

than that, it will provide inspiration in these troubled times from the life of a man who was both a cultured scholar and a gay and humble son of Saint Francis; whose unflinching loyalty to Christ and the Church was a scandal to his enemies and a glory to his Order.



*ANTONIUS DER EINSIEDLER IN KULT, KUNST, UND BRAUCHTUM WESTFALENS.* P. Dr. Gandulf Korte, O.F.M. Edited by P. Dr. Adalbert Klau O.F.M. Werl/Westf. Dietrich-Coelde-Verlag. 1952. Pp. 150, 56 illustrations. Paper. (Available from the Franciscan Institute: \$3.00)

This is another book issuing from Holy Cross Province in Germany, and again it is the work of a victim of the Nazi persecutions. Father Gandulf had a hero's record in the First World War, but that did not save him from the fury of the Hitler regime. He was arrested and condemned to death.

The present work on Saint Anthony the Hermit is one of the last projects that engaged Father Gandulf's attention before conditions in Germany made scholarship and research a practical impossibility. It was inspired by his desire to know how many Saint Anthony of Padua was influenced by Anthony the Hermit, whose cult is so popular in certain parts of Europe. In the finished book, this point covers only about half a dozen pages; but they are the most interesting pages. The treatment of Anthony the Hermit is quite thorough, historically, devotionally, and iconographically. The illustrations, in halftone, are excellent.



*MY SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR.* Fr. Athanasius Steck, O.F.M. Privately Printed.

This is a revision of the well-known series of articles on spiritual direction appearing in *SPONSA REGIS* during the year 1949 under the title "Spiritual Direction by the Ordinary Confessor." There are seven articles or conferences in all, discussing how women religious can make their weekly confessions more fruitful and effective in their spiritual life.

In order to make these conferences more readily available, Fr. Athanasius has had them printed in pamphlet form. They may be ordered directly from Saint James Friary, Riverton, Illinois. Prices: single copy, 50c.; 12 copies, \$5.00; 100 copies, \$35.00.



*THE HOUR OF ST. FRANCIS.* Reinhold Schneider. Transl. by James Meyer, O.F.M. Chicago: The Franciscan Herald Press. 1953. Pp. 113. \$1.75.

With so many studies of Saint Francis already published, one may well ask what more could be said about him. Yet Dr. Schneider has found much to say that has not been said before; he has studied the Saint in his historical significance, pointing out with penetrating and sweeping vision the role he played in his own age and the role he can—and must—play in ours. Here is a book that merits reading and re-reading in the spirit of meditation. Unfortunately, Dr. Schneider's brilliant and profound style is somewhat cumbersome in translation, but Father James Meyer's rendering is at least competent and readable.

# the CORD

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worldly lusts, and live conformed to Christ and thirst with unquenched desire for the blessed hope of Heaven (Bonav., Prol. 1). To us he adds the words of the Apostle: *Be imitators of me as I am of Christ* (I Cor. 11:1). Yet, when we contrast the holiness of Francis and the heights he reached with our own unruly natures and our feeble efforts toward perfection, we are disheartened and ask if we can ever expect to fulfill the ideals he has portrayed in his own life. Perhaps we even give up the pursuit of Franciscan Gospel perfection and soothe our consciences by saying that its attainment is impossible in our day and age.

Yet have we not here forgotten that Francis did not attain the heights all at once? He was not suddenly and completely made conformed to Christ from the very beginning of his conversion. Undoubtedly God gave him extraordinary graces throughout his life, because Providence had designed for him a special mission, of bringing Christ back to the lives of men. But at the same time, he had to make his way slowly up the mountain of the spiritual life; he did not achieve the heights in one swift step.

Did he not have to learn, and slowly, the very meaning of his vocation which at first he interpreted as the re-building of the material church at San Damiano? Was not his prayer-life an evergrowing thing which took complete hold of him only gradually? May we not venture to say that the place of the Divine Office in his life became clear to him only after some years? Did his chastity preclude all temptation or lack of sleep? Not if we believe his biographers and the words they quote. Was not joy his from the beginning?

His progress, of course, hardly paralleled our plodding steps. He did advance quickly, far more quickly than we have after him, following him. His purgation, however, was constant, his illumination unceasing, his union ever deeper until the climax on Mount Alverna. Yet withal, it was a *growth in God*, a steady pursuit of God in all things, and it is this constant growth that we can endeavor to imitate. It is this growth that we must imitate: a gradually deepened realization of the meaning of our vocation, a constantly increasing spirit of prayer, a steady battle to win victory over self by poverty of spirit, by poverty, holy chastity and penance, the submission of Christlike obedience to the will of the Father.

Whether we reach the heights is for God to decide. Ours is to

each day what we have promised the Lord to observe and to seek after.

*Semper Novus! Always New!*

This is no easy task, particularly if we have lost our Franciscan enthusiasm, if we have settled into a rut and a routine, if our ideals have become dim, if disillusionment and discouragement have taken their toll. Such dangers threaten every religious, every Franciscan, every priest. When we are young in religious life, a natural enthusiasm and sense of participation carry us along. Though these are poor foundations if purely natural, who is to say they did not help us as we anticipated our reception, our first profession, our solemn or final profession—and, for the priest, the steps of Holy Orders? We thus reached our goal, and the momentum of that final step carried us through the next few years. But then comes the danger! Our whole life stretches out before us, and if we let the inner flame grow small or, God forbid, have let it die out, our life may become nothing but an empty, hollow shell. We may bury ourselves in everish activity, but the fire is dead. Yet “the Religious without devotion, who is lukewarm, is not only unhappy and useless: before God he carries a dead *soul* in a living body!” (St. Bonaventure).

The danger of such a condition, to face the facts, seems to confront the Friar, be he priest or lay-brother, or a Sister, contemplative or active, between the ages of thirty and forty. Perhaps in some it comes sooner; they have entered religion earlier in life; for others, it may come later. Young religious have growing pains; older ones must watch against the hardening of spiritual arteries, when they have lost the joy of youth and have suffered the rude jolts of life and have slowed up in spiritual ardor.

What was Francis doing in those crucial years? He died in his forty-third year. Two years before, he had received the Stigmata, marks of his conformity to Christ, proofs that he had never paused, never slowed up, never grown old and stagnant within. And shall we dare say his was a peaceful life, free from complications, untrammelled by the hard facts of life, never subject to discouragement or to opposition from others? Why did he once complain: “They twist the sword deeper into my flesh,” when others despised his ideals?

But in the long ago it had been revealed to him and his two companions as they thrice opened the Gospel-book: *If anyone wishes to come*

after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me (Luke 9, 23). Daily! *Quotidie poenitentia crucis debet esse nova recens*, comments Saint Bonaventure: the penance of the Cross must be daily new and fresh. This, he continues, was exemplified in Saint Francis, who even at the end of his life when he had reached the summit and fulness of the imitation of Christ exhorted the Friars: *Brethren, begin to serve the Lord God, because until now we have scarcely made any progress! Never did he think, remarks Celano (1, 103), that he had laid hold of the goal, and unflagging in the pursuit of that holy mission of life (Rom. 6, 4), he hoped always to begin!*

*Cogitabat semper perfectiora incipere!* He thought always to begin to attain greater perfection. Despite bodily illness, weariness, the approach of Sister Death: let us begin! *We do not lose heart*, he could say like Saint Paul. *On the contrary, even though our outer man is decaying, our inner man is renewed day by day* (II Cor. 4, 16). In a word to every son and daughter should remember and treasure: "Although he had laid up for himself many treasures of the spirit, he was *semper novus*, ever new, ever fresh, ever eager in the things of the spirit" (II Cor. 4, 16).

Would that this were our watchword! *Semper novus!* If the Marine is *Semper fidelis*, the Coast Guard *Semper paratus*, surely the Missionary of God, the shock-troops and knights of Christ, can emblazon their banner with *Semper Novus!* The Franciscan, like his Father, can be always new, born anew in spirit each day, taking up his cross daily. That was the secret of the Seraph of Umbria. It can be our secret too.

But how shall we do this? Very practically, for one thing, by leading our daily life to renew our union with Christ through a conscious and faithful morning offering: *Domine, in unione*. . . By starting the day with thanksgiving from our heart: *Ecce venio*, behold I come, O heavenly Father, in union with Christ Thy holy Will. We shall do this by the constant practice of the spirit of prayer, by taking time to meditate on our vocation in our daily life, to see it as a pattern, the pattern of a Christiform life! *The Kingdom of a scribe*—of the friar, the nun, the Sister—*cometh by his leisure*—the leisure of meditation, of prayer, of spiritual reading; *and he that is less in action shall receive wisdom* (Ecclus 38, 25). Thus shall we, as a scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, bring forth from our storehouse of the spirit things new, renewed, and old (Matt. 13, 52).

Detroit, Michigan

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## THE FRANCISCAN NOVITIATE

Deep in the heart of every true aspirant to the Franciscan life there wells a restless impatience for the day of his investiture in the holy habit of Saint Francis. On that day of days on which his great dream will be realized, there will begin for the new novice that journey upon the Franciscan road of life which leads to perfection and to sanctity. One of the most important stages of that journey is the very first, that of the novitiate, which immediately following the investiture leads the new novice into a year of prayer and silence, in complete retreat not only from the noise and distractions of the world but even from studies and indeed from anything which might in any way detract from the spiritual formation of his soul. This initial year of religious life is given up entirely to the cultivation of the spiritual life of the novice along Franciscan lines to the exclusion of all else; it is set aside precisely that he may completely and thoroughly steep himself in all the virtues which filled the heart of his Seraphic Father and which will from this time on govern his entire life.

Indeed one might say that during his stay in the novitiate he will come to learn the heart of Francis, that heart in which is contained the very essence of all Franciscanism, and which, as the Seraphic Doctor tells us, burned with a triple zeal:

"The Holy Father Francis, full of the spirit of God and wholly inflamed with the zeal for the love of God and of neighbor, burned with a triple desire, namely: that he might be able to be a perfect imitator of Christ in the perfection of every virtue; again that he might be able perfectly to cling to God through the taste of His continuous contemplation; and again that he might be able to gain for God and to save many souls for whom Christ willed to be crucified and to die." In the proper understanding of this threefold desire is that spirit of Francis which the new novice must assimilate and make his own during the year of probation.

"Francis burned with the desire that he might be able to be a perfect imitator of Christ in the perfection of every virtue." For the young man of investiture, Holy Mother Church fittingly chooses the example of Saint Paul, telling us to *strip off the old man with his deeds. . . and put on the new man which has been created according to God in justice and holiness of truth* (Col. 3, 9; and Eph. 4, 24). Now this new Man of God is none other than Christ Himself for Saint Paul tells us in another place *put on the Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom. 13, 14). This putting on Christ is the first aim of the new Franciscan who must so dispose himself in his every thought, word, and deed, he might strive to think, and speak and act exactly as Our Lord would have in the same circumstances.

But while this imitation of Christ is basic and fundamental to the life of every Christian and religious life in general, it is in a special way the mark of the true Franciscan. We know that from the very first, the ideal of imitatio Christi narrated in the Gospels captivated our Seraphic Father and most literally the life which our Blessed Lord and the Apostles lived in His every act. Furthermore, his imitation of Christ was limited to a particular aspect of His life but rather directed to the imitation of the *whole* Christ. For him, it would have to be all or nothing. This principle was the basis of his entire life and that of his followers. The Rule and Life of the Friars Minor: namely, to observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . It is to the living of this Christ that therefore, that Francis calls the new novice on investiture day. In the peace and solitude of the novitiate he will teach him that love for God which so filled his own Seraphic heart and turned him into "the leper of Umbria."

Although the Franciscan neophyte must learn in his novitiate that this Christ-life presupposes both activity and contemplation and that both are essential elements of the Franciscan life, he must come to understand the priority of contemplation. From this prayerful love of God will emanate a well-spring from which all acts motivated by fraternal charity, and which will be necessary for the novice to establish himself firmly in the life of Franciscan Prayer which was so necessary a part of the life of our Seraphic Father and his first followers. "Francis burned with the desire that he might be able perfectly to cling to God through the practice of assiduous contemplation."

Soon after the Apostles had begun to follow Christ—one day while they were still in their novitiate—they one day approached

Our Lord with the humble request, *Lord, teach us to pray* (Lk. 11, 1). The young Franciscan novices approach their Father Francis with the same petition: Teach us to pray. During this all-important year of retreat, they will become imbued with the spirit of Seraphic Prayer. In their meditation they will learn of God, of His goodness and mercy and love. Here will they pour forth to their Father in heaven the longings and the joys, the trials and the tribulations, the joy and the sadness which fill their hearts. Here they will *draw waters in gladness out of the Savior's fountains* (Isa. 12, 3). By their recitation of their particular Office joined to the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass they will take an active part in Christ's work of Prayer, mediation and sacrifice for the souls of all men. Finally, by their Crown, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and other devotions they will more closely unite themselves to the Eucharistic Lord Whom they are striving so closely to imitate.

But important as is the life of prayer to the Franciscan, his life is not one of pure contemplation. The Seraphic Doctor tells us further: "Francis burned with the desire that he might be able to gain for God and to save many souls for whom Christ willed to be crucified and to die." For Francis, it was impossible completely to love God unless he also loved all men for whom God sent His only-begotten Son to suffer and to die. Now love is shown by deeds and so Francis would not rest content only to pray for his neighbor. Taking example from Our Lord, he zealously set his hand to the works of the active ministry which are God's visible means of drawing souls to His love. Francis was always ready to help his fellow men, whether they were in need of help for soul or body, and this also should be the disposition of his followers, to see in all men, as Francis saw in the lepers, the image of the Crucified Christ. The service of his fellow man, particularly as expressed in the works of the apostolate, should be such as to draw from the Franciscan the words of the Apostle to the Gentiles: *I will most gladly spend and be spent myself for your souls even though, loving you more, I be loved less* (2 Cor. 12, 15). In the novitiate, then, the new novice must learn this principle well. Although as yet he engages in none of the works of the active ministry, still this year he must fill himself as a great store house with prayer, contemplation, and the love of God, for from these will later flow the works of his active ministry. *Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur* (Matt. 12, 34).

On the day of investiture, the young aspirant to the Franciscan life stands before the altar of God. A year hence he will return to this

altar to vow to live the Franciscan life. In the intervening year there is much to be done. The novice must seek out Francis and at his feet learn that triple desire which animated his soul. He must learn to cast aside the old man of the world and to put on the new man, the man of Francis. He must learn the spirit of Franciscan prayer and contemplation and, that he may be able to bestow the fruits of this contemplation on others, he must learn the spirit of Franciscan fraternal charity. In its external manifestations, the works of the apostolate. Indeed, it is enough to say that he must learn the heart of Francis, for in it is contained every virtue necessary for the living of Franciscan life, the perfect replica of the supremely perfect evangelical life.

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Blessed is the servant of God who remains loyal to the clergy according to the established order of the Holy Roman Church. Woe to those who despise them! For even if they are sinners, no one has the right to sit in judgment on them, since the Lord reserves to Himself alone the right to judge them. For as the ministry entrusted to Him surpasses all others, concerned as it is with the most holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which they receive and they alone minister to others; so do those who sin against them have a greater sin than if they were to sin against other persons in this world.

*Saint Francis of*

## THE THREE CROSSES

*(Sermon in honor of Saint Francis by Berthold of Regensburg—d. 1272).*

*On the three crosses: The Cross of Christ, the cross of the Good Thief, and the cross of the Bad Thief, and the fourfold suffering of each cross.*

*But as for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galat. 6, 14). Since these words could so aptly have been spoken by Saint Francis, they are applied to him today. But significantly the Apostle says that he does not wish to glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ—not in the cross of the evil thief, nor in the cross of the good thief, but only in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. These three crosses signify the three afflictions or punishments of men. The first of them leads to hell; the second to the heavenly paradise and the communion of the saints, although sometimes through purgatory; the third leads to a glory and reward which is above that of all the ordinary saints. Everyone hangs on one of them. The first cross, that on the left, is that of the evil thief; the second, on the right, is that of the good thief; and the third is that of Christ Himself, the Son of God.*

Sinners have their own cross, that is, their own suffering and torment; and they hang on the cross of the evil thief. For although they do not recognize the fact, they are in great fear and suffering, and they are by no means happy. As Ecclesiasticus says: *There is no good for him that is always occupied in evil and that gives no alms (Ecclus. 12, 3). And many are the scourges of the sinner (Ps. 31, 10). In other words, great are the sufferings of evil people. Woe to the wicked unto evil (Isai. 2, 11). The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest (Isai. 57, 20). For as the sea is rarely or never at peace, so it is with the evil ones. The cross, from which they descend to hell, has four parts. For the evil people have a fourfold torture, punishment or torment.*

The one part is the great trouble which they have before their death. For they work very hard in order to commit the sin which they desire. A person will torture himself with heavy labor for a long time in order to gain the coveted honor and glory of the world; and after he has attained it, he finds some little consolation for a short time. He has a long watch and after that, a short feast. *In a short time they suffer want* (Ecclus. 16, 3). For it happens to them, as though in a dream, that they have had amusements, honors, and riches; and when they wake up they find not but misery and poverty. *They have slept their sleep: and all the mirth and riches have found nothing in their hands* (Ps. 75, 6). *The dreamer's comfort evilly* (Zach. 10, 2). Their lot is like that of the spider who in the morning and evening, on feast day and holiday, works very industriously. In fact, it works its insides out, in order to catch a few worthless flies. Thus it happens to these men. *Our years shall be considered as a day* (Ps. 89, 10). *They have woven the webs of spiders, etc.* (Isai. 58, 5).

The second punishment or torment of evil people is remorse of conscience after their sin; this they cannot avoid, whether they were or not. *For whereas wickedness is fearful, it bears the witness of its guilt and demnation and of the condemnation of everyone: for a troubled conscience always forecasts grievous things* (Wisd. 17, 10). For it always preaches to the evildoer worms and hell-fire and other very severe torments which are applied without end. *Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched: and they shall be a loathsome sight to all flesh* (Isai. 66, 24). That is, the good people will see in them such a vengeance of God which they will not ask for more, even though they now say: *How long, O Lord, dost thou refrain from avenging, etc?* (Apoc. 6, 10). The miserable sinners are like those who already live in hell, since their conscience does not allow them any quiet, regardless of their wishes. *He is counted with the wicked that go down into hell* (Baruch. 3, 11). The evil conscience is that of a woman about whom Ecclesiasticus speaks: *There is no anger about the anger of a woman. It will be more agreeable to abide with a lion and a dragon, than to dwell with a wicked woman. All malice is short of the malice of a woman* (Ecclus. 25, 22, 26). And like to a roof continually dripping is a scolding and irate woman (Prov. 19, 13), for she ever taunts and taunts. On the other hand, a good conscience makes a person happy. *Happy is the husband of a good wife. A good woman gives her husband joy, and shall fulfill the years of his life in peace. She shall be like to a man for his good deeds. As the sun, when it rises to the world*

high places of God, so is the beauty of a good wife for the ornament of her house. *She is a lamp shining upon the holy candlestick* (Ecclus. 26, 1-3. . . 11-22). Now note! As delightful as the sun is during the day time, and as the lantern shining in the night, so is a good conscience in a man.

The third punishment, that is connected and mixed in with the sin itself, is very bitter, since every sin has its own particular torment. This is evident in envy, which carries its own punishment, in anger, avarice, drunkenness and all the others. As Jeremias says, *Your wickedness is bitter* (Jerem. 4, 18). And: *Ephraim has provoked me to wrath with his bitterness* (Osee. 12, 14). And also a great deal more bitterness is mixed in as to how the sin can be hidden, or excused; moreover, there are many embarrassments, fears, and the like. Therefore, the Apostle warns us: *Let all bitterness be removed from you, along with all malice* (Eph. 4, 31).

The fourth part of the cross of the evil ones is the torment which they have at their death, when the devils terrify them, scold them, and gathering their sins together, throw them in their face. Then, in a short time the evil one pays many times over for all those things which ever gave him pleasure in his sin. *The affliction of an hour makes one forget great delights* (Ecclus. 11, 29). And then he is taken down from that cross with the thief on the left hand, to the torments of hell, where he is tormented most cruelly for ever.

Therefore, it is good advice to us sinners that we hang on the cross, not with the thief on the left, but rather with the one on the right. For then we will go from there into paradise.

This is the second cross, which is that of penitents. This likewise has four parts or torments, and not unjustly, since these people, too, have offended God. For this reason, the thief on the right said, *And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what our deeds deserved; but this man has done nothing wrong* (Luke. 23, 41). For penitents rightly undergo evils. It is right and customary and natural that one who has gravely offended his lord should satisfy him in some way. Therefore, it likewise has its four kinds of punishment.

The first is a good confession. This part is very painful. *I will not spare my mouth, I will speak in the affliction of my spirit: I will talk with the bitterness of my soul* (Job. 7, 19). Indeed, there is much bitterness in a confession. For many a person would rather fast for fifteen days or a month than make a thorough and good confession. Yet the penitent

should prefer to undergo this penance, since through the confession which he undertakes he gives God great satisfaction because God loves this more than He does a fast on bread and water for three years or more without the needed confession. And therefore it is said, *Give glory to the Lord when you confess your sin* (Jos. 7, 19).

The second part is contrition. This likewise is irksome because one should be so sorrowful that he would wish to die rather than to live having sinned, as the psalmist says from experience: *The sorrows of death have surrounded me* (Ps. 17, 5). And yet many have this kind of sorrow through this bitterness comes peace with God: *Behold, in peace have I come, and bitterness most bitter* (Is. 38, 17). And Jeremias calls people to this: *Build up a watchtower for yourself, make for yourself bitterness* (Jerem. 31, 38).

The third part is satisfaction made to God and neighbor. One should pass over in silence the satisfaction of God which is very burdensome and bitter, such as fasting, watching, praying, scourging oneself and the like. But turning to the satisfaction of one's neighbor, we find it so bitter that one would rather go across the sea, or travel to Saint James of Compostela, or fast for a year, than to repay one's neighbor his due in proper manner. But this is so necessary that whatever good a man may do without penance cannot be saved if he has the means with which to repay. For as a man wishing to be cleansed, had to shave off all the hairs of his body according to the command of the Lord, *He shall shave all the hair of his body and shall be washed with water: and being purified he shall enter into the camp* (Lev. 14, 8), so every penitent must repay, in as far as possible, those things which he has taken unjustly. The hairs are the unjust things, the water is contrition. But some shave only in part and these are not accepted, nor can they see God, as is indicated: *Hanon, that is the devil, took the servants of David and shaved off half of their beards* (1 Kings, 10, 4). Note that those who wish to eat the paschal food, that is, the Body of Christ, or who desire the joys of heaven in the future, must not have any leaven, that is, unjust things, in their homes, but all must be thrown out. *Whoever shall eat anything leavened during the pasch, that soul shall perish out of Israel* (Exod. 12, 15). Therefore it is said in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: *Purge out the old leaven* etc., and so let us keep festival etc. (I Cor. 5, 7-8), because it is said in Galatians, 5, 9: *a little leaven ferments the whole mass*.

The fourth part is to forgive injuries. This is so burdensome that God did not dare to command it expressly for 5,000 years in the

commandments, nor in the Old Testament, fearing that the majority of people would not obey it until He came personally and became man for the love of man. And then for the first time he commanded it expressly. Although it is great and burdensome, nevertheless, because He Himself did and suffered great and burdensome things for His beloved children, He asks this confidently of them, in order that He may have reason for giving them a great reward.

And because it is a very great thing to be kind always, and no one can do this except the virtuous, there is as a result a great reward for those who are kind. For such persons receive more for one day of service than do others, who will not be kind, for a great work. And Christ made what he said evident in Stephen, whose feast He placed next to His own. For although there were many martyrs before him previous to Christ's holy passion, He did not show openly how much He loved them. And He did not make plain how close to Himself in heaven He wished to place those who pray for their enemies, as did Stephen, who was the first one besides Christ to pray for his murderers. But why does the Lord love this good so much? For this reason, because it is hard for a man to be kind and because, although all good belongs to God, nevertheless to forgive and be merciful is said to belong to Him in a singular way, as it is said: "O God to Whom it is proper to forgive, etc." And because in this they are like Him in a special way, He therefore gives them such glory. *Love your enemies, etc., so that you may be children of your Father, Who makes the sun to rise, etc.* (Matth. 5, 44). Note, that a king or prince or anyone else does not give anyone as much of his inheritance as he does to his sons, as we see everywhere. So also the Lord does not give anyone so much in heaven as to those who loved Him and their enemies very greatly. Hence, He forcibly invites them to this in Ecclesiasticus, *Remember thy last things, that is, so many joys, and let enmity cease* (Ecclus. 28, 6). And *if you love those who love you, what reward shall you have?* (Matth. 5, 46), as if He would say, you will each receive only a little reward, because that is the work of nature, but here we are speaking of the works of virtue. Even the beasts love their own offspring, the snake loves its young, so also do the wolf and the vulture; the Jews and the other infidels love their friends, but no one loves his enemies fully, except by the grace and the strength of God.

The third cross is that of Christ Himself and on this cross Blessed Francis hung with Christ, because, in as far as he could, he lived exactly



according to the heart of God. Of him the Lord could truly say, *I found a man after my own heart* (I Kings, 13, 14). (Vulg.: *The Lord sought him a man according to his own heart*). For he literally had his breast pierced to the heart as did the Lord Himself, and moreover his hands and his feet also. Such a man was not found among all the men of that age so that he could most properly have said, *But as for me, God forbid that I should glory*, etc. (Galat. 6, 14). And *With Christ I am nailed to the cross* (Galat. 2, 19). Furthermore, he was crucified with Christ on the spiritual cross. This is the cross of great spiritual love. On it hang the perfect men. On it likewise hung Blessed Francis who was wholly crucified with a great love. And although there is a great delight in virtues, according to the famous saying of Gregory: "Far be it that there should be a great delight in vices as there is in virtues", and as is read today in the Gospel: *Take my yoke upon you, etc., for my yoke is easy*, etc. (Mat. 23, 30), nevertheless this cross has four parts of very great suffering.

The first is the strong desire and affection which the perfect have for the joy of heaven and the vision of God. This pain is so great that they ardently desire death. *I desire to depart and to be with Christ* (Phil. 1, 23). *Unhappy man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?* (Rom. 7, 24). That is: since of myself I cannot be freed. *The dead desire death and it does not come, are as they that dig for a treasure and they rejoice exceedingly when they have found the grave* (Job, 14, 22). For example, take Saint Andrew, John the Evangelist, or Blessed Francis. The latter went to the infidels in his desire for martyrdom. When death was upon him, he received her joyfully, saying: "Welcome, my sister death."

And the second very painful part is the compassion for one's neighbor. For when perfect men see others suffering bodily pain and are unable to help them, they are in great anguish. *Who is made to suffer that is, by some disturbing tribulation, and I am not inflamed?* (I Cor. 11, 29), with the fire of charity, with which I feel compassion for others. This virtue crucified Blessed Francis so that, strange to say, he could hardly stand to see a man poorer than himself, because of his great compassion. *And if one of the members suffers anything, all the members suffer with it* (I Cor. 12, 26). But, miserable man, how do you show compassion? In no way! For you are a rotten member and therefore you are insensible to the pains of others.

The third part is compassion for sinners; and it hurts the p

very much when they see that sinners offend God so much and that so many souls are lost. *Who*—that is, of all the faithful—is *weak*, either in some virtue, or in his faith, *and I am not weak?* (2 Cor. 11, 29), as if he were saying, I sorrow for him as I would for myself. *I speak the truth in Christ. I do not lie, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sadness*—that is, a constant numbness of mind—and *sorrow in my heart*, not externally, but in the depths of the heart, *for the sake of my brethren*, that is, the Jews who wander away from Christ (Rom. 9, 1). So also Christ Himself on Palm Sunday, *when He saw the city, he wept over it* (Luc. 19, 41). So also David: *A fainting has taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake your law* (Ps 118, 53). This pained Blessed Francis so much that he could hardly hear of the defection of certain religious, and if it was spoken of, he tried to flee because it hurt him as much as if in some way one had stuck a spear into his side, as he himself said.

The fourth part is that, either because of sickness or ignorance, they who do the good do seem as nothing to them. Therefore, one of the perfect said, *I cannot serve God as He is worthy to be served and as He deserves from me. I do not consider that I have laid hold of it already. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind, I strain forward to what is before* (Phil. 3, 12). And so the saints considered themselves as the least, so that Jacob said, *I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies* (Gen. 32, 10). And *the days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years, few, and evil* (Gen. 47, 9). And when John the Baptist was thought by almost all to be Christ he answered: *I am not the Christ* (John 1, 20). Now hear, that he said that he was not the Christ or a prophet or anything like that. Likewise, Abraham said that he was dust and ashes (Gen. 18, 27). And such a person was Blessed Francis, who when he was perfect in all things, wished at the time of his death to begin anew to serve God. Those who hang with Christ on this cross will be great above all the ordinary saints with Christ, Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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## AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (XVIII)

### Chapter VI: Care of the Sick

Like the two previous ones, the present and following chapters of the Rule give specific directives as to how the dual law of love, the heart of the Rule and substance of the Gospel message, can be carried out in practice. Where the earlier chapters were concerned primarily with the love of God and the mastery of self, the sixth and seventh are oriented to fraternal charity. Bishop Felder commenting on the distinctive characteristic of Francis' love for his fellowmen declares: "Active, practical charity was at all times the ideal of the Seraphic Saint. Its soul is the knightly knighthood of Christ, its sphere principally the *care of the sick and relief of the poor*" (*Ideals of St. Francis*, ch. 13). If this be so, we can see that inasmuch as Chapter Six on the "Care of the Sick" and Chapter Seven on the "Nature and Manner of Work" reflect the Poverello's sentiments in regard to the infirm and needy, they indicate what should be of major concern in every Tertiary's practice of charity.

Christ willed that fraternal charity should "begin at home," that within the confines of the apostolic band, the first religious community *this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another* (Jo. 13, 35). The Rule of the Third Order Regular with its sense of values singles out the sick and needy of the community as the object of a Franciscan's charity. Three articles comprise this sixth chapter.

**TEXT:** *Article Seventeen. If a Brother or Sister falls ill, no one shall refuse to offer his services; but it shall be the duty of the Superior to provide for the proper care of the patient. The others who are assigned to this duty should not hesitate to visit the patient and comfort him with consoling words. Not only the sick, however, but also the aged and otherwise needy should all gladly tender the offices of charity as becomes the children of the Seraphic Father.*

*Article Eighteen. The Superiors especially are bound to admonish the sick Brother or Sister to accept the penance of illness and to be truly reconciled with God, reminding the patient also of the nearness of death, and of the severity of Divine Judgment, as well as of the Divine Mercy (cit. Rule, ch. VI).*

*Article Nineteen. When a Brother or Sister has departed this life, the Superiors shall see to it that the obsequies are held with great piety (cit. Rule, ch. IX). The prescribed suffrages should be faithfully performed for the soul of every deceased member.*

It is the closing phrase of the first article, "as becomes the children of the Seraphic Father," that adds the specifically Franciscan note to what is otherwise of general obligation for all religious communities.

Francis, we know, had a tender compassion and natural sympathy for those who were sick or in need, even though at times the nature of the disease itself might cause an almost abnormal loathing or revulsion of soul as was the case, for instance, with leprosy. Under the influence of divine grace, however, this natural compassion rose to the heights of heroism, and became a spiritual ferment that transformed and supernaturalized his entire life. That is why Francis himself, in reviewing his spiritual Odyssey that culminated in the combined Calvary and transfiguration of Alverna, could date its beginning to the discovery of Christ in the person of the leper. "The Lord granted me thus to *begin* to do penance, for when I was in sin, it seemed to me too bitter a thing to see lepers, but the Lord Himself led me among them, and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, that which had seemed bitter to me was changed for me into sweetness of soul and body" (*Testament*).

As disciples began to band about him, Francis' compassion for the sick found a new object of concern, his own brethren. Nothing could make him forget his own excruciating pain so quickly as the sight of another friar's suffering. Countless charming instances of this concern are recorded by early biographers. The migratory life of the first friars and the lack of fixed dwelling places made it incumbent on Francis to write in his first Rule: "If any of the brothers fall into illness, wherever he may be, let the others not leave him, unless one of the brothers, or more if it be necessary, be appointed to serve him as they would wish to be served themselves; but in urgent necessity they may commit him to some person who will take care of him in his infirmity." Even afterwards

when the establishment of convents made such injunctions unnecessary. Francis still cautioned superiors in particular of their duty to care for the sick and needy. In the Rules of all three of his Orders Francis included special reminders of this obligation.

Not only did the Poverello personally exemplify how to care for the sick but he gave his followers a no less important object lesson in how to bear their affliction when they themselves fell sick. So great was his anxiety lest he become a burden to his brethren in his illness that he was constrained to beg their pardon whenever they rendered him a service. He hid his own sufferings beneath a mask of smiling cheerfulness. Celano tells us, "Only obedience forced him to accept the attention and care his condition demanded (*Leg. Prima*, n. 101, 107). "I ask the pardon of my brother," he wrote, "that he give thanks to the Creator for all that I am and that he desire to be as God wills him to be, whether sick or well. For all whom the Lord has predestined to eternal life are disciplined by the rod of afflictions and infirmities and the spirit of compunction; and the Lord says: "Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise! If however, he be quieted and angry, either against God or against the brothers, or people, he eagerly ask for remedies, desiring too much to deliver his body, which is soon to die, which is an enemy to the soul, this comes to him from the flesh and he is carnal, and seems not to be of the brothers, because he loves his body more than his soul" (*Rule of 1221*, ch. 10).

As Francis viewed the matter, a twofold obligation exists: one upon the religious superiors and brethren to look after their sick, the other upon the infirm to bear with their adversity patiently. Articles Seventeen and Eighteen reproduce substantially this dual duty of a Franciscan religious. While the clarity of the wording almost makes further commentary superfluous, we might consider with profit what moral theology and Canon Law have to say on the subject.

Moralists, for instance, point out that the obligation of a community to care for its sick and bury its dead is not merely a matter of charity but rather of strict justice. It is one of the consequences of the bilateral contract involved in religious profession. On the other hand, justice requires only that religious superiors make use of the ordinary means of caring for the sick. No community is obligated in justice to provide extraordinary remedial measures, for instance, those so expensive that only the wealthy class could afford to make use of them. Sending the sick to a great cost to a distant and more healthy climate, for example, would

be a question of charity, not of justice. Prudence dictates if and when such extraordinary measures can be employed in the name of charity without detriment to the relief of other pressing community needs. In the spirit of Francis, however, we can say that other things being equal, it is better to fail by excessive solicitude for the sick than by defect. With Francis it was always a matter of reserving the best cell, the finest food, the warmest clothing for the sick. In fact he did not hesitate to provoke wonderment and even a certain amount of scandal by personally begging for delicacies during the penitential season of Lent that he might gladden the hearts of his sick brethren.

Where it is necessary to send religious to hospitals or sanitariums, superiors should take note of the prescription of Canon 605, par. 2, which requires special permission of the Apostolic See if the sick religious is to remain outside a house of his or her Congregation for more than six months, and this even when the hospital in question is staffed by religious of some other institute. Such permission can be readily obtained, however, where there is any real necessity, for example, in the case of a religious with tuberculosis.

Implicit in the notions of "proper care of the patient" (Art. 17) and "to be truly reconciled with God" (Art. 18) is the idea of providing the sick with the opportunity of going to confession and communion and of receiving the last sacraments. In this connection we might note the special concessions made by Canon Law and the Apostolic Constitution *Christus Dominus* of Pius XII.

The latter permits the sick, even if not confined to bed, to take non-alcoholic liquids or medicine (liquid or solid) any time before receiving communion providing they have the permission of some confessor, which permission may be given once and for all as long as this condition of sickness lasts. Where priests are concerned, probable opinion maintains that the permission of a confessor is not required.

Canon 523 permits any religious sister seriously ill, even though not in danger of death, to call any priest approved for the confessions of women though not specially approved for the confessions of nuns, to whom she may confess during the grave illness as often as she wishes. The superior may not either directly or indirectly prohibit the sister from making use of this concession. Canonists explain that by 'serious illness' is to be understood any illness that would require the services of a physi-

cian or an illness that obliges a patient to remain in bed for a week or more. Where the sickness is such that it constitutes 'danger of death' of course, any priest, even though not approved for confessions can licitly and licitly absolve any penitent (Can. 882).

Religious men, whether sick or not, "for the peace of their conscience, may go to any confessor approved by the local Ordinary." The confessor may absolve the religious from sins and censures reserved to the institute" (Can. 519).

The religious superior has the right in clerical orders or institutes to administer the last sacraments to his subjects (Can. 514)—and if the institute is exempt, at least from the pastor in whose parish the religious house is situated, the superior also has the right to conduct the funeral (Can. 464, par. 2). In the case of lay institutes (Sisterhoods and Congregations of Brothers), however, the local pastor has both the right and obligation to administer, either in person or through another, Viaticum and Extreme Unction to the religious, except where the bishop has given the chaplain of their church or oratory 'parochial rights' in this matter (Can. 514, par. 3). Of course, in case of necessity or with reasonably presumed permission, any priest can administer the last sacraments (Can. 848, par. 2; 938, par. 2).

Article Nineteen requires the religious superior to "see to it that the obsequies are held with great piety," that is to say, to provide for ecclesiastical burial for the deceased. Here it is well to recall the legislation laid down by the Code of Canon Law regarding the interment of the religious.

Ecclesiastical burial according to the Code consists of the transportation of the body to the church or chapel, the funeral services proper (Mass and Absolution of the Dead) and the interment in some lawfully designated burial ground (Can. 1204).

Novices have the right to choose their place of burial as well as the Church where their funeral will take place. They lose this privilege granted generally to the faithful, when they make religious profession (Can. 1221, 1224).

While the superior may give permission to the parents or relatives of the deceased to bury the religious in a family vault, if specific regulations or customs proper to their institute does not forbid it, the funeral

itself must be conducted according to the following norms set down by Canon Law.

In case of death outside the religious house (e.g. in a hospital), the professed religious and novices are to be transferred to the church or oratory of the convent to which they were attached or at least to some house of their organization, unless the novices have chosen otherwise. If death occurs in a place so distant that the body cannot be conveniently brought to a church or chapel of the religious institute, the deceased is to be buried from the church of the parish where the death occurred, unless it be a case of a novice who has chosen some other church. Religious superiors, however, always have the right to have the body transferred at their expense to any house of the institute should they so wish (Can. 1221).

In institutes of men, even when they are not technically clerical exempt orders or congregations, if the religious superior is a priest he is usually given parochial rights by the local ordinary in regard to his own subjects in the matter of ecclesiastical burial. In lay institutes (such as Sisterhoods or Brothers of the Third Order Regular), if the chaplain of the convent church or oratory has been given parochial rights or is exempt from the local pastor, it is he who has the right and privilege of conducting the funeral services at the convent, otherwise this is the right of the pastor in whose parish the religious house is located. Consequently, if a religious superior wishes another priest, e.g. a relative, friend, former pastor, etc., of the deceased to have the funeral Mass, permission must be obtained from the chaplain or pastor as the case may be.

With regard to religious women, Canon Law prescribes that the priest is not to enter the enclosure, but the sisters are to bring the body to the threshold of the cloister where the priest meets them and conducts the body to the church or oratory for the last rites (Can. 1230, par. 5).

The earlier Rule of Leo X, referred to in Article Nineteen, prescribed in some detail the various suffrages for the dead. The present Rule follows current procedure in the Church which leaves it up to the Constitutions of the religious institute to determine what the specific suffrages for the dead shall be. Canon 567, par. 1, however, indicates that those who die as novices are entitled to the same suffrages as the professed religious.

## FRANCISCAN GENEROSITY

In commemorating the death of Saint Francis, all Franciscan hearts are moved to joy and admiration. Joy, because of the heavenly reward and glory that is now his; admiration, because of his unusual life of love, penance, poverty, and obedience. But all these things in the life of Saint Francis might never have been if Saint Francis had lacked the virtue of generosity.

The virtue of generosity is a self-less and willing giving of ourselves for some cause. From such a definition we can find any number of examples. The lives of great men and especially of the saints proffer much material and inspiration for generosity. But the generosity of Saint Francis stands out in a singular way. True, his poverty could scarcely be improved upon; his obedience was a paragon for all religious. But the virtues of Saint Francis got their real start at the time of his conversion. Once he had given himself to God and the things of God, poverty, penance, and the other virtues of Saint Francis followed with comparative ease. This ease was assured because of his generous heart in cooperation with God's grace.

Before Saint Francis was converted, his life was devoted to a search for comfort and success, camaraderie and gay times. He used little restraint in the indulgence of all his desires, so long as serious sin was not involved. His head was full of the worldly glory of knighthood, party, gay clothes, and a fascination for trifles. Evidently Francis Bernardone was convinced that all was right with him. He was relatively upright in the eyes of the Assisians, but behind his uprightness a layer of egotism lay hidden and untouched. It was egotism that prompted him to demand the liberty of trivial transgressions without any serious displeasure from God. He probably loved this wretched liberty which seemed to leave him the right of being unpunished, though unfaithful. Then something happened. The soul of Francis Bernardone was moved and enlightened. He desired something great, very great. One thing led to another until

realized what it was that he wanted. He wanted and longed for God!

The virtue of generosity urged Francis to give himself entirely to the love of God. To do this he realized with shame that he must change his interests and ideals. God must be first and last—nothing else mattered but God. His self-centered life of gaiety and pleasure must be supplanted with a God-centered life of love and penance. By determination to change, he stifled every desire incompatible with this new longing for God. He rejected every worldly interest that would leave his soul less open to follow the movements of God's grace. He realized the truth of Christ's words, *No man can serve two masters; for he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other* (Matt. 6:24). After Francis had God for the center of his life, he truly found God. He had learned through experience the truth of God's words, *You shall seek me and shall find me, when you shall seek me with all your heart* (Jer. 29:13).

The conversion of Saint Francis was a conversion that lasted throughout the rest of his life. Repeated acts of generous cooperation with God's grace filled every day. Whatever he knew to be right and pleasing to God, he did with thoroughness and a willing heart. He gave his all to God; he never started those dangerous backward steps of taking back bit by bit what he had so generously given to God. His generosity toward God was without reserve and without counting the cost.

We say that we envy the converted life of Saint Francis. Are we perhaps deceiving ourselves? Do we envy his converted life of love, fervor, and sacrifice, or is it only his eternal reward we admiringly long for? Reward follows after sacrifice and not after mere wishful thinking. If we truly want the same reward of Saint Francis, we must necessarily want the same sacrifices. If we want to suffer the sacrifices that he made—the sacrifice of self-love in the forms of poverty, obedience, chastity, and a Christo-centric love of neighbor, we must have the generosity of Saint Francis.

To develop in our hearts the generosity of Saint Francis, we must have what some authors call a "readiness to change". We are to have the humble willingness to realize that we are not what we should be. With Saint Augustine we should convince ourselves, "Whatever we are, we are not what we ought to be." But to convince ourselves of this may be difficult. We may be perfectly content with ourselves. We say that we

obey the orders of God and of our superiors. We think that everything we do is the way God wants it to be. We pride ourselves in being kind, understanding, and spiritual-minded. But to these virtues we attach a reservation—keep these things in their place and their place is the pointed place our selfishness allows them. We will not have our comfort and liberty invaded at any price. If anything does interfere with our comfort or self-love, we quickly label it too radical, theoretical, or impractical for Novices.

In a moment of fervor we may walk with God for awhile with a generous heart. But our generosity soon fades away. As Père Charles de Foucauld in his *Prayer for All Times* (p. 26), “. . . with a vacant look, we turn away our heads and leave Him. We fear that He is about to ask for some service that will call for generosity. . . for the moment we don't want to do it. But we dare not look Him in the face, for we know so well that a single glance all our opposition will fade away, and we should fall prostrate at His feet. So we pretend to be busy and absorbed with things outside of our service; and in this very pretense it is easy to read the secret desire for His power, and the fear of His inevitable exactions.”

How differently Saint Francis acted. Once God became the center of his life, God *remained* the center of his life. There was no looking away aside. We must realize with Saint Francis that we are to change our hearts from being self-centered and pleasure-centered, to being only God-centered. As Fr. Leen says in *Progress Through Mental Prayer* (p. 100), “we must be ready to pursue our own sanctification, even though we are tried by hunger after the satisfactions of a life lived for the indulgence of every gratification not positively sinful.” To do this requires generosity and more generosity. When God moves our hearts to correct our faults and to be faithful in little things, let us respond with the generosity of Saint Francis. How un-Franciscan it would be to say, “Move the center of someone else, God; I like myself just the way I am.” To limit the demands of ourselves and our love of God in advance, ends up in not giving anything at all.

Christ gave His all for love of us. Saint Francis followed His example by giving his all for love of Christ. We are followers of Christ and of Saint Francis. Are we ready to imitate their generosity? Are we ready to open our hearts wider for God's love and grace, which in turn will prompt us to correct our faults? Was Saint Ignatius Loyola correct

he said that *few* souls understand what God would accomplish in them if they were to abandon themselves unreservedly to Him and if they were to allow His grace to mold them according to His will? Who of us can not say with Saint Francis, “Up till now we have done nothing; let us now begin”? (I Celano, n. 103).

*Consider that I have set before thee this day, life and good, and on the other hand, death and evil. . . Choose therefore life, that thou. . . may live; and that thou may love the Lord thy God and obey His voice, and adhere to Him for He is thy life* (Deut. 30: 15-20).

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Because his activity lay really in the life he led, Francis strove with almost terrifying ruthlessness to achieve in his person the utmost in harmony between what he was and how he lived, between his interior and exterior self—strove for consuming truthfulness. Whatever took visible shape in his conduct, was made to correspond most exactly with his interior attitude. Any point where exterior and interior were at variance with each other, where his life failed to match the demand of it, Francis would have felt to be a horrible blot, a barefaced lie. His life, his inmost self becoming visible exteriorly, was all the law he knew; he laid down no law but what he was fulfilling.

Reinhold Schneider, *The Hour of Saint Francis*

## THE HILL OF PARADISE

From *La Basilica di San Francesco in Assisi* by Fr. Raymond Sciamannini, O.F.M. Conv.

With the celebration of so many centenaries this year, we are to forget a most important one in the history of our Order—the Centenary of the Dedication of the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi.

The Church in Assisi arose at the express command of Pope Gregory IV who as Cardinal Bishop of Ostia had been a personal friend of the Saint and the strongest supporter of the nascent Franciscan Order. On April 29, 1228, with the Bull *Recolentes qualiter*, he announced to the entire world that it was his wish that a majestic temple be built on a certain piece of territory," so runs the venerable text, "given to Us and the Church for the permanent custody of the blessed body of Saint Francis, reserving to himself the inalienable proprietary rights over it with the relative rights of immunity. To show his jurisdiction over the land he ordered the Friars to renew each year to himself and his successors a homage of a pound of wax, to be given on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

The piece of land was the western slope of Assisi, presented to the Pope on March 29 of the same year by Simone di Pucciarello in the presence of the communal judge, Guido, and six witnesses. The gift was confirmed the following year with the offering by Monaldo di Leonardo of a woodland stretching from the east to the Tescio River. These were the first gifts—the ones nearest the heart of the Saint since they were given by his own fellow citizens—destined to become a place of veneration for the whole world. On July 17 of the same year, 1228, after the dedication of the Poverello, the same Pontiff, amid lights and music, placed the cornerstone.

A pious legend has the story that on this spot, popularly known as Colle dell' Inferno, culprits were executed and buried. Saint

Francis, in a last act of humility, had previously selected it as the place of his burial. Legend has woven a beautiful story about the ugly name of the hill. The hill was called *inferno* only because it was lower than the hill which dominated the city. At any rate, the solemn laying of the cornerstone cancelled any apparent unseemliness in the name and transformed it into a veritable Colle del Parasido, a Hill of Paradise.

Emperors, princes, cardinals, Assisians, and faithful from all parts of the world visited the wonderful edifice planned and executed by the genius and love of Brother Elias, vicar and successor of the Saint. The offerings in money and material literally poured in from everywhere, and in a way unprecedented in the construction of shrines and churches. The Pope himself authorized and solicited alms in a Bull granting spiritual privileges to the benefactors. In less than two years, the Church was ready to receive the sacred remains of the Saint. This seems incredible when we think of the many shrines, begun with a like fervor, the building of which ran on for years or was never completed at all.

On April 22, 1230, with the Consistorial Document *Is qui Ecclesiam*, undersigned by thirteen cardinals, the Pontiff himself declared that it was his will that the cathedral and papal throne be placed in the new Church, which he proclaimed the "Head and Mother of the Order of Friars Minor." He then made it immediately subject to the Holy See. On May 25, 1230, the vigil of Pentecost, the body of Saint Francis was solemnly transferred from its temporary resting place in the Church of Saint George to the new Church. The body, still in its stone sarcophagus, was drawn by a team of purple-clad oxen. The entourage was unparalleled. There were men from far and near, says Thomas of Celano, and the nearby hills were filled with their Hosannas. More than one miracle occurred that day at the touch of the Poverello's bier.

When the procession reached the Church, however, the doors were closed. The magistrates of Assisi, jealous of their treasure, did not want the people to witness the actual burial. Accordingly, they lowered the sacred relics into the bowels of the hard immobile rock under the main altar—the exact place known only to them.

Both because of the tremendous love and veneration of the people for Saint Francis, whose body they might have attempted to exhume, and because of the everlasting strife between Assisi and Perugia, such precautions were most necessary. The way in which the burial was carried

out may seem to us somewhat violent; as a matter of fact, the Pope lamented the procedure. Upon being apprised of the circumstance, however, he expressed his approval of what had been done.

Succeeding centuries proved that the fears of the Assisians had been groundless. In the repeated invasions of Frederick the Second and his soldiers from 1239 to 1246; of the Ghibellines in 1319; of Braccio Braccio in 1442; and of the Beglinoni in 1497, the body of Saint Francis was never taken as prize booty to be taken from the sanctuary and from the city.

Rome, however, was ever watchful over this house of prayer. Pope Innocent IV, leaving his exile in France to which Frederick the Second had constrained him, came to Assisi in 1253 for the consecration of the Basilica. He himself presided over the ceremonies, and remained in Assisi from April to mid-October. It was during this time, also, that he blessed the Convent. In the course of the succeeding years, with the reigns of Innocent IV, Clement IV, Martin IV, the Franciscan Nicholas IV, and Sixtus IV, came a torrent of gifts and privileges, renewing the full jurisdiction of the Holy See over the Church. The Franciscan Pope Sixtus V, in 1585, instituted there the Confraternity of Cordbearers. In 1600 a Papal Bull granted a plenary indulgence to be gained once a day by the faithful who visited the Church. This privilege is recorded in letters inscribed over the door of the Lower Church.

The jurisdiction of the Papacy over the sanctuary of Saint Francis became more and more emphatic. The Constitution of Benedict XIII, on March 24, 1754, *Fidelis Dominus*, to dispel any possible doubts, gathered together and codified all the rights and privileges granted by his predecessors. With this document, a monument of jurisprudence, the Church of Saint Francis was elevated to the rank of Patriarchal Basilica and Papal Basilica, equal to the major basilicas in Rome. Thus the Pope became *in person* the immediate ordinary. A ceremonial was compiled to regulate expressly the Papal ritual to be followed there.

After the interest shown to the Basilica by Clement XIII and the Franciscan Clement XIV, there came the revolutionary movement in France at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1798, while Pius VI was in France, subjected to the most trying difficulties, the Basilica was invaded by military hordes of France and despoiled of practically all its gold and silver. In May of 1810 there followed the first suppression of religious orders. As a result, only seven priests with three lay brothers were a-

to remain as custodians of the Sanctuary. But at the fall of Napoleon, on December 1814, the religious again took their place in the Basilica.

The finding of the body of Saint Francis was the secret joy God had prepared for the comfort of his children in their hour of trial. In 1818, at the fervent and repeated requests of the religious, Pius VII allowed the sepulchre of the Saint to be made accessible again to the faithful. The patient and secret search that followed was at length successfully ended. Behind layers of mortar and slabs of stone, an oblong opening was found, about six feet deep and nine feet wide, covered entirely with dark travertine. Deep within, as if buried in the bowels of the earth, and enclosed by an iron gate, lay the limestone tomb containing the body of the Saint. To the tremendous joy of the Catholic world, the Pope announced by a Brief that "the question of the identity of the body recently discovered under the main altar of the Basilica in Assisi is settled, and without doubt it is the body of Saint Francis, the Founder of the Order of Friars Minor."

After the visits of Gregory XVI in 1841 and Pius IX in 1857, the Italian suppression brought new trials for the Convent in Assisi. It was turned into an orphanage for the children of teachers employed by the government. The Holy See decried this unjust usurpation, invoking the Law of Guarantees. At the recover of the Convent in favor of the religious, on October 2, 1927, the Friars, with the help of the government and with offerings from all over the world, constructed a new building for the orphanage. Pius XII, finally, with the proclaiming of Saint Francis as the Patron of Italy (June 19, 1939) conferred upon the Sanctuary a national character.

Every detail, every stone, every color breaths the august presence of the sovereign Pontiff in this Franciscan Basilica. The Papal presence seems to be a very part of that Chair, erected from the beginning, in the center of the tribune of the Upper Church; it stands as incontestable proof against the usurpers of the apostolic rights. *Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk; and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon* (Ps. 90).

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