⁴⁷³ I want above all things to honor, to venerate and to be placed in precious places. · Wherever I will have found written the Most Holy Names and His words in unlawful places, I want to gather them together and I beg, that they are gathered together and placed together in an honorable place. · And all theologians⁴⁷⁴ and those, who minister the most sacred divine words, we ought to honor and venerate, as those who minister to us spirit and life (cf. Jn 6:64).

II. And after the Lord gave me some friars,⁴⁷⁵ no one showed me, what I ought to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me, that I ought to live according the form of the Holy Gospel. · And I had it written in a few words and simply and the Lord Pope⁴⁷⁶ confirmed it for me. · And those who were coming to receive life, used to give "all that they possibly had" (Tob 1,3) to the poor; and they used to be content with one tunic, patched inside and out, with a cord and breeches. · And we did not use to want to have more. · We clerics used to say the Office along with the other clergy,⁴⁷⁷ the lay brothers used to say the Pater Noster;⁴⁷⁸ and we used to remain⁴⁷⁹ quite freely in the churches. · And we used to be idiots and subject to all. · And I used to work with my hands, and I want to work; and all the other brothers I firmly want, that they work at their job, because this pertains to honesty. · Those who do not know how, let them learn, not for the sake of the cupidity to receive a price⁴⁸⁰ for work, but for the sake of the example (it gives) and to repel idleness. · And when the price for the work would not be given to us, let us have recourse to the table of the Lord,⁴⁸¹ by asking for alms door to door. · The Lord revealed to

⁴⁷² On account of the sacramental character of Sacred Orders.

⁴⁷³ In general "the Holy Mysteries" refer to the Sacraments; here St. Francis is speaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

⁴⁷⁴ In St. Francis' day theologians were the men who both believed and studied Catholic teaching.

⁴⁷⁵ lit dedit mihi de fratribus, an latinized Italian idiom, equivalent to "gave me some friars." This phrase recalls St. Francis' identification of God as King, and of himself as God's vassal.

⁴⁷⁶ Pope Innocent III, who died in 1216 A.D..

⁴⁷⁷ lit secundum alios clericos, a phrase that can be rendered "according to the manner of the other clergy" or "along with the other clergy." The former would refer to the use of the Gallican Psalter, which prevailed in the earliest years of the Order, before changing to the Roman Psalter in accordance with the Rule; the later would refer to the friar's lack of liturgical books, which were very costly.

⁴⁷⁸ The "Our Father;" because the lay brothers usually did not know how to read.

⁴⁷⁹ On account of the poverty and small numbers of the first friars, they lived in local churches.

⁴⁸⁰ The early Franciscans received food and other necessities in exchange for their work.

⁴⁸¹ To resort to begging is to "have recourse to table of the Lord," because Our Lord himself was fed by others during His public ministry. St. Francis' construction of this sentence, which

me a greeting, that we are to say: "The Lord grant you peace!" · Let all the friars beware of themselves, so that they receive almost none of the churches, the poor tiny dwellings and all (the buildings), which are constructed on their behalf, unless they would be, (such) as befits holy poverty, which we have promised in the Rule, always boarding there as exiles and pilgrims (cf. 1 Pet 2:11). · I firmly precept⁴⁸² all the friars by obedience, that wherever they are, they do not dare to seek any letter⁴⁸³ in the Roman Curia, by means of themselves nor by an interposed person, nor on behalf of a church nor on behalf of another place nor under the appearance of preaching nor on behalf of a persecution of their bodies; · but wherever they have not been received, let them flee into another land to do penance with the blessing of God.

III. And I firmly want to obey the Minister general⁴⁸⁴ of this fraternity and any guardian, whom it will have pleased him to give me. · And I want to be so captive in his hands, that I would not be able to go or do beyond obedience and his will, because he is my lord. · And although I am simple and infirm, nevertheless I want to always have a cleric, who will perform the Office for me,⁴⁸⁵ as it is contained in the Rule. · And all the other friars are bound to likewise obey their guardians and perform the Office according to the Rule. · And those, who would be found, that do not perform the Office according to the Rule, and want to vary it in another manner, or are not Catholics,⁴⁸⁶ let all the friars, wherever they are, be bound by obedience, that wherever they have found any of these, they ought to present them before the nearest custos of that place, where they found him. · And let the custos be firmly bound by obedience to guard him strongly, just like a man in chains day and night, so that he cannot be snatched from their hands, until he in person presents him into the hands of his minister. · And let the minister be firmly bound by obedience to send him by means of such friars, that day and night guard him as a man in chains, until they present him before the lord of Ostia,⁴⁸⁷ who is the lord, protector and corrector of the whole fraternity. · And let friars not say: "This is another Rule," because this is a remembrance, an admonition, an exhortation and my testament, which I, tiny Friar Francis, make for you, my blest friars, for the sake of this, that we might observe the Rule, which we have promised the Lord, in a more Catholic way.

IV. And let the Minister General and all the other ministers and custodes be bound by obedience, not to add to these words nor take away. · And let them have this writing with them

employs the imperfect subjunctive in the initial clause, indicates that the friars should have recourse to begging, not on every occasion that they do not receive alms in exchange for their work, but only if this is a habitual circumstance of their work.

⁴⁸² see fn. 7.

⁴⁸³ i.e. any legal grant of right or privilege, which would distinguish them from the poor.

⁴⁸⁴ For an explanation of this and the other offices mentioned below, see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes" [EpCust I].

⁴⁸⁵ St. Francis was so debilitated by a illness of his eyes, that he could no longer see well enough to recite the Divine Office; for an explanation of the Office see fn. 278.

⁴⁸⁶ The Office prescribed by the Rule was that of the Roman Church; hence St. Francis judges rightly that those who dissent from the liturgical tradition of the Roman Church are not Catholic, in as much as it was upon Peter, the Founder of the Roman Church, that Christ established His Church for all peoples, and it is from this same Apostle that the liturgical traditions of the Roman Church originate.

⁴⁸⁷ The lord Cardinal of Ostia, was at this time the representative of the Order in the Papal court.

always, next to the Rule.⁴⁸⁸ · And in all the chapters that are convened, when they read the Rule, let them also read these words. · And all my friars, cleric and lay, I firmly precept by obedience, to not place glosses upon the Rule, not even by saying in these words: "Thus they intend to be understood." · But as the Lord granted⁴⁸⁹ me simply and purely to dictate and write the Rule and these words, so you should understand them simply and without gloss and observe them with holy work until the end.⁴⁹⁰ · And whoever has observed these, may he be filled in heaven with the blessing of the Most High Father and on earth with the blessing of His Beloved (dilectio) Son with the Most Holy Spirit and all the Virtues⁴⁹¹ of Heaven and all the saints. · And I Friar Francis, your tiny servant, in as much as I am able, confirm for you, inside and out, that most holy blessing.

St. Francis' last Will written for St. Clare

[UltVol]

St. Francis' most devoted disciple was St. Clare of Assisi. She founded a monastery of nuns at San Damiano shortly after St. Francis had founded the Order of Friars Minor. St. Francis counseled them throughout his religious life and shortly before dying left this brief exhortation to impress upon them the importance of their own vocation. Like "The Form of Life given to St. Clare" [FormViv], this short note has been preserved in the Rule of St. Clare for nearly eight centuries.⁴⁹² There, in her Rule, St. Clare testifies that St. Francis wrote this Last Will shortly before his own death on Oct. 3, 1226 A.D..⁴⁹³ It is St. Francis' classic exhortation to the observance of most high Poverty.

I, tiny⁴⁹⁴ Friar Francis, want to follow the life and poverty of Our Most High Lord Jesus Christ and of His Most Holy Mother and to persevere in it until the end; · and I beg you, my ladies, and I give you counsel, that you live in this most holy life and poverty always. · And guard yourselves very much, lest by the doctrine or counsel of anyone you retreat from this in any manner forever.

⁴⁸⁸ Hence, the custom of keeping and reading this Testament immediately after that of the Rule.

⁴⁸⁹ St. Francis refers here to that special light God gave him to compose the final version of the Rule, the Regula Bullata.

⁴⁹⁰ On this phrase see fn. 84.

⁴⁹¹ For "Virtues" see. fn. 236.

⁴⁹² Rule of St. Clare, VI,3; cf. K. Esser, p. 585.

⁴⁹³ loc. cit.; cf. K. Esser, p. 587.

⁴⁹⁴ lit. parvulus the diminutive form of the Latin parvus (small); this appellation appears elsewhere whenever St. Francis addresses his friars, cf. Test III,8; IV,7; EpOrd 3; EpCust I,1.

Dictated Works

Among the writings that can be identified as having being brought into being through some action of St. Francis, are a small collection of writings which K. Esser terms *Opuscula Dictata*.⁴⁹⁵ These include: "The Blessing given Friar Bernard" [BenBern], "The Blessing sent in writing to St. Clare and her sisters" [BenCl], "The Letter written to the citizens of Bologna" [EpBon], "The Written Letter of St. Clare on fasting" [EpCl], "The Letter written to Lady Jacoba" [EpJac], "The Letter sent to the Friars in France" [EpFranc], "The Testament given at Siena" [TestSen], and the short exhortation "On True and Perfect Gladness" [VPLaet].

However, all but the first and final two of these are simply excerpts from the writings of other authors testifying that St. Francis did in fact write something. Therefore these citations are actual "Reported Works" and serve to keep up the expectation of scholars that someday more writings of St. Francis will be found.⁴⁹⁶ The three dictated works "The Blessing given Friar Bernard" [BenBern], "The Testament given at Siena" [TestSen], and the short exhortation "On True and Perfect Gladness" [VPLaet], are actual dictated statements made by St. Francis, and thus are included in this translation.

The Blessing given Friar Bernard

[BenBern]

Friar Bernard was the first companion of St. Francis. Before joining the Order he had been a respected lawyer in the city of Assisi. Upon seeing St. Francis remarkable conversion to a life of evangelical simplicity he himself sold all his possessions and gave them to the poor. Throughout his life St. Francis cherished his friendship and courage. From the internal evidence it can be supposed that St. Francis wrote this letter during the last years of his life, either at a time when death seemed near, or after he had resigned his office of Minister general. The unanimous testimony of the early sources state that the place and date of composition were the very last days of the Saint's life, while he lay dying at the Portiuncula (late Sept. to Oct. 3, 1226 A.D.)⁴⁹⁷

Write as I tell you: · The first friar, whom the Lord gave me, was friar Bernard, and: (it was he) who began and fulfilled most perfectly the perfection of the Holy Gospel by distributing all his own goods to the poor; · on account of which and on account of many other prerogatives, I am bound to love him more than any other friar of (this) entire religion.⁴⁹⁸ · Whence I want and precept,⁴⁹⁹ as I am able,⁵⁰⁰ that, whoever be Minister general,⁵⁰¹ that he love and honor him as my

⁴⁹⁵ K. Esser, pp. 589-604.

⁴⁹⁶ It should be noted that the citation which K. Esser includes under the title "The Letter sent to the Friars in France" [EpFranc] does contain the actual quote of one phrase of the letter by St. Francis: "Let us bless the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit"; cf. op. cit., pp. 598-9.

⁴⁹⁷ cf. K. Esser, p. 591.

⁴⁹⁸ see fn. 156.

⁴⁹⁹ see fn. 7.

⁵⁰⁰ Inasmuch as St. Francis would no longer be Minister general, after his resignation, he could not strictly give his friars a command, but only admonish them as the founder of the Order.

⁵⁰¹ For an explanation of the offices of Minister general and Minister provincial, see the introduction to "The First Letter to the Custodes," [EpCust I].

very self, · and let all the other Ministers provincial also hold⁵⁰² him as (they would) me.

The Testament made at Siena

[TestSen]

Sometime between April and May of 1226 A.D., while St. Francis visited the city of Siena, he fell so ill that all presumed he would shortly die. It was at that time that he dictated this short version of his last will and testament to Friar Benedict of Pirato.⁵⁰³

Write this way: I bless all my friars, who are in (our) religion⁵⁰⁴ and who will come even until the end of the world (saeculum) . . . · Since on account of my weakness and the pain of my infirmity I cannot manage to speak, in these three words I am briefly making clear my will to my friars, · that is: that, in remembrance of my blessing and my testament, they love (dilectio) one another, · that they always love and observe our lady, Holy Poverty, · and that they be⁵⁰⁵ faithful and subject to the prelates⁵⁰⁶ and all the clerics of Holy Mother Church.

On true and perfect gladness

[VPLaet]

This famous story, told in Chapter 8 of the Fioretti (the Little Flowers of St. Francis) with much embellishment, has its origin in a very simple and short version, which K. Esser considers to have originated with St. Francis. Though seemingly simplistic, the teaching presented here by St. Francis is of the stature of St. John of the Cross' doctrine of the Nada. It is a profound explanation of Christ's sayings: "Where your heart is, there your treasure will be." And "Do not rejoice in this, but rather that your names are written in Heaven." The time of composition is sometime after the beginning of 1220 A.D.⁵⁰⁷

The same (fr. Leonard)⁵⁰⁸ recalled there that one day blessed Francis, while at St. Mary's (of the Angels), called friar Leo and said: "Friar Leo, write." · Who responded: "Behold I am ready." · "Write—he said—what is perfect gladness?" · A messenger comes and says that all the masters⁵⁰⁹ of Paris have entered the Order, write, "not true gladness." · Likewise that all the

⁵⁰² lit. teneant, "to hold, keep, preserve, remember," etc.

⁵⁰³ cf. K. Esser, pp. 600 and 599 respectively.

⁵⁰⁴ see fn. 156.

⁵⁰⁵ lit. exsistant, which means more exactly "to stand forth, arise, come into existence"; cf. Frag II, 10.

⁵⁰⁶ see fn. 6.

⁵⁰⁷ Friar Leo accompanied St. Francis' daily after his return from the Holy Land at the beginning of 1220 A.D., as his personal secretary and chaplain; cf. K. Esser, pp. 601-3.

⁵⁰⁸ i.e. Friar Leo.

⁵⁰⁹ i.e. professors of theology.

prelates beyond the Alps, archbishops and bishops; likewise that the King of France and the King of England: write, "not true gladness." · Likewise, that my friars went among the infidels and converted them all to the Faith; likewise that I have from God this grace, that I heal the infirm and work many miracles:⁵¹⁰ I say to you that in all these things there is not true gladness. · But what is true gladness? · I return from Perugia and in the dead of night I come here and it is winter time, muddy and what is more, so frigid, that icicles have congealed at the edge of my tunic and they always pierce my shins, and blood comes forth from such wounds. · And entirely (covered) with mud and in the cold and ice, I come to the gate, and after I knock for a long time and call, there comes a friar and he asks: "Who is it? I respond: "Friar Francis." · And he says: "Go away; it is not a decent hour for traveling; you shall not enter." · And again he would respond to (me) insisting: "Go away; you are a simpleton and an idiot; you do not measure up to us; we are so many and such men, that we are not in need of you!" · And I stand again at the gate and I say: "For the love (amor) of God take me in this night." · And he would respond: "I will not! Go away to the place of Crosiers⁵¹¹ and ask there." · I say to you that if I will have had patience and will not have been disturbed, that in this is true gladness and true virtue and soundness⁵¹² of soul.

⁵¹⁰ lit. miraculis, "miracles" in the proper sense; compare Adm V,7.

⁵¹¹ St. Francis is referring to the Hospital of Fontanelle, run by the Order of Crosiers. It was only a short distance from St. Mary's. Hospitals in the Middle Ages where the places for the infirm, the elderly, and travelers; cf. K. Esser, p. 602, n. 41.

⁵¹² lit. salus, see fn. 68 for the various meanings of this word.

APPENDIX

Fragments of other rules

[Frag]

The student of the Rule of St. Francis will find it useful to compare these fragments with the text of the *Regula non-Bullata*. Mostly of scholarly interest, they serve to shed some light, however obscure, on the development of St. Francis' expression of what was essential to Franciscan life. One group of fragments have been salvaged from the Codex of Worcester (fol 158v-159v) and another from the writings of Hugo of Digne, in his *Exposition of the Rule*, written between 1245-1255 A.D., and still another from Bl. Thomas of Celano's *Vita Secunda*, written in the winter of 1226-7.A.D..

*I. From the Codex of Worcester*⁵¹³

1-5 [XXII,1-7] [Let us attend, all friars that the Lord says: Love (*dilectio*) your enemies and do good to those who hate you (cf. Mt 5:44 par.), because Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose footsteps we must follow (cf. 1 Pt 2:21), called His own betrayer friend and offered Himself willingly to His own crucifiers. · Therefore all those are our friends "who unjustly bring upon us" tribulations, difficulties,] embarrassments,⁵¹⁴ injuries and sorrows and torments, martyrdom and death; (these are the ones) whom we ought to love much, because from this, which they bring upon us, we have eternal life. · And let us castigate our body, crucifying it together with (its) vices and concupiscence and sins, because by living carnally it wants⁵¹⁵ to bear away from us the love (*amor*) of Jesus Christ and eternal life and to send its very self with the soul into Hell; · because we through our own fault were stinking, contrary to the good, prompt and willing to evil; · because as the Lord says: "From the heart proceed and come forth wicked thoughts" (Mk 7:21) etc..

6-8 [XXII,9-12,17] ...but however, after we have dismissed the world, we have nothing else to do, except to be solicitous to follow His will and please Him; · let us beware much, lest we be as the rocky and thorny ground situated along the road, according to that which the Lord says in the Gospel: "The seed is the word of God" (Lk 8:11); "which fell along the road, and was trampled upon" (cf. Lk 8:5) and etc. through to: · "they bear fruit in patience" (Lk 8:15).

9-13 [XXII,18-24] And on that account, all friars, as the Lord says: "Let us dismiss the dead ... their (dead)" (cf. Mt 8:22); · and let us beware much of the wickedness and subtlety of Satan, who wants, that a man not have his virtue and his heart (turned) toward the Lord; · and going around, he desires to bear off the heart of a man under the appearance of some wage or help and to suffocate the word and precepts of the Lord from (his) memory and wanting to inhabit and blind the heart of a man through secular business and cares, · as the Lord says:

⁵¹³ To facilitate reference, each paragraph is identified, in italics, with the corresponding verse-number of the Latin text (as it appears in K. Esser, pp. 361-6) and comparable verse location in the *Regula non-Bullata* [RegNB]. For other notes, refer to these corresponding sections in that Rule. This first section of the Fragments comprises part I.

⁵¹⁴ lit. *verecundias*, things that make us ashamed.

⁵¹⁵ St. Francis speaks metaphorically here, for the body, by the effects of original sin, is inclined to inordinate desires.

"When the unclean spirit" (Mt 12:43) etc. through to: · "The last (state) of that man becomes worst than the first" (Mt 12:45).

14-26 [XXII,25-41] Whence, all friars, let us guard ourselves much, lest under the appearance of any work or reward or help we lose or bear our mind and heart from the Lord. · But in the Charity, which God is (cf. Jn 4:16), I beg all the friars, the ministers as much as the others, that with every impediment removed, with every care and anxious concern (sollicitudo) put behind, whithersoever they can (go), let them make the Lord God loved, served, and adored with a clean heart and a pure mind, which He himself seeks above all things, · and let us always make a little dwelling⁵¹⁶ and mansion (cf. Jn 14:23) for Him, who is the Lord God Omnipotent, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, who said: "And so make vigil praying at all times, so that you may be regarded as worthy to flee all the evils, which are to come, and to stand before the Son of man" (Lk 21:36); "and when you stand up to pray (Mk 11:25), say (Lk 11:2): Our Father" (Mt 6:9). · And let us adore Him with a pure heart, "since it is proper that we pray always and not fail to do what we might" (Lk 18:1); "for even the Father seeks such" adorers (cf. Jn 4:23). · "God is spirit and it is proper that those who adore Him adore Him in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:24). And let us have recourse to Him as "to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls" (1 Pt 2:25), who says: "I am the Good Shepherd" (Jn 10:11) etc. through to: "I lay down My life⁵¹⁷ on behalf of My sheep" (Jn 10:15). · "You are all brothers and call (no one) on earth 'father'" (Mt 23:8-9) etc.. · Do not "be called teachers" (Mt 23:10) etc.. · "If you will have remained Me and My words will have remained in you, whatever you want, you will ask for and it shall be yours" (Jn 15:7). · "Wherever there are two or three gathered together in My Name" (Mt 18:20) etc. · "Behold I am with you all days" (Mt 18:20) etc.. · "The words, which I have spoken to you, are spirit and life" (Jn 6:64). · "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:16).

27-29 [XXII,42,55] Let us hold fast therefore to the words, doctrine, life and Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who deigned to beg the Father on our behalf and to manifest His Name to us, saying: Father, "I have manifested Thy Name to men" (Jn 17:6) etc. through to: · "Father, those whom Thou has given me, I want, that where I am, they also may be with Me, so that they may see My splendor"⁵¹⁸ (cf. Jn 17:24) in Thy Kingdom. · Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

30 [XI,6] And let the friars show the poor the (same) love (dilectio) they have for one another, just as the Apostle says: "Let us not love (only) in word nor speech" (1 Jn 3:18) etc..

31-32 [XII,1,5] Let all the friars, wherever they are, themselves beware of wickedly looking at and frequenting women and let no one take counsel with them alone. · Below: And let us keep ourselves and all our members very clean, because the Lord says: "Every man who looks at a woman to desire (her)" (Mt 5:28) etc.. Below.

33 [XIV,1] When the friars go about through the world, let them carry nothing along the road neither a small bag (cf. Lk 10:4) "nor a purse nor bread nor money" (cf. Lk 9:3) "nor a (walking) stick nor footwear" (cf. Mt 10:10). Below:

34-5 [XIV,4-6] [Let them not resist the evil man, but to him who has struck them upon one cheek, let them offer "also the other" (cf. Mt 5:39). · And (from him) who bears off their clothing, let them not hold back even (their) tunic (cf. Lk 6:29), and (from him) who bears off from them what is theirs, let them not seek (anything) back (cf. Lk 6:30).

⁵¹⁶ i.e. in our hearts.

⁵¹⁷ lit. animam, "soul"; here used to signify that "human life" sustained by the soul.

⁵¹⁸ lit. claritatem, "brightness, fame, glory;" a reference to the Beatific Vision

36-8 [XVI,5-7] The friars who in accord with] the permission of their minister go about among the infidels c[an] conduct themselves spiritually in two manners. · One manner is, that they cause no arguments nor strife, but are subjects "of every human creature for God's sake" (1 Pt 2:13) and confess themselves to be Christians. · The other manner is, that when they have seen that it pleases God, they announce the word of God, so that (the infidels) may believe in the Omnipotent God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Below:

39-40 [XVI,10-11] And let all the friars, wherever they are, remember, that they have given themselves and abandoned themselves and their bodies to the Lord Jesus Christ. · And on behalf of His love (amor) they ought to endure persecution and death by enemies both visible and invisible; etc.. Below:

41-4 [XVII,3-6] Let all the friars preach by (their) manners. Let no minister or preacher appropriate to himself the office of minister or the office of preaching, but in whatever (hour) it has been enjoined upon him, let him lay down his office. · Whence I beseech in the Charity, which God is (cf. 1 Jn 4:16), all my friar preachers, prayers, laborers, the clerics as much as the lay (brothers), that they strive to humble themselves in all thing, · not to glory, to rejoice in themselves nor interiorly to exalt themselves because of the good words and works, indeed because of no good thing, which God does or says or works at any time in them and through them,⁵¹⁹ according what the Lord says: "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you" (Lk 10:20) etc..

45-6 [XVII,7-8] And let us firmly know, that nothing pertains to us except (our) vices and sins; · but we ought to rather rejoice, "when" we have fallen "into various temptations" (cf. Jm 1:2) and have endured whatever anguish and tribulation of soul and body in this world for the sake of eternal life.

47-53 [XVII,9-16] Therefore let all the friars beware of pride and vain glory; let us guard ourselves much from the wisdom of this world and the prudence of the flesh. · For the spirit of the flesh wants and strives much to have words, but little towards working; and it seeks not religion and sanctity of spirit, · but wants and desires a religion and sanctity appearing outwardly to men. · And these are those, of whom the Lord speaks: "Amen I say to you, they have received their wage" (Mt 6:2). · The spirit of the Lord, however, wants mortification and the flesh to be despised, vile and abject and disgraceful. · And it strives towards humility and patience, pure simplicity and true peace of spirit. · And above all it desires the divine fear and the divine wisdom and the divine love of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

54-5 [XVII,17-18] And let us render all good things to the Lord God, the Most High and Highest, and let us recognize that all good things are His. · And let Him accept all honors and reverences, all praises and blessings, all thanks and glories, of whom is every good, who alone is good (cf. Lk 18:19).

56 [XVII,19] And when we hear men speak evil or blaspheme the Lord, let us do good and bless and praise the Lord, "who is blest through the ages" (Rm 1:25).

57 [XIX,3] Let all of us clerics and religious regard (one another) as lords in those things which pertain to the salvation of the soul, and do not turn aside from my religion;⁵²⁰ and let us venerate their state and administration and office in the Lord. Below:

58-66 [XXI,1-9] This or such an exhortation or praise all the friars can announce, as much as God will have inspired them, among whatever men, with the blessing of God and the permission of their minister: · Fear and honor, praise and bless, give thanks (1 Th 5:18) and

⁵¹⁹ see fn. 5.

⁵²⁰ see fn. 156.

adore the Lord Our God, Omnipotent in Trinity and Unity, the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator of all. · Do penance (cf. Mt 3:2) and produce fruits worthy of penance (cf. Lk 3:8), because know that we shall soon die. · "Give and it shall be given to you" (Lk 6:38). · Forgive and it shall be forgiven you (cf. Lk 6:37). · And "if you will not have forgiven" (Mt 6:14), the Lord shall not "forgive you your sins" (Mk 11:25); confess all your sins (cf. Jm 5:16). · Blessed are those who die in penance, because they shall be in the Kingdom of Heaven. · Woe to those who do not die in penance, because they shall be "sons of the devil", whose works they do (Jn 8:41) and they shall go into eternal fire. · Beware of and abstain from all evil and persevere until the end in good.

67-70 [VII,13-16] Let all the friars beware, wherever they have been, in hermitages or in other places, that they appropriate no place or any thing to themselves nor defend it against anyone. · And whoever will have come to them, friend or adversary, let them not contend with him in any manner. · And wherever the friars are and in whatever [place they have come upon one another, they ought to spiritually and diligently look upon themselves and honor "one another without murmuring" (1 Pt 4:9). · And let them beware of themselves, that they do not show themselves to be sad, exteriorly gloomy and hypocrites; but let them show themselves to be (those) "rejoicing in the Lord" (cf. Phil 4:4) and cheerful and jocund] and suitably gracious.

71 [X,3] I beg every sick friar, that by returning thanks to the Creator because of all things, as God wants him to be, so he would desire (to be), whether healthy or infirm, because all, whom the Lord has preordained "to life eternal" (cf. Act 13:48), He trains with the goads of whips and infirmities and a spirit of compunction;⁵²¹ just as (He says): "Those whom I love" (Apoc 3:19) etc..

72 [X,4] Whence I beg all my sick friars, that in their infirmities they do not grow angry nor become disturbed against God or against the friars, nor very solicitously or exceedingly desire medicines to free the flesh (that is) swift to die, which is the soul's enemy (that is) to die.

73-8 [IX,1-6] Let all the friars strive to follow the humility and poverty of Our Lord Jesus Christ and let them remember, that it is proper that we have nothing else of the whole world, except, as the Apostle says, having [food] and clothing "with which we are covered let us be content with these" (1 Tm 6:8). · And they ought to rejoice, when they conduct themselves among vile and despised persons, among the poor and weak and infirm and lepers and those begging along the road. · And when the necessity has arisen, let them go about for alms. · And let them not be ashamed, because Our Lord Jesus "Christ, the Son of the living God" (Jn 11:27) Omnipotent, "set his face as flint"⁵²² (Is 50:7) nor was He ashamed. · And He was poor and a guest and lived by alms, He and the Blessed Virgin, His holy Mother Mary, and His disciples. · And when men have shamed them and have not wanted to give them (anything), let them on that account return thanks to God, that because of the shame they shall receive great honor before the tribunal of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

79-8 [IX,7-9] And let them know, that shame will be imputed not to those who are suffering (it), but to those who bring it upon (others); · because alms are the inheritance and justice, which ought to be given to the poor, (and) which Our Lord Jesus Christ acquired. · And the friars, who labor by acquiring it, shall have a great wage and shall make the donors profit and acquire (merit); because all things, which men leave behind in the world, will perish, but because of the charity and alms, which they will have given, they shall have eternal life.

⁵²¹ cf. St. Gregory the Great, Homil. in Ev. 18,18; PL 76, 1148.

⁵²² see fn. 396.

*II. From the writings of Hugo of Digne*⁵²³

II,175 [II,5] Whence the Saint used to say regarding this kind of thing in the Rule before it was approved: Let the friars and the ministers of the friars beware of themselves, that they in no manner enter into his affairs.

II,193 [II,15] Before the Rule was approved the Saint used to add: And though they be called hypocrites, let them not cease to do good.

III,201-2 [III,12] Whence before the Bull⁵²⁴ the Rule used to have it thus: However at other times they are not bound to fast according to this life except on Fridays.

X,297 [IV,6] ...as the Saint said previously in the Rule: Let the ministers—he said—remember that the care of the souls of the friars has been committed to them, of which, if any would be lost on account of their fault or bad example, it shall be proper that they render an account before the Lord Jesus Christ.

VII,285-6 [V,7-8] The Saint used to say it thus, in the original Rule: Let all the friars beware, the ministers as much as the others, that on account of the sin or bad example of anyone they are not disturbed or grow angry, because the devil wants to corrupt the many on account of the sin of one, but let them spiritually, as they are able, help him, who has sinned, because a doctor is not needed for the healthy, but for those who have a malady (cf. Mk 2:17 par.).

X,296 [V,10] ...in accord with that word of the Lord, which even blessed Francis used to speak to the friars: The princes of the nations dominate their own, and those who are greater exercise power among them; not so shall it be among you (Mt 20:25-26a).

X,302-3 [V,14b-5] ...thus the Saint used to exhort them in the Rule before it was approved: Through charity of spirit let them voluntarily serve and obey one another (cf. Gal 5:13). This is, he said, the true and safe obedience of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

X,305 [VI,1-2] Whence, previously it used to be said thus in the Rule: Let the friars, in whatever places they are, who cannot spiritually observe our life, indicate the same to their minister. Let the minister indeed strive to provide in such a wise, just as he would want to be done to himself.

⁵²³ Each excerpt is identified in italics (Hugo's chapter #, Sisto's p. #) according to its position in Hugo of Digne's *Expositio super regulam Fratrum Minorum*, as it appears in A. Sisto's, *Figure del primo Francescanismo in Provenza: Ugo e Douceline di Digne*, Florence, 1971, pp. 159-324. The cross references, in square [] brackets, to the Regula non-Bullata [RegNB] are from K. Esser, pp. 373-77, and refer to the latter's chapter and senate enumeration. These fragments taken from Hugo of Digne are arranged by K. Esser into verses according to the number of their paragraphs: each paragraph reckoned as one verse. This entire selection comprises part II of the Fragments. For other notes, see the corresponding sections of the Regula non-Bullata [RegNB].

⁵²⁴ i.e. the bull of Pope Honorius III, *Solet annuere*, which approved the final version of the Rule; for a text of this Bull see the opening and closing paragraphs of the Regula Bullata [RegB].

X,307 [VI,1] ... or according to the first Rule, as has been said: In whatever places there are friars.

IV,223 [VII,1-2] Whence the Rule previously used to have it thus: Let all the friars in whatever places they have stayed over⁵²⁵ among others, not be chamberlains or chancellors nor take precedence⁵²⁶ to those whom they serve; nor let them receive any office, which generates scandal or causes detriment to their soul (cf. Mk 8:36); but let them be lesser⁵²⁷ and subject to all, who are in the same houses.

V,237 [VII,3] Whence previously there used to be said in the Rule: Let the friars who know how to work, work and exercise that art, which they know, if it has not been contrary to the salvation of (their) soul.

V,237 [VII,6] And a little afterwards: Let each one remain continually in that art or office, in which he was called (cf. 1 Cor 7:24) according to the arrangement of (his) minister.

V,236-7 [VII,12] Whence before the Bull it used to be put thus in the Rule: The servants of God ought to always persist in prayer or some good work.

VI,267 [VII,13] And before the Bull these words used to be in the Rule: Let the friars beware, that they appropriate no place or any thing to themselves nor defend it against anyone.

VI,276 [VII,15-6] Previously the Saint used to speak in this manner in the Rule . . . And again: Wherever the friars are and in whatever place they come upon one another, they ought to spiritually and diligently look upon themselves and honor one another without murmuring (1 Pt 4:9). And let all the friars beware of themselves, that they do not show themselves to be exteriorly sad and gloomy hypocrites, but let them show themselves (to be) those (who are) rejoicing in the Lord and cheerful and jocund and suitably gracious.

IV,224 [VIII,6] Of money found the Saint used to speak thus: If we have found money, let us not care for it more than the dust, which we tread upon with (our) feet.

IV,223 [VIII,10-11,8] [Francis] used to endure (the fact) that the friars would seek alms for the lepers in (times of) great necessity, yet in such a manner that they would beware much of money. And although they loved (*dilectio*) the pious places, in which the friars used to be guests and linger, he would not suffer them to seek money on behalf of any place or that they cause it be sought, or that they go with those seeking it.

VI,266 [IX,3] And the text of the first Rule used to have it thus: When the necessity has arisen, let the friars go about for alms.

⁵²⁵ lit. *existiterint*, translated here as "stayed over", means literally "to stand forth, arise, come to be, exist" and thus implies a lengthy stay. There is a play on words, here, since "standing forth" (*existiterint*) is contrasted with not "taking precedence" (*praesint*).

⁵²⁶ lit. *praesint honoribus*, to be before others in honor; a reference to the Medieval custom of ordering society, from household to public life, in gradations of rank.

⁵²⁷ lit. *minores*, "minors;" hence the name of the Franciscan Order: the Order of Friars Minor.

VI,269-70 [IX,3-9] This he used to put more extensively in the original Rule in this manner: When the necessity has arisen, let the friars go about for alms. And let them not be ashamed, but rather let them remember, that Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God (Jn 11:27) Omnipotent, "placed" His "face as flint"⁵²⁸ (Is 50:7) and He was not ashamed. And He was poor and a guest and lived by alms, He and His disciples. And when men would shame them and not want to give them (anything), let them on that account give thanks to God, that because of (this) shame they shall receive great honor before the tribunal of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And let them know, that shame is not imputed to those suffering it, but to those shaming (others); and that alms is the inheritance and justice, which ought to be given to the poor, (and) which Our Lord Jesus Christ acquired. And the friars, who labor by acquiring it, shall have a great wage and shall make the donors to profit and acquire (merit) because all things, which men leave in the world, will perish, but because of the charity and alms, which they have given, they shall have a reward from the Lord.

VI,276 [IX,10] Previously the Saint used to speak in this manner in the Rule: Let one without fear manifest to the other his own need, so that he may find those things necessary for him and minister (them to him).

VI,277 [X,3] ...before the Bull the Saint used to warn them in this manner in the Rule: I beg the sick friar, that by returning thanks to the Creator because of all things, as the Lord wants him, so he would desire himself to be, healthy or infirm.

VI,277 [X,4] And a little afterwards: I beg all my friars, that in (their) infirmities they do not grow angry or become disturbed against God or against the friars, nor ask very solicitously for medicine, nor desire exceedingly to free the flesh (that is) swift to die, which is the enemy of the soul.

I, 167 [XI,4] They used to reckon it forbidden to say to a friar "Raca!" or "Fool!" as a type of contumely,⁵²⁹ since even previously the Rule and the these words of the Gospel express (it so) (cf. Mt 5:22).

VI,268 [XI,1; XIV,1-7] Next the Gospel teaches one not to contend with, nor seek restitution from, nor resist the evil man, which before the Bull the Rule used to especially express; but now it comprehends all (these) things under concise and general words.

XII,320 [XVI,5-7] However the Saint used to say that there were two ways of conducting (oneself) among the unbelievers, putting it in this manner in the first Rule: The friars can conduct themselves among them spiritually in two manners. One manner is, that they cause no arguments nor strife, but are subject to all creatures for God's sake (1 Pt 2:13) and confess themselves to be Christians. The other manner is, that, when they have seen that it pleases God, they announce the word of God, so that (the unbelievers) may believe in God the Omnipotent Father and His Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all, (and) in the Redeemer and Savior of all the faithful, and to baptize and make them Christian, because they cannot be saved, unless

⁵²⁸ see fn. 396.

⁵²⁹ Contumely is the sin of speaking in an insulting and rude manner towards another person.

they be baptized and be true and spiritual Christians, because "except one will have been reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5).⁵³⁰

XII,320 [XVI,10-11,17,14] And he used to add with certain insertions: And let the friars remember, that they have given themselves and abandoned their own bodies to the Lord Jesus Christ for God's sake. And on behalf of His love (amor) they ought to endure tribulation, persecution and death, because the Lord says: "He who will have lost his life for My sake, shall save it" (Lk 9:24). "However I say to you, My friends, not to be terrified by those, who slay the body" (Lk 12:4). "If they persecute you in one city, flee to another" (cf. Mt 10:23).

IX,294 [XVII,3] ...just as the Saint previously used to exhort in the Rule, saying: Let all the friars preach with works.

IX,293 [XIX,3] In a wonderful manner the Saint used to want to defer to ecclesiastical persons: Let us regard all clerics and all religious as lords in those things, which do not deviate from our religion, and let us venerate their state and administration in the Lord.

Prologue,161 [XXIV,1-3] ...meanwhile on for the edification of whom and the elucidation of the greater context by the original, I remember that he used to pray that all friars teaching, learning, or examining the tenor and spirit of those things, which had been written in the Rule itself, be blest by the Lord.

*III. From the Vita Secunda of Bl. Thomas of Celano*⁵³¹

II,243 [VI,6] Let [the ministers] be bound on the Day of Judgement before Thee, Lord, to render an account, if any friar of theirs either through negligence or (bad) example or bitter correction has perished.

II,128 [VII,16] ...as a general warning in a certain chapter he caused these words to be written: Let all the friars beware, lest they show themselves to be outwardly gloomy and sad hypocrites, but let them show themselves to be those (who are) rejoicing in the Lord, cheerful and jocund and suitably gracious.

II,66 [VIII,6] ...impressing upon the temerarious the word of the Rule, by which it sufficiently shines forth that money found ought to be trampled upon as dust.

II,175 [X,3-4] Whence in a certain Rule he caused to be written these words: I beg all my sick friars, that in their infirmities they not grow angry or be disturbed against God or against the friars. Let them not ask very solicitously for medicines, nor desire exceedingly to free the flesh (that is) swift to die, which is the enemy of the soul. Let them give thanks because of all things,

⁵³⁰ see fn. 412.

⁵³¹ Each citation is identified in italics with its corresponding location in Bl. Thomas of Celano's Vita Secunda (chapter,sentance), and in the Regula non-Bullata [RegNB], both as indicated by K. Esser, p. 382. These selections comprise part III of the Fragments.

(and) such as God wants them to be, let them desire themselves to be. For those whom God has preordained to eternal life (cf. Act 13:48), He trains with the goads of whips and infirmities, just as He Himself said: "Those whom I love (amor), I correct and chastise" (Apoc 3:19).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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