

# GREYFRIARS REVIEW

Volume 4

Supplement

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## Introduction

The fact that in recent years Christ-centered devotion, so long overlooked, has been the subject of a number of remarkable studies must be considered a promising sign. To mention only the most outstanding: In 1925, J.A. Jungmann, S.J., published his research *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer*, in which he traces the late medieval echoes of anti-Arian polemics in doctrinal and devotional expressions of devotion to Christ.<sup>1</sup> In W. Völker's monographs on the piety of Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and more recently, of Pseudo-Dionysius, the relationship to Christ has been thoroughly investigated.<sup>2</sup> We are particularly indebted to K. Baus for his study of prayer to Christ among the martyrs and individual church fathers.<sup>3</sup> In a number of works, B. Fischer and P. Salmon have shed light on the Christological significance of the psalms for the primitive church and the patristic age.<sup>4</sup>

Under the expert tutelage of K. Hallinger, M. Balsavich has written a masterful dissertation on the place of Christ in the life of Gregory the Great.<sup>5</sup> A. Kemmer has collated and expanded a study of St. Benedict

1. J.A. Jungmann, S.J., *Die Stellung Christi im liturgischen Gebet* (Münster, 1925); "Die Abwehr des germanischen Arianismus und der Umbruch der religiösen Kultur im frühen Mittelalter," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.* 69 (1947):6-99.
2. W. Völker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origines. Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit und zu den Anfängen christlicher Mystik* (Tübingen, 1931).  
———, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemen Alexandrinus* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1952).  
———, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker* (Wiesbaden, 1955).  
———, *Kontemplation und Ekstase bei PseudoDionysius Areopagita* (Wiesbaden, 1958).  
See also F. Bertrand, S.J., *Mystique de Jesu chez Origene* (Paris, 1951).
3. Baus, "Das Gebet der Märtyrer," in *Trierer Theol. Zschr.* 62 (1953):19-32.  
———, "Das Nachwirken des Origenes in der Christus frömmigkeit des hl. Ambrosius," in *Röm. Qschr.* 49 (1954):21-55.  
———, "Das Gebet zu Christus beim hl. Hieronymus," in *Trierer Theol. Zschr.* 60 (1951):178-88;  
———, "Die Stellung Christi im Beten des hl. Augustinus," in *Trierer Theol. Zschr.* 63:321-39.  
See also Optatus van Veghel, O.F.M.Cap., "De Christusvroomheid van Augustinus," in *Tijd. Geest. Leven* 15 (1959):166-84, 381-96.
4. B. Fischer, *Die Psalmenfrömmigkeit der Märtyrerkirche* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1949), somewhat edited in the French translation: "Le Christ dans les psaumes: La devotion aux Psaumes dans l'Eglise des Martyrs," in *La Maison-Dieu*, n. 27 (1951):86-100.  
———, "Die Psalmenfrömmigkeit der Regula S. Benedicti," in *Liturgie u. Mönchtum*, vol. 4 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1949), pp. 22-35; vol. 5 (1950), pp. 64-79.  
See also P. Salmon, "De L'interpretation des Psaumes dans la liturgie aux origines de l'office divin," in *La Maison-Dieu*, n. 33 (1953), pp. 21-55.  
———, *Les "Tituli Psalmorum" des manuscrits latins* (Paris, 1959).
5. M. Balsavich, O.S.B., *The Witness of St. Gregory the Great to the Place of Christ in Prayer*, doctoral dissertation, Pont. Institute of St. Anselm (Rome, 1959). See also

along the same lines.<sup>6</sup> The works published on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Bernard have supported our viewpoint. Recently A. van den Bosch published a portion of his thesis *Christ in Our Life According to St. Bernard*.<sup>7</sup> Worthy of note certainly is the latest study of H.B. Meyer on the piety of Alcuin, because of its significant position between the early and late Middle Ages.<sup>8</sup>

Although most of the studies concern the patristic age, there are signs they are now reaching into the late Middle Ages. It must have been tempting to depict St. Francis's relationship to Christ, in all its richness of expression, against the ever more brightly illuminated backdrop of preceding and contemporary devotion. Based on these great but still incomplete investigations, we offer the present study of the devotion of the Poverello to the sacred passion. Before taking up the question of sources, however, we must make a few pertinent observations concerning the method we shall follow.

For a historical discussion of the piety of a saint who lived more than seven hundred years ago, we need first of all a solid base for our research. Here we run into some difficulties. It is a well-known fact that the question of Franciscan sources is one of the thorniest problems of critical hagiography. Even though new interpretations of the spiritual stature of the simple Francis appear almost every year, they are based on a different assessment of the sources.

Accordingly we must find a reliable base in the sources for our study. We have accordingly devoted considerable time to this question and will try to present an overview of the data accumulated by the research of the past fifty years.<sup>9</sup> Without going into all the details of the evi-

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K. Hallinger, O.S.B., "Zur geistigen Welt der Anfänge Klunys," in *Dt. Arch.* 10 (1954): 417-47; French trans. in *Rev. Mabillon* 46 (1956): 117-40.

6. A. Kemmer, O.S.B., "Christus in der Regel St. Benedicti," in *Commentationes in Regulam S. Benedicti*, ed. Basil Steidle, O.S.B., *Studia Anselmiana*, vol. 42 (Rome, 1957):1-14.
7. A. van den Bosch, O.C.S.O., *Le Christ dans notre vie selon saint Bernard*, extracts from doctoral dissertation, Pont. Inst. of St. Anselm in Rome (Westmalle, 1959).  
 ———, "The Christology of St. Bernard: A Review of Recent Works," in *Citoux in de Nederlanden* 8 (1957):245-51.  
 ———, "Présupposés à la christologie bernardine," in *Citoux in de Nederlanden* 9 (1958):51, 85-103.
8. H.B. Meyer, S.J., "Alcuin zwischen Antike u. Mittelalter: Ein Kapital frühmittelalterlicher Frömmigkeitsgeschichte," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.* 81 (1959):306-50, esp. pp. 309-43; C. Richstaetter, S.J., *Christusfrömmigkeit in ihrer historischen Entfaltung*. Ein quellenmässiger Beitrag zur Geschichte des Gebetes und des mystischen Innenlebens der Kirche (Cologne, 1949); B.W. Völker, *Theol. Lit. Ztg.* 78 (1953):516ff; K. Baus, *Trierer Theol. Zschr.* 60 (1951):178, n. 2.
9. *Zum kritischen Wert der bedeutenderen Quellen für die Erforschung der Geistigkeit des hl. Franziskus von Assisi*, mimeographed (Rome, 1956).

dence, our study shall present as much as needed to arrive at a judicious evaluation of the source material.

The writings of the holy founder take precedence among all the sources.<sup>10</sup> Although they are not very extensive, and, apart from the prayers, were addressed to the friars and devout Christians in the world for special occasions, they still tell us the most, and most accurately, about the religious personality of the saint. Nevertheless, when dealing with individual writings, we must conduct a careful comparison of the texts. This is so because of material added by various friars, a number of apparently contradictory passages, and the difficulty of establishing the exact wording of the original text.

However meaningful and indispensable the writings of St. Francis may be, we cannot accept them as the only and definitive measure of Francis's spirituality. Besides being fragmentary and limited in scope, they betray a singular reticence when it comes to revealing personal experiences. Spiritually they stand far apart from the classical literary genre of spiritual autobiography.<sup>11</sup> Consequently we are forced to look to other witnesses for a comprehensive presentation of Francis's interior life.

Among the two official biographers, Brother Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure are without doubt the most important.<sup>12</sup> For thoroughness and historical reliability, the three works of Celano (after the writings of St. Francis) take precedence over all other early Franciscan sources.<sup>13</sup> But defects peculiar to the age, such as the efforts of the writers to edify the reader, an uncritical acceptance of miraculous events, so characteristic of medieval man, and rhetorically inflated accounts, necessitate careful probing of individual passages.

To St. Bonaventure<sup>14</sup> we owe the *Major Life* (*Legenda maior*), written between 1260 and 1263, and a compendium of the same entitled *Minor*

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10. L. Lemmens, O.F.M., *Opuscula S. Patris Francisci Assisiensis*, (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1949), hereafter cited as *Op.*. See Jacques Cambell, O.F.M., "Les écrits de s. François d'Assise devant la critique," in *FSien* 36 (1954):82-109, 205-64; Daniele Dallari (da Bari), O.F.M.Cap, "S. Francesco d'Assisi 'scrittore,'" in *ItFran* 33 (1958):94-102, 163-79, 188, 233-43; 34 (1959):11-20, 84-95, 175-83; Kajetan Esser, O.F.M. and Lothar Hardick, O.F.M., *Die Schriften des hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Werl in Westphalia, 1956), pp. 17-, hereafter cited as Esser and Hardick, *Schriften*.
  11. See J. Lortz, *Der unvergleichliche Heilige* (Düsseldorf, 1952), p. 47; see also F. Vernet, in *Dict. Spir.*, s.v. "autobiographies spirituelles."
  12. *1Cel*; *2Cel*; *3Cel*. See also Engelbert Grau, O.F.M., *Thomas von Celano: Leben u. Wunder des hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Werl in Westphalia, 1955), pp. 28-63; F. van den Borne, O.F.M., "Thomas van Celano als eerste biograaf van Franciscus," in *Sint Franc.* 2 (1956):183-213.
  13. See Grau, *Thomas von Celano*, p. 60.
  14. In *AF* 10:555-652, and esp. pp. 653-78; prologue, pp. 62-81, esp. pp. 70ff. See also W. Goetz, *Die Quellen zur Geschichte des hl. Franz von Assisi* (Gotha, 1904), pp.



*Life (Legenda minor)*. The Seraphic Doctor probably intended to give us a historical, albeit edifying, biography. Given this goal, and the time gap separating him from the lifetime of the saint, we can understand the legendary quality of his stories and a heavy emphasis on the miraculous. Unlike the Celano trilogy, the work of the Seraphic Doctor is obviously colored by his own spiritual ideology. Proof of this is his use of theological and mystical concepts to describe Francis's spiritual development, a stress on the Trinitarian dimension, and especially his exaggeration of Francis's devotion to the holy cross. The originality of Bonaventure's *Life* is to be found in these elements and some incidents which are not narrated elsewhere.

The *Mirror of Perfection* literature ranks next in importance. It comprises the following writings: a long compilation edited by P. Sabatier under the title of *Speculum perfectionis*, a shorter one which the editor L. Lemmens also calls *Speculum perfectionis* and labels *Redactio I*. To this same group belongs a compilation which F. Delorme incorrectly calls *Legenda antiqua*.<sup>15</sup>

Basically they are not meant to be polemic or partisan pieces; yet certain chapters betray a militant, reactionary mentality, like that which produced such disastrous consequences in the Spirituals' movement. At the same time we encounter many passages of charming content, refreshing originality, and an ingenuousness that lends them the seal of authenticity. We believe it appropriate to propose the following guidelines for using these works. Since the historicity of the writings has not been adequately established, their stories are not to be accepted as independent evidence, and individual passages must always be judged in the light of the proofs for their authenticity.<sup>16</sup>

243-57; Paul Sabatier, *Vie de s. François d'Assise*, édition définitive (Paris, 1931), pp. 535-42; E. Gilson, *Der hl. Bonaventura* (Hellerau, 1929), pp. 41-44; O. Karrer, *Franz von Assisi: Legenden und Laude* (Zurich, 1945), pp. 293-99, 147-49; S. Clasen, O.F.M., "Die Sendung des hl. Franziskus: Ihre heilsgeschichtliche Deutung durch Bonaventura," in *Wiss. Weish.* 14 (1951):212-25; J. Ratzinger, *Die Gechichtstheologie des hl. Bonaventura* (Munich/Zurich, 1959); F. van den Borne, "Betekenis van S. Bonaventura, voor zijn orde en de algemene asceseleer," in *Sint Franc.* 5 (1959):107-30.

15. Paul Sabatier, *Le Speculum perfectionis ou Memoires de Fr. Leon: I Texte latin*, published postumously by A.G. Little (Manchester, 1928), earlier edition Paris 1898; L. Lemmens, *Speculum perfectionis* (Redactio I) (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1901); F.M. Delorme, O.F.M., *La "Legenda antiqua" du ms 1046 de la bibliotheque communale de Perouse*, in *AFH* 15 (1922):23-70, 278-332; Julius van Gorp, O.F.M.Cap., "Nachbonaventuriansische Franziskusquellen in niederländischen und deutschen Handschriften des Mittelalters," in *AFH* 49 (1956):434-82.
16. Goetz, *Quellen z. Geschichte d. Hl. Franz*; J.R.H. Moorman, *The Sources for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi* (Manchester, 1940); K. Beyschlag, *Die Bergpredigt u. Franz von Assisi* (Gütersloh, 1955). We must remember that other authors present some very different solutions. Since the authentic writings of Brother Leo and the controversial *Legend of the Three Companions* contribute little to our viewpoint, we

Given such a procedure, many of our conclusions may fall short of the degree of certainty we might desire.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes our own cherished beliefs must yield to the weight of objective criticism. Yet, in this way we are offering a better service, it would seem, to science and to life, than by an uncritical retention of long obsolete ideas or an acceptance of hastily conceived theories. On the other hand, as E. Gilson cautions us, we must be careful to steer clear of the opposite extreme. Anyone delving into the history of piety must not allow the spirit of rigid criticism to blind him to the true objective of his investigation.<sup>18</sup>

If Francis's devotion to the passion is to be properly presented, recourse must be had to a systematic analysis of the relevant sources. We deliberately emphasize analysis. There can be no question of merely marshaling texts according to the theme in order to achieve a quick digest. Rather, the themes themselves must as far as possible be drawn from the sources, that is, from the writings of St. Francis. Thereupon the more significant texts must be examined as to their meaning and content according to well-structured critical norms. In the course of centuries, the connotation of concepts, despite similarity of wording, often changes. We must be careful not to clothe language with our own contemporary meanings.<sup>19</sup>

For these reasons we cannot rest satisfied with a bare analysis of source texts. They must be interpreted against the background of the religious movements of the time. It would be unrealistic to view the piety of the Poverello simply as a gift of nature and grace. All people, geniuses not excepted, live within the framework of their own age. They not only radiate ideas but above all receive them from preceding and contemporary sources. The better to understand the historical

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shall not consider them further in this place. See G. Abate, O.F.M.Conv., "Novi studi sulla Legenda di S. Francesco detta dei 'Tre Compagni,'" in *MisFran*, 39 (1939):1-55, 225-62, 359-73, 375-432, 635-55, 375-432. Having taken this position with regard to the various sources, one must make a presupposition which entails serious consequences. Internal evidence must be taken into account as well as external. The biographical writings are not the inspired word of God and must not be treated as such. They are typical products of medieval hagiography. Because of deficiencies stemming from their age, content and bias, they cannot be compared with the objective, factual documents of our own time. A conscientious concern for the truth demands that we compare them with other contemporary sources, and above all with their own touchstone, the writings of St. Francis.

17. Here we might do well to recall the observation of the famous exegete M.J. Lagrange, O.P, in *L'Évangile de Jésus Christ* (Paris, 1928), p. 543: "L'histoire est une approximation du passé."
18. É. Gilson, *Théologie et histoire de la spiritualité*: Leçon inaugurale de la chaire d'histoire de la spiritualité prononcée a L'Institut Catholique de Paris le 15 Nov. 1943 (Paris, 1943), p. 21: "La première (erreur) serait, pour mieux inclure la spiritualité dans l'histoire, d'en éliminer d'abord la spiritualité même, c'est à dire la réalité de la grâce."
19. See esp. Esser and Hardick, *Schriften*, pp. 193ff.

origin and setting of Francis's piety we must search out contemporary or near-contemporary parallels of his sayings and life-style. We must try to trace his most significant insights back to their genetic roots. Only in this way can we discover how powerfully the founder was carried along in the stream of tradition, and, on the other hand, to what extent he maintained an independence of particular currents.

The guidelines we have adopted will be applied to the arrangement of data in this study. Taking a critical view of the sources, we shall attempt to depict Francis's devotion to the passion first in the light of his writings; then as portrayed in biographical literature; and finally we shall present a comparative resumé of sources and their genetic line of development.

## Part 1

### Francis's Devotion to the Passion in the Light of His Writings, Excluding the *Office of the Passion*

Despite the wide range of Franciscan literature, we look in vain for a definitive presentation of this subject. There are of course worthwhile fragmentary studies, collections of texts, and a comprehensive overview, but they fail to meet the need for a comparative analysis of texts and sources, or do so in a manner that is less than satisfactory.<sup>20</sup> So our task is cut out for us: to authenticate one by one the relevant passages in Francis's writings.

Sound methodology leads us to focus first of all on a consideration of Francis's thoughts on the passion as found in his writings, excluding the *Office of the Passion*. This provides us with a double basis for further dividing the material. Our next step will be to discuss, from the same exegetical viewpoint, texts from the writings which compress various thoughts on the passion into a small compass, so that they can be separated only artificially and with a loss of a comprehensive grasp of the whole. Then we shall arrange the sayings that recur most frequently according to their context and thematic outlook. We shall treat the crucifix prayer separately, as well as the veneration of the mystical Tau and the imitation of the Crucified.

#### A. His Contemplation of the Passion

We find a rich vein of devotion to the passion particularly in his *First* and *Second Version* of the *Letter to the Faithful*. In an emotional realization of the happiness of being a brother of Him who gave His life for His sheep (John 10:15), the saint clearly shows that his consideration of the Redemption was stirred up primarily by the thought of Christ's love for humankind. This is evident not only from the Johannine text about the Good Shepherd, but also from the various blessings listed by Francis as a consequence of having such a Redeemer: "Oh,

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20. For a systematic arrangement of the texts, see Hilarin Felder, O.F.M.Cap., *Die Ideale des hl. Franziskus v. Assisi* (Paderborn, 1951), pp. 34-40, 231, 401ff. See also his *Der Christusritter aus Assisi* (Zurich-Altstetten, 1941), pp. 112-20, where the element of chivalry is overstressed. See also Gratian (of Paris), O.F.M.Cap., S. *François d'Assise: Sa personnalité, sa spiritualité* (Paris, 1928), pp. 80-86; Jean de Cognin, O.F.M.Cap., *Le Crucifix et s. François d'Assise* (Paris, 1926), pp. 15-63; F. Imle, *Die Passionsmine im Franziskanerorden* (Werl, 1934), pp. 9-24, 176; Optatus van Veghel, O.F.M.Cap., *De geest van Franciscus: Proeve van synthese* (Roermond-Maaseik, 1946), pp. 33-47, 68-70; Leone Bracaloni, O.F.M., *Spiritualità francescana*, (Venice, 1949), pp. 148-51, 175-77; Kajetan Esser, O.F.M., and Engelbert Grau, O.F.M., *Antwort der Liebe: Der Weg des franziskanischen Menschen zu Gott* (Werl in Westphalia, 1958), pp. 41-53.

how holy and how loving, pleasing, humble, peaceful, sweet, lovable, and desirable above all things to have such a Brother and Son."<sup>21</sup>

A little later we read: "Let every creature in heaven, on earth, in the sea and in the depths, give praise, glory, honor, and blessing to Him who suffered so much for us, who has given so many good things and [who] will [continue to] do so for the future. For He is our power and strength, He who alone is good, [who] is most high."<sup>22</sup>

Here the thoughts of the holy founder press closer to the historical events of the passion. The bitter sufferings Jesus bore for us and the benefits of so many graces of salvation which He won for us should echo in heaven and on earth. The emphasis on the "for us," a phrase which occurs frequently in St. Ambrose's thoughts on the passion, points to a warm and intimate relationship.<sup>23</sup> Yet Francis does not see the Savior in isolation but united with all the redeemed. This reference to the greatness and bitterness of the passion of Jesus manifests his interest not only in the work of Redemption itself but in the person of the Redeemer. The love of the Man of Sorrows rather than the triumph of the cross occupies the mind of the meditating soul.

In another part of the same letter the Poverello accompanies the Savior from the cenacle to the Garden of Olives. There he contemplates Jesus struggling with the will of His Father and sweating blood. He quotes only three passages of Scripture, with some slight variations, and without involving himself affectively in the mystery of the passion.<sup>24</sup>

After admiring Jesus' unconditional yes to the Father's wishes ("He placed His will at the will of the Father"), he describes God's salvific will and the redemptive work of Christ in a short dogmatic passage: "The will of the Father was such that His blessed and glorious Son, whom He gave to us and [who] was born for us, should, through His own blood, offer Himself as a sacrifice and oblation on the altar of the

21. *Op.*, p. 94. For other passages which show how deeply moved Francis was by the image of the Good Shepherd, see: *RegNB* XXII, *Adm* IX. See also his description of the ideal minister general in *2Cel* 184-86. Francis probably drew this charming representation of Christian antiquity directly from the Gospels. It is seldom found in medieval iconography. See E. Josi, in *Enc. Catt.*, s.v. "Pastore, Buon."

22. *Op.*, pp. 94ff. The prayer is not directed to Christ as Esser and Hardick suppose (*Schriften*, p. 150). Rather, Francis calls on all creation to thank God because Christ suffered so much for our salvation. Our interpretation is based solely on its grammatical structure: "... quia (Christus, frater noster) ... sustinuit ... omnis creatura ... referat Deo." Likewise the phrase "solus Bonus" which the saint always applies to God as such indicates the same. On the other hand, it can be objected that the passage from Revelation 5:13 (with the omission of the words "to Him Who sits upon the throne and the Lamb") refers to God as well as Christ.

23. See K. Baus, "Das Nachwirken des Origenes in der Christus frömmigkeit des hl. Ambr.," in *Röm. Oschr.* 49 (1954):39ff.

24. *Op.*, p. 88; *Metodio*, *Cantori della Passione*, pp. 19, 113ff.

cross: not for Himself through whom all things were made, but for our sins, leaving us an example that we should follow in His footprints" (1 Pet. 2:21).<sup>25</sup>

Even though we do not find here any outpouring of emotion, we can detect some subjective elements of a personal devotion to the passion. Significant is his twofold "for us" in strong contrast to "not for Himself," that is, "for our sins." Again the saint relates the salvation event not only to himself as an individual, but since he was writing to all people, he has the whole company of the redeemed in mind. A historical vision accompanies his thoughts on following the Crucified. The unselfish, generous sacrifice of Jesus is a model for all of us. Just as a child walks safely and with less effort by following the footsteps of his father who is walking ahead of him, we should advance by following the Redeemer closely in our thoughts and actions.<sup>26</sup>

### B. The Passion in Francis's Prayer-Life

Among the saint's prayers that make explicit reference to the mystery of the passion, the following is outstanding: "We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ, in all Your churches throughout the world, and we bless You, for through Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."<sup>27</sup> Thomas of Celano informs us that the holy founder taught this short prayer to his first brothers since they had not yet learned the Divine Office. His spiritual sons carefully carried out their father's wishes. Whenever they espied a church even from afar and "whenever they noticed a cross or any cruciform object on the ground or on a wall, on

25. *Op.*, pp. 88ff.

26. See Esser, *Der Orden des hl. Franziskus* (Werl in Westphalia, 1952), p. 28, n. 19. Already in the early church, the martyr was looked on as the perfect follower of the footsteps of Christ. See A. Stumpff, in G. Kittel, *Theol. Wörterbuch z NT.*, s.v. "ixnos." (Some Protestant interpretations of New Testament concepts of "following" are useful.) For an interpretation of the Petrine passage concerning the following of the cross, see Beda, "Homilia 22," *PL* 94, 252a. Alcuin would have liked to follow and kiss the *vestigia salvatoris* in the Holy Land. See H.B. Meyer, S.J., "Alcuin zwischen Antike und MA: Ein Kapitel frühmittelalterlicher Frömmigkeitsgeschichte," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.* 81 (1959):306-50. See also the relevant passages from Peter Damian, "Sermo 45 in nativ. B.V.M.," II, *PL* 144, 745ff: "Quod enim subire crucis patibulum voluit, viam nobis qua redire valeamus ad patriam stravit... Unde et pastor Ecclesiae clamat... 'Christus passus est....'" See also the statement of Francis's contemporary, Martin de León, Can. Aug. (d. 1221), "Expos. in epist. I b. Peter," *PL* 209, 229 bd. Certainly É. Domoutet's assertion that Peter Damian was one of the first to stress the following of the cross *avec force* is antiquated (*Le Christ selon la chair et la vie liturgique au m.é.* (Paris, 1932). For the time after Francis, see some passages from the Seraphic Doctor, in Bonifatius Strack (von Remsen), O.F.M.Cap. "Das Leiden Christi im Denken des hl. Bonaventura," in *FSien.*, 41 (1959):129-62, esp. pp. 132ff, n. 30.

27. *Test 2*; K. Esser, *Das Testament des hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Münster-Westphalia, 1949), p. 101.

trees or bushes along the road," they bowed deeply and prayed the "We Adore You."<sup>28</sup>

This is not the place to ask whether the holy founder later applied this prayer (taken from the liturgy of the feast of the Holy Cross) to his Eucharistic Lord. It is certain that in the beginning of the order the prayer took its inspiration from the cross. Otherwise it would be hard to explain why it was prayed before every cross or cruciform object.<sup>29</sup> The meaning of the little prayer for the first friars can be summed up as follows: Francis and his first companions felt that whenever they saw a cross, the whole place was filled with the mysterious presence of God, calling their attention to the redemptive work of Christ, and they adored and praised the Redeemer.

The dependence of this prayer on the Divine Office explains the absence of any deeply subjective element. It would require some manipulating to prove that because the brothers were moved to say the prayer at the sight of a cross or cruciform object, and that they used the words "We bless You, for through Your holy cross You have redeemed the world," a connection was indicated with certain affective devotions to the passion found in the prayers of earlier and later mystics.<sup>30</sup> The prayer was obviously modeled on the objective style of the Roman liturgy. Since the texts of the liturgical feast of the Holy Cross influ-

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28. *ICel* 45. Noteworthy is an account by *APer* 19. See F. van Ortroij, S.J., in *MisFran.*, 9 (1902-5):40, where we find the addition: "Et ibi credebant se locum Domini invenire." The word *Dominus* is missing, no doubt through an oversight. See also G. Abate, O.F.M.Conv., "Leg. S. Francisci Assisiensis tribus sociis hucusque adscripta," n. 37, in *MisFran* 39 (1939):406, esp. pp. 359-60.
29. According to H.A.P. Schmidt, S.J. *Hebdomada sancta*. In section 2, "Commentarius historicus," 2 (Rome, 1958), p. 946, this wording is found for the first time in an antiphonary of the eleventh century for the feast of the discovery of the holy cross. See *Responsorialia et antiphonaria Romanae Ecclesiae*, by Cardinal G.M. Tommasi, C.R., recently reissued by A.F. Vezzosi, C.R. The codices from the ninth to the twelfth centuries give the following among the antiphons for May 3: "Adoramus te Christe et benedicimus tibi, quia per crucem tuam redemisti mundum." For a study of its significance for Francis's Eucharistic devotion see our study: *Die Stellung Christi im Gebet des hl. Franziskus*.
30. For examples see *Apophthegmata Patrum*, no. 144, PG 65, 358b. Abbot Isaac writes: "Mens mea in eo loco versabatur, in quo S. Maria, Dei Genetrix, stetit plorans iuxta crucem Salvatoris; atque ego cuperem semper eo modo flere." For a related passage from Cyrilus (or Johannes) of Jerusalem. See A. Dumon, O.S.B., "Grondleggers der middeleeuwse vroomheid," in *Sacris Erudiri* 1 (1948):213. In a footnote there is a reference to a very moving passage from the Nestorian monk Dádisho (d. ca. 690). See also B. Capelle, O.S.B., "Aux origines du culte de la croix," in *Quest. Liturg. Paroiss.*, 27 (1946):162. For Peter Damian, see Opusc. 50, "Institutio monialis, Ad Blancam," c. 3, PL 145, 735cd. For the times after Francis, e.g. Anthony of Padua, see Clasen, *Lehrer des Evangeliums* (Werl, 1954), pp. 347-48. For Bonaventure, see Strack, *Das Leiden Christi*, pp. 129-62, esp. pages 139, 143-47. Further examples have been collected by Metodjo, *Cantori della Passione*, pp. 131ff.

enced the prayer formulae of the monks, the "We adore you" fits in well with the traditional veneration of the cross.

During the so-called Carolingian renaissance, and under the leadership of Alcuin, the element of private devotion gained strength. Under eastern influence the veneration of the cross assumed a distinctly liturgical-patristic character. This was true especially among the monks of the Cluniac reform, but it happened in other Benedictine monasteries as well. Francis's prayer definitely occupies a niche in this monastic setting.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, there is one original element: The saint extended his act of adoration to all the churches in the world.<sup>32</sup>

Among the other prayers of Francis there are two in which the saint prays directly to Christ and recalls His sufferings. His soul encounters the image of the Good Shepherd who with unselfish love lays down His life for His sheep, a concept that we shall refer to later on. Here is evidence of how much the Poverello looked upon love as the basis of the sufferings of Jesus.<sup>33</sup>

For the sake of completeness, we must now make mention of a very remarkable fact. If the research of Kajetan Esser passes the test of criticism, we now probably possess the wording of the prayer Francis prayed before the crucifix of San Damiano after he felt in his soul the mysterious call to rebuild the church. We here present the short prayer

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31. For pre-Franciscan development of devotion to the cross, see, among others, H. Schmitz, O.S.B., *Histoire de l'Ordre de S. Benoit*, vol. 2 (Maredsous, 1949), pp. 397ff. For Cluny, see G. Schreiber, "Cluny u. die Eigenkirche," in *Gesammelte Abhandlungen I: Gemeinschaften des MA* (Münster, 1948), p. 88. We can find samples of individual prayers to the cross in *Precum libelli quatuor aevi Karolini*, ed. A. Wilmart, O.S.B. (Rome, 1940), pp. 13ff, 45, 142. For Alcuin, see H.B. Meyers, "Alcuin zwischen Antike u. MA," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.* 81 (1959):341-43, and the studies mentioned in footnotes 341 and 170. Liturgical prayers in honor of the cross are found already in Frankish ordinals of the ninth century. See Römer, *Die Liturgie des Karfreitages* (1955), p. 77. Richard of Verdun, O.S.B. (d. 1046), used a formula similar to that of Francis. See Hugo von Flavigny, O.S.B., *Acta Sanctorum*, "Vita", chap. 1, n. 3, June 3, p. 456b. Similar prayers may be found in John Gualbert, "Preces," *PL* 146, 974. The collection stems from a ninth-century Italian source. See A. Wilmart, in *Rev. Bén.*, 48 (1936):259-99. When they ascended the altar, the Premonstratensian priests kissed it and the cross on the missal with the words: "Tuam crucem adoramus, Domine, tuam gloriosam recolimus Passionem. Miserere nostri qui passus est pro nobis." See F. Petit, L. Praem., *La spiritualité des Prémontrés aux XII et XIII siècles* (Paris, 1947), pp. 87ff. In the rule for anchorites *Ancren Riwele*, dating from about 1150, we find a kind of *Office of the Passion* with five salutations to the cross, psalms and prayers, among them the liturgical antiphon. See E. Dumoutet, *Le Christ selon la chair et la vie liturgique au. m. d.* 20. St. Edmund of Canterbury (d. 1240) has also handed down the liturgical formula for the veneration of the members of the crucified. See L. Gougaud, O.S.B., *Deviotions et pratiques ascétiques du m. d.* (Paris, 1925), pp. 77ff.
32. See P. Bayart's commentary, *S. François vous écrit* (Paris, 1935), pp. 145-48.
33. *RegNB* XXII; *IIEpFid* 94. See n. 21 above. Both passages are analyzed more in detail in our *Die Stellung Christi im Gebet des hl. Franziskus*.



in its complete wording: "Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me, Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command."<sup>34</sup>

Two things surprise us. The newly-converted Francis directs his prayer not to Christ but to God. In spite of the place and circumstances there is not the slightest reference to the mystery of the cross. After hearing the words of the Crucified, the saint begs "the most high and glorious God" to strengthen in him the three theological virtues and to grant him a clear vision that he might fulfill his given task faithfully and perfectly.<sup>35</sup> One might ask: Does our mystic look upon the Crucified as the bearer of a divine message who then in turn carried Francis's answer to the triune God? Or was he so overwhelmed by the religious experience that in that moment he saw the divinity of Christ as predominant? Or is the biographers's account a misinterpretation owing to his zest for the miraculous, and did Francis perceive an interior voice to which he responded with a prayer? These are questions which we must further investigate in the light of the biographies.<sup>36</sup>

Much the same must be said about the prayer which the saint, after receiving the sacred stigmata, wrote for Brother Leo, who at the time was suffering grievous temptations. The glowing words of praise which, according to "Brother Little Lamb of God," were a thanksgiving for the grace of the stigmata,<sup>37</sup> are directed to the one and triune God without

34. Esser, "Das Gebet des hl. Franziskus vor dem Kreuzbild in San Damiano," in *FSien.*, 34 (1952):1-11. The scene from *2Cel* 10 will be taken up in the second part of this essay. Our study presupposes naturally the authenticity of this prayer and the originality of its word order as reconstructed by the author. Before Esser, writers looked on the prayer as either unauthentic or at least doubtful. See Cambell, "Le écrits de S. François d'Assise devant la critique," in *FSien.* 36 (1954):250-54: "Sa vrai place est, selon moi, parmi les écrits douteux, au moins quant à la forme" (p. 252). We do not find his position convincing. S. Clasen remarks without good reason in *Rev. Hist. Eccl.* 52 (1957):366: "Il est difficile ... de comter au nombre des textes provenant à coup sur de S. François la Prière à l'heure de la conversion." F. van den Borne ("Voornaamste feiten uit het leven van Franciscus in het licht van de historische kritiek," in *Sint Franc.* 3 [1957]:186-90) does not take a stand on our question. Certain striking agreements with the wording of Francis's prayer can be found in John Gualbert, "Preces," *PL* 146, 972d. See n. 31: "Reple corda nostra fide, spe et caritate, obedientia et humilitate atque patientia, et fac nostrum rectorem secundum cor tuum, ut faciat voluntatem tuam ad salutem suam et nostram. Amen."

35. See Esser's commentary: *Das Gebet vor dem Kreuzbild*, pp. 9ff.

36. See Part III A below: "Apparitions of the Crucified in the Life of St. Francis."

37. *Op.*, pp. 124ff. For the historical background of the prayer, see *2Cel* 49. The authenticity of the relic is no longer in question. See Cambell, *Les écrits devant la critique*, pp. 218-22. For a comprehensive discussion of the laudes the following are still readable: R. Balfour, *The Seraphic Keepsake*. A talisman against temptation written for Br. Leo by St. Francis of Assisi (London, 1905), and F.J. Chauvet, O.F.M.'s commentary "La sapienza cristiana secondo S. Francesco," in *Vita*

any express mention of Christ. Nor is there any reference to the sufferings of Jesus or his own wounds. Even though the final sentence speaks of a "merciful Savior," the whole context rules out any explicit reference to the Redeemer. The casual lines scribbled at the bottom are the mystic's praise of the omnipresence and goodness of God without making express mention of the singular grace he had received.<sup>38</sup>

If the poetic prayer omits any mention of the passion, the same cannot be said of the blessing given to Brother Leo. The saint signs his dedication to his trusted friend with the mystical Tau.<sup>39</sup> This detail must be studied in a broader perspective.

### C. Francis and the Mystical Tau

To grasp the full meaning of this letter in the devotional life of the Poverello, we must have recourse to the biographical sources. To do this we shall have to abandon our prearranged plan for the time being. Thomas of Celano relates in his treatise on miracles: "The Tau was dearer to him than all other letters. He used it as his signature on all his messages and traced it everywhere on the walls of the cells."<sup>40</sup>

The saint made use of this cross also as a seal and signature for his letters. With it he marked the friaries and living quarters of the brothers as with a coat of arms. This statement of his biographer can be substantiated not only by Francis's blessing to Brother Leo but by means of the oldest copy of his *Letter to the Clergy*. Here too we find a reasonable facsimile of the Tau, drawn at the close of the text.<sup>41</sup>

During the renovation of the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene in Fonte Colombo, a Tau, painted in red, was discovered in the window niche on the Gospel side. It had been covered over by a fifteenth-century painting. Monsignor A. Terzi had solid ground for attributing it to Francis himself.<sup>42</sup>

Minorum, 30 (1959):198-224, esp. 208-10.

38. On the other hand, Brother Leo remarks about the reverse side of the parchment: "Post visionem et allocutionem seraphim et impressionem stigmatum Christi in corpore suo fecit has laudes ex alio latere chartae scriptas et manu sua scripsit gratias agens Domino de beneficio sibi collato" (*Op.*, p. 199).
39. For a good reproduction see L. Von Matt and W. Hauser, *Francesco d'Assisi* (Padua, 1952), pictures 149-50, after p. 228.
40. *3Cel* III. See also *3Cel* CLIX: "Hoc signo s. Franciscus suas consignabat litteras, quoties necessitatis vel caritatis causa scriptum aliquod dirigebat."
41. L. Oligier, O.F.M., "Textus antiquissimus epistolae S. Francisci 'de Reverentia Corporis Domini' in Missali Sublacensi," codex B 24 Vallicellanus, in *AFH* 6 (1913):9, 3-12. Illustration between pp. 12 and 13.
42. A. Terzi, O.F.M., *Memorie francescane nella Valle Reatina* (Rome, 1955), p. 80, and pp. 128ff, n. 59. See also p. 410, where the author speaks of the sanctity of St. Cat(h)aldus. In the recently restored fresco the Savior holds in His right hand a *crux comissa*. See plate CVI. Of course this has no reference to St. Francis. It is simply iconographic evidence that he was not alone in his preference. See notes 45, 64, and 68 below.

The *crux commissa* (the Egyptian or Antonian cross) was no novelty in the Middle Ages. It came from early Christian times.<sup>43</sup> H. Rahner's historical study of the symbolic *Antenna crucis* (the mystical Tau) has demonstrated the extent that the fathers related Ezekiel's signing of the Tau on the foreheads of the just to the cross of Christ, symbolized by this last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.<sup>44</sup> In the Middle Ages it was the universal custom to begin every official act with the sign of the cross. The Tau occasionally appears in manuscripts.<sup>45</sup> Besides, this type of cross was a favorite motif of medieval art as we find in the illumination of the initial words of the canon of the Mass as well as in the design of many church buildings. "Popular belief in the Middle Ages looked upon the Tau of Ezekiel 9:4ff as a symbol of life and a special mark of health, above all a defense against the plague and hostile forces. It was worn as an amulet on rings, written on quarantine notices, on blessings and on doors and walls."<sup>46</sup>

But what did the people of the Middle Ages understand by this mysterious letter? Rupert of Deutz, well known for his expertise in the traditions of the fathers, provides an answer in his *De Trinitate et operibus ejus* with an excellent explanation of the passage from Ezekiel:

The last letter of the old Hebrew alphabet, which the Samaritans still use, is the letter Tau. It is in the shape of a cross and was impressed on the foreheads of Christians and often used as a signature. Note what the prophet says: "Go all through the city, all through Jerusalem, and mark the sign of the Tau on the foreheads of all who deplore and disapprove of the filth practiced in it. I heard him say to the others: Follow him through the city and strike. Show neither pity nor mercy; old men, young men, virgins, children, women, kill and exterminate them all. But do not touch anyone with the Tau on his forehead. Begin at my sanctuary" (Ezek. 9:4-6). For our Lord, when He was about to pass from this world to the Father and place the sign of His cross on our foreheads, not with ink but with His blood and the Holy Spirit, said: "Do penance, for the kingdom of

43. H. Leclercq, O.S.B., in *Dict. Arch. Liturg.*, s.v. "Tau."

44. H. Rahner, S.J., "Antenna crucis: Das mystische Tau," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.* 75 (1953):385-410. See Ezek. 9:3-11; Rev. 3:12, 7:3, 9:4, 14:1, 22:4. For an exegesis of the passages in the light of the fathers, see e.g. B. Trochon, *Les Prophètes: Ézéchiél* (Paris, 1897), pp. 73ff, and J. Knabenbauer, S.J., *Commentarius in Ezechielem Prophetam* (Paris, 1890), pp. 98-100. For more recent commentaries see F. Spandaforra, *Ezechiele* (Turin, 1948), p. 82-85, esp. p. 83b, and J. Steinmann, *Le prophète Ézéchiél et les débuts de l'exil* (Paris, 1953), p. 65. The just who have experienced grief over the misdeeds of sinners will be the object of a special divine protection in the face of the impending judgment.

45. Oliger, *Textus antiquissimus*, p. 9. See also F. Oppenheim, O.S.B., in *Enc. Catt.*, s.v. "Croce V: Il segno della C." With respect to iconography, see Rahner, *Das mystische Tau*, pp. 405-9.

46. A. Schebler, in *Lex. Theol. Kirche*, s.v. "Tau."

God is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). He wished that this sign be inscribed, not on all, but on those who wept over past evils, that is, who did penance.<sup>47</sup>

Is there perhaps some clearer evidence of Francis's dependence on the practices of popular piety, and with the patristic emblems of his time? In our opinion, an appendix to the *Major Life* of St. Bonaventure by Jerome of Ascoli, minister general of the Friars Minor and later Pope Nicholas IV (d. 1292), gives us a lead that has hitherto been overlooked. He writes that Francis, during his visit to Rome early in 1210 to obtain papal approval for his way of life, spent the night in St. Anthony's Hospital near the Lateran.<sup>48</sup> The institution was conducted by the Hospitalers of St. Anthony, an order founded in France in the eleventh century, and which had 369 foundations in the thirteenth century. As their special ministry, these religious undertook the care of victims of St. Anthony's Fire, probably a form of the bubonic plague. As a sign of their fraternity and symbol of their calling, they carried a staff in the form of a Tau. They also sewed the Tau on their habits.

It is impossible to say precisely when the Antonians adopted the Tau as the mark of their order. In the Bull *In dispositione ministrorum* of May 18, 1297, in which Pope Boniface VIII changed the Benedictine-oriented order into Canons of St. Augustine, the old custom of sewing the Tau on the habit is taken for granted. He writes: "The abbot, the canons and the brothers, shall wear always and everywhere, according to the custom of this hospital, a habit with the sign of the Tau."<sup>49</sup>

Some years before 1191, in S. Gregoire du Val d'Avançon, William Raymond and his noble wife Agnes founded a community of brothers and sisters of St. Anthony to care for the sick and the poor. They chose as their distinguishing mark the Tau symbol. In 1191, their hospital was placed under the jurisdiction of the abbot general of the Antonians. We can therefore accept the judgment of P. Noordeloos that the Tau was already the religious symbol of the Hospitalers of St. Anthony.<sup>50</sup> If this

47. Chap. 32, *PL* 167, 1458ff. Because of a certain devotional parallel with Francis, reference is also made to Peter Damian, "Sermo 48 de exaltatione s. cruxis," *PL* 144, 769b. See also Rahner, *Das mystische Tau*, p. 394.

48. *LMaior* III 9. See A. Fortini, *750 anniversario della fondazione dell'Ordine dei frati minori*, 1209-1959. The *Storia, cronaca, discussione* (Assisi, 1959), pp. 5-17, shows that the traditional view placing the oral confirmation of the *Rule* in April 1209 is untenable. See also his *Nova vita di s. Francesco*, (ed. Assisi 1959), vol. 1, 1, p. 367. L. Oligier, in his book *L'Italia Francescana* (Assisi, 1927), pp. 67ff, shows that it is not a question of a Hospital of St. Anthony close to S. Maria Maggiore, where the *Russicum* now stands, but of a hospital behind the little church of St. Anthony the Hermit that once stood between the aqueduct and the Church of Saints Peter and Marcellinus. Compare the various opinions in E. Buletti, O.F.M., "Ospedale e chiesa di S. Antonio presso il Laterano," in *Studi Franc.*, 3d ser., 1 (1929):267ff.

49. *Bullarium Romanum* (Turin, 1859), vol. 4, 144b.

50. P. Noordeloos, "De Tau van S. Antonius," in *Het Gildeboek* (Leiden, 1942), pp. 69-79, esp. p. 75a. The Tau does not appear to have been quickly adopted as the seal

be the case, there is no reason to doubt that the meeting of St. Francis with the Antonian brethren in 1210 was an important, if not the initial, factor in his veneration of the Tau symbol.

This devotion of the saint was undoubtedly reinforced by the Tau vision of Brother Pacificus. "Not long afterwards (that is, after his conversion) he saw the great sign Tau on the forehead of blessed Francis, surrounded by many colored circles which reminded one of the splendor of the peacock." It is doubtful, however, whether this incident (the context is fraught with certain critical problems) can be taken as a decisive factor in the origin of the Tau devotion, as R. Balfour suggests.<sup>51</sup>

Since the publication of Father Cuthbert Hess's life of Francis, several others have concentrated on a greater influence. On 11 November 1215, Pope Innocent III opened the Fourth Council of the Lateran with a sermon on the threefold *transitus*: the bodily, the spiritual and the eternal. In his discourse on the bodily *transitus* he summoned western Christendom to undertake a new crusade against the Muslims. As for the spiritual *transitus* he demanded the religious and moral reform of the clergy. The pope went through the church as if to single out the good and the evil, and to imprint the mystical Tau on the brows of the just: "Tau is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It has the shape the cross had, before Pilate attached a title above it when the Lord was crucified.... He Who showed forth the power of the cross in his actions, bore it on his forehead."<sup>52</sup>

There is only one document, and it is of doubtful historical value,<sup>53</sup> that states that Francis took part in the Lateran Council. Internal

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of the order. Guillaume de Chancellai, director of the hospital of St. Anthony in Marseilles, was not aware of it in 1272. But on the seal of the Grand Master Aymon de Montagne in 1293 one can see the Tau-shaped staff of St. Anthony (p. 75-77). The author tries to explain the choice of this emblem. He himself derives the Tau of the Antonians from a crutch (pp. 78b-79a). This explanation finds support in the ninth-century *Miracula S. Lifardi*, chaps. 3, no. 18. *Acta Sanctorum*, 1 June, 301a; Ch. Du Cange and G.A.L. Henshel, in *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis*, s.v. "Potentia." Nevertheless, at least for the later period it is not possible to exclude a devotional element in the choice of the cruciform Tau. See Noordeloos, in *Kath. Encycl.* s.v. "Antonianen." For medical practices and the Roman hospital, see A. Pazzini, in *Enc. Catt.*, s.v. "Antoniani." See also F. Meffert, *Caritas u. Volksepidemien* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1925), pp. 161-65; Ch. Chaumartin, *Le mal des ardents et le feu de S. Antoine* (Vienne, 1946).

51. *2Cel* 106. The conversion of the King of Verses is usually assigned to 1212. Certain writers are for 1215/16. See R. Balfour, *The Seraphic Keepsake*, pp. 85ff: "I may be allowed to conjecture that from this vision ... dates the habit S. Francis acquired of signing his letters with a capital 'T'" (p. 86). For critical problems, see Grau, *Thomas von Celano*, p. 335, n. 239.

52. Cuthbert (of Brighton), *Life of S. Francis of Assisi* (London, 1912), pp. 172-76. For the sermon of Innocent III, see *PL* 217, 673-80. His text is from Luke 22:15: "Desiderio desideravi..." (col. 677a).

evidence, however, affords a probability that he was present, not as the official representative of the order but simply as a private observer. Even if the internal evidence is not convincing, it cannot be denied that the saint could hardly escape being influenced by the great council.<sup>54</sup>

All this is in harmony with a letter written by Innocent in which he says he saw in spirit the crusaders marked with the Tau as they embarked in Venice. In his letter on the Blessed Sacrament he sees the mystical Tau of Ezekiel in the initial letter of the canon of the Mass.<sup>55</sup>

We have attempted to pinpoint the various factors which influenced Francis in his Tau devotion. We must now turn our attention to its religious significance. If the Antonian influence on the Poverello is established, it is more than likely that the ideal of self-sacrificing care of the lepers, at least in the beginning of the order, found its expression in the Tau devotion. The words of the saint himself indicate as much: "The Lord granted me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance in this way: While I was in sin, it seemed very bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I had mercy upon them."<sup>56</sup> Thereafter the Tau would signify his self-renunciation in the service of the poorest of the poor.

Francis's stress on the cult of the Eucharist stems from meeting with the crusade-preacher and spiritual patron of the Liege Beguines, Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240) at the deathbed of Innocent III in 1216.<sup>57</sup>

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53. *Chronica XXIV Generalium O. Min.*, in *AF* 3:9: "Anno Domini MCCXV tempore Concilii generalis B. Franciscus Romam adiit et s. Dominicum, qui ibi tunc erat pro sui Ordinis approbatione, reperit..." It is not easy to evaluate the historical worth of this account. See Oligier, *S. Francesco a Roma*, pp. 70ff. See also F. Delorme, *Leg. ant.*, no. 67, p. 39; Angelus of Clarenno, *Expositio Regulae Fratrum Minorum*; L. Oligier (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1912), pp. 16ff, n. 3.
54. In his *Textus antiquissimus*, p. 8, n. 4, Oligier expresses serious doubts about Francis's presence at the council. However, he writes in his *S. Francesco a Roma*, p. 70ff: "Se dunque S. Francesco fu a Roma nel 1215, lo fu come privato o quasi" (p. 71). Father Cuthbert agrees with him. For a further discussion of the problem, see Laurentius Casutt (von Falera), O.F.M.Cap., *Die älteste franziskanische Lebensform: Untersuchungen zur Regula prima sine Bulla* (Graz, 1955), pp. 67-68, nn. 50, 65-69. See the concurring opinion of B. Cornet, O.F.M., "De Reverentia Corporis Christi," in *EF*, n.s. 8 (1957):49-52.
55. Innocent III, "Epistola 46," *PL* 214, 1012a; "De sacro altaris mysterio," l. 3, c. 2, *PL* 217, 840ff. See Rahner, *Das Mystische Tau*, pp. 404ff.
56. *Test* 1. See K. Esser, *Das Testament des hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Münster-Westphalia, 1949), pp. 100, 140-45. See also the psychologically impressive study by Laurentius Casutt, *L'eredità di S. Francesco: Riesame della sua spiritualità* (Rome, 1952), pp. 50ff. See also Ch. Dukker, O.F.M., *Umkehr des Herzens: Der Bussgedanke des hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Werl in Westphalia, 1956), p. 79.
57. See A. Callebout, O.F.M., "Autour de la rencontre à Florence de s. François et du card. Hugolin (en été 1217)," in *AFH*, 19 (1926):530-58; B. Cornet, O.F.M., "Le 'De Reverentia Corporis Christi': Exhortation et lettre de s. François," in *EF*, n.s. 7 (1956):23-25; Fredegando Callaey (of Antwerp), O.F.M.Cap., "Origine e sviluppo

Francis expressed this devotion in letters in which he strove to animate the clerics, the custodians, the friars assembled in Chapter, the leaders of the people, and the faithful in general to a more frequent reception of and greater reverence for the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>58</sup> Two points must be noted here. At one time the Poverello was accustomed to sign his letters with the Tau, as can be seen in his *Letter to the Clergy*.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, in more than one letter the idea of penance is linked with the reception of the Eucharist: "All those men and women who are not [living] in penance and do not receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ... are blind."<sup>60</sup>

We can assume that the mystical Tau, which the man clothed in linen placed on the foreheads of penitents as a sign of their salvation (Ezek. 9:4), was, at least after 1216, closely associated with Francis's Eucharistic apostolate. Nor can there be any doubt that the idea of universal church reform and the crusades, eloquently proclaimed by Innocent III, also had its influence, even though we cannot point to any hard evidence for it in the sources.<sup>61</sup>

The safest way to treat the mystery of Francis's Tau devotion would be to investigate the sign on the parchment he gave to Brother Leo. Here we encounter some serious problems. Unfortunately the meaning of the drawing at the foot of the Tau is not clear. Brother Leo wrote an explanation on the back of the relic: "In like manner (Blessed Francis) traced this sign of the Tau with a head."<sup>62</sup> The very ambiguity of the word *caput* ("head") gave rise to a proliferation of mutually contradictory interpretations.

It is certainly not meant to be a picture of a flower. Equally untenable is that of a gallows-image. Others have fancied they saw an outline of La Verna in the *caput*.<sup>63</sup> A theory that the drawing depicted

della festa del 'Corpus Domini', in *Euntes Docete*, 10 (1957):3-33, esp. pp. 3-9. For de Vitry's role in the Beguines, see E.W. McDonnell's study: *The Beguines and Beghards in Mediaeval Culture*. With special emphasis on the Belgian scene (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1954), pp. 20-30. See his index s.vv. Vitry and Francis.

58. Oligier, "Textus antiquissimus," in *AFH* 6 (1913):3-12; *Op.*, pp. 113-15; 99-107, 111ff, 87-98.

59. Oligier, "Textus antiquissimus," pp. 9, 12/13.

60. *IEpFid* II 1, 7; *IEpCus* 6.

61. This is stressed, though in an exaggerated manner, by Cornet, "Le 'De Reverentia,'" 8 (1957):49-52.

62. *Op.*, p. 200.

63. We offer the following bibliography not because these theories are to be taken seriously but only because they contribute something toward the problem of the authenticity of the relic. See M. Faloci and Pulignani, "Gli autografi di s. Francesco," in *MisFran*, 6 (1895-97):33-39; page 35: "a kind of flower ... a gallows." See also M. Carmichael, "A New Light on the Benediction of St. Francis," in *St. Peters* (London, 1900); Balfour, *The Seraphic Keepsake*, p. 68, n. 1. The author accepts the theory of La Verna in *La Benedizione di S. Francesco, spiegazione del*



Golgotha with its skull and cross rising above it was once taken seriously. The picture of Adam's skull at the foot of the cross over which the blood of the Second Adam flowed was cherished in the writings of the fathers and in later medieval iconography.<sup>64</sup>

In the light of the vision of Brother Pacificus and the association of the Tau with penance, the theory that *cum capite* stands for *in fronte* ("on the brow")<sup>65</sup> has to be considered most probable. The arguments of St. Bonaventure based on the Ezekiel vision tend in the same direction. After the Seraphic Doctor speaks of Francis's love for the holy letter, he adds: "The holy man venerated this symbol with great affection, often spoke highly of it and signed it with his own hand at the end of the letters which he sent, as if his whole desire were to mark with a Tau the foreheads of those who have been truly converted to Jesus Christ and who moan and grieve, according to the text of the Prophet" (Ezek. 9:14).<sup>66</sup>

This interpretation is all the more probable since to the right and left of the upright beam of the cross the saint wrote a special blessing: "May the Lord bless you, Brother Leo," and the name of the recipient is divided by the upright Tau. R. Balfour points out the resemblance of this figure to that found in the missal where the cross is placed between the words of consecration.<sup>67</sup> The Poverello comforted his sorely tried

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*gerogifico* (Leghorn, 1900). S. Attal shares the same viewpoint in "La benedizione di frate Leone," in *MisFran.*, 32 (1932):245-48. For a refutation of these theories, see Balfour, *The Seraphic Keepsake*, pp. 96-101.

64. H. Grisar, S.J. was the first to anticipate this interpretation: "La benedizione manoscritta di S. Francesco nel sacro convento di Assisi," in *MisFran.*, 5 (1895-97):129-32. See *Civ. Catt.*, 16th series, no. 47, 5 (1896):723-28: "...testa da morto del Calvario" (130b). See also Edouard d'Alenon, O.F.M. Cap., *La Benediction de S. François. Histoire et authenticité de la relique d'Assise* (Paris, 1896), esp. p. 7. See also A. Cresi, O.F.M., *La Benédizione di Fr. Leone scritta da S. Francesco all Verna*, 11 (1913):30-42. More recently this theory has been stressed by Cambell, *Les écrits devant la critique*, pp. 219ff, where we also find some references to the origins of this view. Leone Bracaloni, O.F.M. discusses Cresi in *AFH*, 7 (1914):382ff and supports the reference to Adam, however with the strange idea that Francis, in his humility, "in qualità di peccatore," put himself in the place of our first parent. For a history of symbolic representations, see the witness of the fathers in X. Le Bachelet, S.J., in *Dict. Theol. Cath.*, s.v. "Adam." For iconography, see É. Mâle, *L'art religieux du XIII siècle en France* (Paris, 1923), p. 189. See also W. Neusz, in *Lex. Theol. Kirche*, s.v. "Adam in der bildenden Kunst." In the Cathedral of Spoleto there is a crucifix by Alberto Sotio (1187) where we see the blood flowing down from the feet of the crucified Christ on the skull of Adam. The scene is repeated in other paintings of the crucifixion. See Bracaloni, "Il prodigioso Crocifisso che parlò a S. Francesco," in *Studi Franc.*, 3d ser., 11 (1939):196.
65. For Brother Pacificus's vision, see n. 51 above.
66. *LMaior* IV 9. See also Prologue 2; *3Cel* X 7; *LMiior* II, VIII, nn. 9 and 1. See also Balfour, *The Seraphic Keepsake*, pp. 95ff.
67. See Cambell, *Les écrits devant la critique*, p. 219. See also Balfour, *The Seraphic Keepsake*, p. 106.



brother with the blessing: "The seal of the cross is upon your brow, for you belong to the true penitents and therefore to the elect."<sup>68</sup>

The holy founder does not appear to appropriate to himself the salvific mission of the angel of the seventh seal (Rev. 7:2). If so, he might have felt that as the bearer of the seal of the living God by reason of the stigmata, he was commissioned to sign the servants of God with Tau on their foreheads (Rev. 7:3; Ezek. 9:4). In reading such a specific and exalted meaning into the parchment blessing, J. Ratzinger seems to be exaggerating its content.<sup>69</sup> Anyone who keeps in mind Francis's modesty and his keen awareness of his spiritual poverty before God would find such a parade of self-esteem on his part simply incredible. At any rate we find no reference to the Revelation text quoted above. Nor does the Celano trilogy contain any hint of such a salvific interpretation. The application of the verses of Ezekiel (9:4) and Revelation (7:2-3) to Francis was made for the first time, under Joachimite influence, by Gerard of Borgo S. Donnino (d. 1276). It is true that we find a juxtaposition of these texts in St. Bonaventure's *Major Life*, but he ascribes a different role to the angel of the seventh seal, as E. Bihel has demonstrated.<sup>70</sup>

After this rather tedious analysis of individual references and sources we are in a position to sum up the religious content of the Tau symbol according to the mind of Francis. The mystical Tau certainly lies at the very heart of the Franciscan way of life. This is evident from the fact that the Poverello chose this letter as the seal and coat of arms of the order. His life of penance according to the Gospel was not to follow a rigid, externally established pattern. It changed and evolved according to the exterior and interior guidance of the grace of God. The significance of the mystical Tau naturally changed with the development of the Franciscan ideal, since it symbolized the content of this penitential life. In the early days it apparently expressed dedication and self-renunciation in the service of the lepers. After 1216 in all

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68. See Balfour, *The Seraphic Keepsake*, pp. 105ff. Esser and Hardick (*Schriften*, p. 163, n. 109) express the same opinion though without mentioning Brother Leo. The same meaning is expressed by Mâle, *L'art religieux du XII siècle en France* (Paris, 1922), pp. 156ff. Rahner (*Das mystische Tau* p. 409, n. 20) makes reference to W. Neusz, *Das Buch Ezechiel in Theologie und Kunst bis Ende des 12 Jhs.* (Münster, 1912).
69. Ratzinger, *Die Geschichtstheologie des hl. Bonaventura* (Munich-Zürich, 1959), pp. 33-40, 36, and nn. 36, 38. We are not excluding by any means an influence of Ezek. 9:4. On the contrary, it is absolutely necessary for an understanding of Francis's veneration of the Tau. The problem of Rev. 7:2-3 is different. Even if Francis were acquainted with the text (see below), it is unthinkable that the saint would have put himself in the role of the parousial messenger of salvation.
70. See Bihel, O.F.M., "S. Franciscus fuitne Angelus sexti sigilli?," in *Ant 2* (1927):59-90, 62 (Gerard). 63-60 (Bonav.). See also Clasen, "Die Sendung des hl. Franziskus: Die Heilsgeschichtliche Deutung durch Bonaventura," in *Wiss. Weish.*, 14 (1951):212-25. We cannot pursue the matter any further here.

probability it included Francis's involvement in Eucharistic and ecclesiastical reforms and the theme of the cross.<sup>71</sup> At all times it encompassed the entire evangelical manner of life which the saint firmly believed he had received directly from God. For this life leads to a radical renunciation of the world and an unconditional turning to God, together with many forms of self-denial. From it flow poverty and humility, a total dedication to the imitation of the passion of Christ and a bond of suffering with Him. It thereby contains the pledge of eternal life.<sup>72</sup>

#### D. Following the Crucified

Following the cross of the Savior could be treated under the general concept of following Christ. But it really forms an essential element of Francis's devotion to the passion.<sup>73</sup>

Let us first of all consider a passage from the *Earlier Rule*. After a general admonition to "follow the humility and the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ," he tells the brothers that "they must rejoice when they live among people [who are considered to be] of little worth and who are looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside." He prescribes questing for alms when necessary:<sup>74</sup> "They should not be ashamed, but rather recall that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living and all-powerful God, set His face like flint (Isaiah 50:7) and was not ashamed. And He was a poor man and a transient and lived on alms, He and the Blessed Virgin, and His disciples."

Finally, he admonished the brothers that they should thank God when they must endure humiliations because of their begging.<sup>75</sup>

We must ask the question whether the saint had in mind here only the generic theme of the poor life of Jesus (in which case the passage should be studied in connection with the following of Jesus) or whether he went further and was thinking about the patient suffering of Christ.<sup>76</sup> The latter would appear to be the case because of the quota-

71. We shall discuss Francis's participation in the Fifth Crusade and its religious significance in II C 5 below: "Francis's Longing for Martyrdom."

72. Besides the reference given in n. 56, see Esser, "Die Lehre des hl. Franziskus von der Selbstverleugnung," in *Wiss. Weish.* 18 (1955):161-74; Optatus, "De Orde van Boetvaardigheid: Over de boete in de geest van Franciscus," in *Franc. Leven* 42 (1959):33-43, nn. 34, 2; R. Koper, O.F.M., *Das Weltverständnis des hl. Franziskus von Assisi*. Eine Untersuchung über das "Exivi de Saeculo" (Werl in Westphalia, 1959). Francis saw the image of the cross in the clothing of the Friars Minor. We shall come back to the subject in Part 4 A below: "Symbolic Association of the Cross with Clothing."

73. It would require a separate essay to deal with the charge of St. Francis's alleged literalism.

74. *RegNB IX*.

75. Esser and Hardick, *Schriften*, p. 37.

tions from the Servant of God pericope of Isaiah. The biblical picture of the face set like flint, symbolizing unbreakable courage in the face of injustice and abuse, takes its clearest meaning from the passion of Christ.<sup>77</sup> Francis would learn to put up with insults and humiliations to which a beggar, even though he be a religious, is necessarily exposed, and endure them with the patience of the suffering Redeemer.

The theme of the following of Christ in the light of the mystery of the cross receives new emphasis in the words of the sixth *Admonition*: "Let all of us, brothers, look to the Good Shepherd, who suffered the passion of the cross to save His sheep. The sheep of the Lord followed Him in tribulation and persecution, in insult and hunger, in infirmity and temptation, and in everything else, and they have received everlasting life from the Lord because of these things. Therefore, it is a great shame for us, servants of God, that while the saints [actually] did such things, we wish to receive glory and honor by [merely] recounting their deeds."<sup>78</sup>

Once more the saint holds up the touching picture of the Good Shepherd<sup>79</sup> and the inexpressible love with which He endured the martyrdom of the cross to save His sheep. We must reiterate that he is not thinking about individual events of the historical passion but rather about the work of salvation in its wholeness. The Lord's sheep, the apostles, the martyrs and all the saints, followed Him through all manner of privation, trials and persecution. It is noteworthy that Francis singles out sickness as a special form of carrying the cross.<sup>80</sup>

76. This is assumed by Metodio, *Cantori della Passione*, p. 21, nn. 48 and 114ff, without however offering further evidence.

77. For the meaning of the passage, see J. Knabenbauer, S.J. and Z. Zorell, S.J., *Commentarium in Is. Prophetam*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1923), p. 278, and more recently A. Penna, C.R.L., *Isaia* (Turin, 1958), p. 510b. Here we touch on the question whether, with C. Andresen, "Asketische Forderung u. Krankheit bei Franz von Assisi," in *Theo. Lit. Ztg.*, 79 (1954):129-40. On pages 134ff we must refer to the passage from *IIEpFid* 93: "Et habeamus corpora nostra in opprobrium et despectum, quia omnes per culpam nostram sumus miseri et putridi, foetidi et vermes, sicut dicit Dominus per Prophetam" (Ps. 21:6). The wording of the passage does not seem to justify this conclusion. Rather it is an allegorical application of the psalm verse to all human misery (*Vermis-vermes*).

78. *Op.*, pp. 9ff. Here is an opportunity to point out biblical cross-references. See *ibid.*, n. 2, which refers to John 10:11, Heb. 12:2, and Rom. 8:35.

79. See n. 21 above.

80. Andresen, "Franz von Assisi u. seine Krankheiten," in *Wege zum Menschen: Monatsschrift f. Seelsorge, Psychotherapie u. Erziehung* (Göttingen) 6 (1954):3-43. Pages 42ff are more definite: "The close association this word has taken on with the ideal of following in the sense of 'suffering with Christ', justifies one in translating the ambiguous word 'infirmity' as 'sickness'." Esser (*Die Lehre von der Selbstverleugnung*, p. 161, n. 6) admits that there is good reason to translate 'infirmity' as sickness, but he prefers the more comprehensive term 'weakness'. The term 'infirmity' has many meanings. See *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. On the other hand, Francis almost certainly spoke his admonition in Old Italian, in which

The danger for a later generation would be an absorption with the purely miraculous and awe-inspiring aspect of former events, and substituting the study of marvelous deeds for an imitation of them. Francis's inborn honesty would revolt at such a monstrous fraud.<sup>81</sup>

In the same context we find a further warning against self-seeking in bearing the cross. Francis declares very emphatically that anyone looking for self-glorification will find no ground for it here. Although irrational creatures do not enjoy the likeness to God and Christ that was conferred on human beings, they serve their Creator in their own way better than we do. "Even the demons did not crucify Him, but you together with them have crucified Him and crucify Him even now by delighting in vices and sins."<sup>82</sup> The focus here is not on following Christ but on the existential relationship of the baptized Christian to redemption. Consequently the warning is valid for our own times, especially since the words make explicit reference to the social dimension of sin. The evil deed of an individual is not frozen in a given moment of history. Its malice is diffused over time and space and reaches its climax in the redemptive death of the innocent Savior.<sup>83</sup>

Francis then condemns that vainglory which sprouts from special knowledge, linguistic skills, theological acumen, physical beauty, wealth and even the gift of miracles: "None of them would belong to you, nor could you glory in any of these things. But in this we can glory: in our infirmities (2 Cor. 12:5) and bearing daily the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Francis believed that he might glory in only one thing—his sufferings, whether they came from his body, worn out by sickness and penance, from his encounters with human dullness and ill will, from his concern for the purity of his original ideal or from the awareness of

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'infirmite' means only sickness. See V. Branca, in *AFH*, 41 (1948):85; N. Tommaseo and B. Bellini, *Dizionario della lingua italiana* (Turin-Naples, 1869), 1485.

81. See commentary and other passages in Gratien, *Personalité et spiritualité*, pp. 102-7. See also P. Bayart, *S. François vous écrit* (Paris, 1935), pp. 28ff. For a historical illustration of Francis's remark, see H. Boehmer, *Chronica fr. Jordani*, (Paris, 1908), p. 7, no. 8. The legend of the first five martyrs of the Friars Minor in Morocco on January 16, 1220, seemed to provide some friars with an occasion for vainglory, so Francis forbade it to be read. Peter Damian ("Sermo 18 de inventione s. crucis," *PL* 144, 610c) utters a similar warning: "Nec sibi quispiam de solo signo crucis applaudat, si veritatem crucis in operibus non exhibeat."

82. For five words of holy admonition, see *Op.*, p. 8.

83. See C. Spicq, O.P., *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1953), p. 153: "La Passion n'est pas seulement un fait historique, c'est un drama contemporain de tout homme qui doit prendre parti pour ou contre le Sauveur, être crucifié avec lui (Gal. 2:19, 4:19) ou se mettre du côté des bourreaux, et renouveler leur mise à mort." See also S. Verhey, O.F.M., "Franciscus' opvatting over de zonde," in *Sint Franc.* 4 (1958):216-42, 225ff.

his own personal shortcomings. And so the basis for any glorying lies not in human achievement. The power and glory of God are manifested most clearly through our fellowship with the sufferings endured by the crucified Savior.<sup>84</sup>

Jesus was a model for Francis especially in love for one's enemies: "Let us pay attention, all [my] brothers, to what the Lord says: Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you (Matt. 5:44), for our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose footprints we must follow (see 1 Pet. 2:21), called His betrayer 'friend' (see Matt. 26:50) and gave Himself willingly to those who crucified Him."<sup>85</sup>

Francis had two scenes from the passion in mind: Jesus' treatment of the traitor Judas whom He greets with the tender name of friend, even though He is well aware of his horrible intention, and the scene where Christ freely hands Himself over to His executioners, even though He could escape them by a single word of His almighty power. From the overall obligation to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, Francis deduces the duty of his brothers to love their enemies as friends even though the latter are prepared to afflict them with every kind of insult and suffering, and even death itself. Doing this, they will help them to attain eternal life.

Francis does not depict the seizure of Jesus in all its details. We might have expected, for example, some mention of the traitor's kiss. He utilizes this passage of the passion story not to immerse himself affectively in the event but to establish and shed light on a particular virtue—love of one's enemy.

The manifestations of Francis's devotion to the passion considered thus far are surprising for their little emphasis on historical or emotional elements. In the texts we have examined Francis seems to be more concerned with the Savior's interior experience of suffering and love. On the other hand he outlines with bold strokes the claims the passion of Christ has on our lives as followers of the cross.

Will a study of the Poverello's most extensive prayer, the *Office of the Passion*, lead us to confirm or to modify these provisional conclusions?

84. See C. Spicq in L. Pirot and A. Clamer, *La Sainte bible*, vol. 11 (Paris, 1948), pp. 390, 392ff. See also R. Bultmann in G. Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum NT*, vol. 3, 646–56, especially 650. See Ambrosiaster's explanation in "Commentarium in epist. II ad Corinth.," *PL* 17, 349b, and "Glossa ordinaria," *PL* 114, 568cd. To restrict Francis's meaning to illness alone is too narrow for the whole context. See Andresen, *Franz v. Assisi und seine Krankheiten*, p. 44: "If there is any glory in the following of Christ, it is to be found only in illness." See n. 80 above.

85. *RegNB* XXII. See Esser, *Die Lehre von der Selbsterleugnung*, p. 163.

## Part 2

### The Passion of Christ as Seen in St. Francis's *Office of the Passion*

Since this devotional Office is more than a meditation on the sufferings of Christ, we cannot include its whole compass in one essay.<sup>86</sup> Our goal will be limited to an analysis of the liturgical hours which treat exclusively of the passion in their relationship to the mystery of the Redemption. To establish an adequate base for our investigation, we must first of all determine the origins and purpose of the prayer. In this way we hope to delineate its essential characteristics more accurately.

#### A. Historical Antecedents of the *Office of the Passion*

Francis's *Office of the Passion* is not unique in the history of Christian spirituality. It is one link in a long chain.<sup>87</sup> A trend toward the composition of supplementary Offices can be discerned from the time of Benedict of Aniane's efforts to reform monasticism in the year 817. An enlarged *Liber Precum* ("Book of Prayers") grew up side by side with the *Psalterium* ("Psalter").<sup>88</sup> Alcuin (d. 804) had already composed some private Offices based on the text of the Psalter for the use of literate lay people. In the course of the thirteenth century these Offices gradually lost their dependency on the Psalter and evolved into the so-called *Book of Hours* (*Livres d'Heures, Prymers, Libri d'ore*) which were more adapted to the devotional tastes of the laity.<sup>89</sup>

The private *Office of the Passion* formed part of this proliferation of devotional texts. We hear it mentioned for the first time in the life of St. Ulric of Augsburg (d. 973), written by the provost Gerhard, who lived toward the close of the tenth century. The biographer mentions that the saint was accustomed to recite "one Office in honor of the Blessed Virgin..., another of the Holy Cross, in addition to the canonical hours."<sup>90</sup> Somewhat later the monk Aelsin of Newminster composed an *Officium S. Crucis* ("*Office of the Holy Cross*") for Abbot Aelfwin.<sup>91</sup> So

86. Other aspects of his prayer life are thoroughly discussed in the article *Die Stellung Christi im Gebet des hl. Franziskus*.

87. For the following, see J. Stadlhuber, "Das Laienstundengebet vom Leiden Christi in seinem mittelalterlichen Fortleben," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.*, 72 (1950): 282-325.

88. See U. Berlière, O.S.B., *L'ascèse bénédictine des origines à la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1927), pp. 47-50. See also Stadlhuber, "Laienstundengebet," pp. 283, 285-86.

89. Stadlhuber, "Laienstundengebet," pp. 291ff. For Alcuin see pp. 283-84.

90. *Vita S. Udalrici, ep et conf.*, c. 2, no. 14: *Acta Sanctorum Julii II*, 101b, or *Mon. Ger. Hist. Script.*, vol. 4, p. 389, lines 39-40. See also Stadlhuber, "Laienstundengebet," pp. 287ff.

91. S. Bäumer, O.S.B. and R. Biron, O.S.B., *Histoire du bréviaire*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1905), p. 38, n. 2. Unfortunately we cannot be sure if the reference is to Aelfwig (Elfwig,

far as we know, these texts have not survived, and it is difficult to imagine what their content and structure might have been. V. Leroquais assures us that toward the end of the twelfth century and especially in the course of the thirteenth, the Psalter took on new elements in northern France, Belgium, England and in the Rhenish provinces. In addition to new prayer formulas, an *Office of the Passion* was sometimes added.<sup>92</sup> Two variations of text must be distinguished, at least for the *Book of Hours*: the *Parvus Ordo de Cruce* ("Little Office of the Cross"), which consisted of only one hymn and oration, and the *Ordo magnus de Cruce* ("Large Office of the Cross"), sometimes called the *Officium sanctissimae Passionis Domini nostri Jesu Christi* ("Office of the Most Holy Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ"), which had three lessons. Our knowledge of these Offices is limited to a sketch of their external structure. So far we have not been able to determine their contents or their historical evolution.<sup>93</sup>

### B. Essential Characteristics

The first question to be settled about Francis's *Office of the Passion* is its title—Was it given by the author himself? The surviving documents bear no title at all. Marianus of Florence (d. 1523) tried to supply one: *Officium in honorem Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* ("Office in Honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ").<sup>94</sup> The wording *Officium Passionis* ("Office of the Passion") has been favored since Luke Wadding's edition.<sup>95</sup> Others feel that this heading does not do justice to its contents. Hilarin Felder, for one, maintains that strictly speaking it is an Office of Christ, not just of His passion.<sup>96</sup> L. Bracaloni goes so far as to suggest that the title

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Always), Abbot of Newminster (d. 1066). It would appear that the same name is erroneously mentioned twice in the list of abbots. See A. Noyon, in *Dict. Hist. Eccl.*, I, 651a.

92. V. Leroquais, *Les bréviaires manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*, I (Paris, 1934), p. X; ders., *Les psautiers manuscrits latins des bibl. publ. de Fr.* I-II (Macon, 1940-41). A number of manuscripts have the *Office of the Cross*, but none of them dates back to the time of St. Francis. See Index, vol. 2, s.vv. Croix, Cruz, and Passio Domini.
93. See esp. Leroquais, *Les livres d'Heures manuscrits de la bibliothèque nationale*, I (Paris, 1927), pp. 25-26. Apart from a few references, it lacks devotional or historical perspective. See H. Leclercq, O.S.B., *Dict. Arch. Liturg.*, s.v. "Office divin." Stadlhuber, in "Laienstundengebet," pp. 296-98, treats of a later period. We were not able to consult Ph. Schmitt, O.S.B., "Livres d'heures et usages bénédictins," in *Rev. Liturg. Monast.*, 13 (1927-28):309-21.
94. In a lost work by Marianus Florentinus, *Fasciculus chronicarum Ordinis Minorum*, bk. I, quoted in *Op.*, p. VIII.
95. "Officium Passionis Dominicae," *B. Patris Francisci Assisiatis Opuscula* (Antwerp, 1623), p. 380. See also J. de La Haye, O.F.M. (d. 1661), *S. Francisci Assisiatis ... nec non S. Antonii Paduani ... opera omnia* (Paris, 1641), p. 51; *Op.* p. 126, "Officium Passionis Domini." Also in H. Boehmer, *Analekten zur Geschichte des Franziskus von Assisi* (Tübingen-Leipzig, 1904), p. 107.

*Office of the Passion* originally designated the first part and was later mistakenly applied to the entire Office. He writes that "it could be described as an appendix to the *Officium B. Mariae quinque per anni tempora* ("Office of the Blessed Mary for five times of the year")."<sup>97</sup> J. Cambell also rejects the traditional title and opts for *L'Office de S. François* ("The Office of St. Francis").<sup>98</sup>

We cannot lightly dismiss the position taken by these writers that the Office encompasses more than the mystery of the passion. The solution to the problem, however, must be found above all in the purpose of the writer. The above-mentioned authors restrict the opening heading<sup>99</sup> to the first part of the Office and seem to overlook the fact that the following rubrics unquestionably refer to the Office in its entirety.<sup>100</sup> We must also keep in mind what St. Clare's biographer records: "She learned the *Office of the Cross* just as Francis, that lover of the cross, composed it and often prayed it with the same love."<sup>101</sup> If in fact the *Office of the Cross* is the same as the *Office of the Passion*, which is very probable,<sup>102</sup> there can be no doubt as to Francis's intention. Internal evidence indicates that the first portion spans the greater part of the liturgical year, the period from the octave of the Epiphany to Easter, and from the octave of Pentecost to Advent, with the exception of Sundays and feast days for which a special Office is provided.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, an unmistakable reference to the mystery of the passion is found in Matins for Easter and even more clearly in the Christmas psalm. In the Easter Office, the hours from Prime to Vespers inclusively are taken unchanged from the part devoted to the passion.<sup>104</sup>

96. Felder, *Ideale*, p. 401.

97. Bracaloni, "L'Ufficio composto da S. Francesco d'Assisi," in *Studi Franc.*, ser. 3, 12 (1940):251-65, esp. p. 253.

98. Cambell, *Les écrits devant la critique*, p. 232, in an addition to the rubric "Si quis voluerit dicere hoc officium b. Francisci." Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. 122 (*Op.*, p. 148) omits it without good reason.

99. "Incipiunt psalmi, quos ordinavit beatissimus pater noster Franciscus ad reverentiam et memoriam et laudem Passionis Domini," *Op.*, p. 126. We must assume that Francis's original intention is reflected in later rubrics.

100. "Et nota, quod sic dicebat istud officium beatus Franciscus: Primo dicebat orationem, quam nos docuit Dominus et Magister..." p. 126. The opposing viewpoint can always bring up the argument that in the introductory note to the third schema for Sundays and feast days the "psalmi ... Passionis" of the first part are clearly distinguished from the "alii psalmi" (p. 140).

101. *LegCl* 30. [An English translation of the *Legend of Saint Clare* can be found in *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., (New York-Mahwah, 1988). See p. 219.—Translator].

102. Bracaloni, *ufficio*, p. 252, defends the identity of the two Offices: "E certamente il Serafico non può aver composto più di un Ufficio analogo. Ma probabilmente non fu lui a dargli il titolo." Cambell, *Les écrits*, pp. 232-40, does not take the text into consideration.

103. *Op.*, p. 137.



Consequently we are on the right track when we trace the original inspiration of the Office to the mystery of the passion. Francis's choice of proper prayers for the great feasts of the church year evidence his authentic liturgical spirit.<sup>105</sup>

### C. Structure

The way is now open to show the connection of Francis's *Office of the Passion* with what we know of its antecedents. In its overall structure it continues the trend of paraphrasing liturgical texts, a practice which dates back to the Carolingian era. In the present state of research its relationship to the "Little" and the "Large" *Offices of the Cross* can be discussed only in terms of structure<sup>106</sup> which appears to be modeled on the smaller (*parvus*) *Office of the Cross*. Like it, the hours of Francis's Office are composed of an antiphon, which also functions as an oration, and a loosely structured prayer. An adapted version of the psalm takes the place of the hymn. L. Bracaloni points out that we can detect a Marian note in the Office from the fact that the antiphon and oration are replaced by the prayer "Holy Mary." This detail shows that Francis's *Office of the Passion* had a spiritual and temporal affinity with the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>107</sup>

### D. Sufferings of Jesus

After this short historical outline we come to the text of the *Office of the Passion*. The first object of our attention will be the opening section, which was composed specifically for Passiontide.<sup>108</sup>

104. *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 148; also pp. 140, 141, 144, 146. We can only assume that Bracaloni was guilty of an oversight when he wrote in *Ufficio*, p. 254, n. 4: "Il ricordo della Passione si deve riferirsi solo a questa prima parte..., assegnata ai tre giorni della Settimana Santa."

105. Bracaloni, in *ufficio*, p. 253, n. 3, appropriately quotes F. De Sessevalle, *Histoire générale de l'Ordre de S. François*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1935), p. 252: "...Il nous donne [Franziskus] la preuve que le cycle de l'année chrétienne influait réellement sur sa piété et qu'il n'était pas perpétuellement au pied de la croix." We must remember that for Alcuin and the church fathers the word *passio* embraced the totality of the Redemption, including the Resurrection. See H.B. Meyer, "Alkuin zwischen Antike und MA," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.*, 81 (1959), p. 343. It was in this broad sense of the word, while accenting the mystery of the passion, that Francis used the title *Officium Passionis*.

106. For a thoroughgoing study of their historical development we would have to consult medieval liturgical manuscripts, a task which lies beyond our scope.

107. *Santa Maria* and the corresponding rubric: *Op.*, pp. 128, 126; Bracaloni, *Ufficio*, p. 253. But we cannot write off the special character of the *Office of the Passion*, as he does. He writes: "Come un prolungamento di altro Ufficio canonico, e particolarmente dell'Officium de Santa Maria." The internal connection of the two Offices is clearly shown in their early history (see A, above). The *Office of the Cross* does not always occupy the same place in the various *Books of Hours*. See Leroquais, *Les livres d'Heures*, pp. 25-26.

108. See n. 86 above.

Francis opens the Office with compline for Holy Thursday. The rubricist indicates the reason: "For on that night our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed and taken captive."<sup>109</sup> A selection of psalm verses leads him to the Mount of Olives and lets him listen to Jesus, sorrowful unto death, pleading with His Father: "God ... You have placed my tears in Your sight (Ps. 55:8-9)."<sup>110</sup> All my enemies were planning evil [things] against me (Ps. 40:8a) and they have taken counsel together (Ps. 70:10c). They repaid me evil for You, and hatred for my love (Ps. 108:5). In return for my love they slandered me, but I kept praying (Ps. 108:4): *Mi Pater sancte, Rex caeli et terrae* [F]<sup>111</sup> ne discesseris a me, quoniam tribulatio proxima est, et [R] non est qui adiuvet" (*My holy Father, King of heaven and earth* [F], do not leave me, since trouble is near and [R] there is no one to help.—Ps. 21:12). With his eyes raised to his ultimate vindication (Ps. 55:10) he continues: "Amici mei et proximi mei adversum me appropinquaverunt et steterunt, et proximi mei [R] de longe steterunt" (*My friends and my neighbors* [R] have drawn near and have stood against me, and those who were close to me have stayed far away.—Ps. 37:12).<sup>112</sup> "You have driven my acquaintances far from me; they have made me an abomination to them. I have been handed over (*traditus!*) and have not fled! (Ps. 87:9). *Pater sancte* [F], ne elongaveris

109. *Op.*, p. 126. See Bracaloni, *Ufficio*, pp. 254-55, n. 6, where he states without any proof that the custom of counting the Office from Vespers to Vespers was not yet common in Francis's time. See C. Durandus (d. 1296), *Rationale divinarum officiorum*, bk. 5, chap. 3, no. 1 (Neapel, 1859), p. 344, where the Office is assumed to begin with Vespers, although the author for reasons of his own starts with the nocturns. In the early Roman liturgy the hours began with Matins and Lauds. See V. Raffa, F.D.P., "Più antichi i primi o i secondi Vespri?", in *Eph. Liturg.*, 69 (1955):313-35.
110. We are giving the meaning of the verses and the corresponding scriptural references. We agree with T. Sauser, O.F.M., in his interpretation of the events in the Garden of Olives, "Das 'Officium de passione Domini', eine Gebetsperle des hl. Vaters Franziskus," in *Spiritus et Vita*, 5 (1925), p. 119, and Cambell, *Les écrits*, p. 237: "Angoisse de Jésus au jardin devant l'attitude de ses ennemis et celle de ses amis." Bracaloni, *Ufficio*, p. 255, speaks in general terms: "Un doloroso appello al Padre, da parte del Giusto insidiato."
111. *Op.*, p. 127. The letter "F" after words in italics indicates Francis's contribution to the text. But the appeal to the Father is taken from Scripture. Cambell, *Les écrits*, p. 237, refers to Matt. 26:39-42; John 17:11; Luke 10:21.
112. The letter "R" after words in italics indicates the influence of the *Psalterium Romanum*. This verse is a typical example of the interplay of the *Psalterium Gallicanum* and the *Psalterium Romanum*. Here and in the following we rely on R. Weber, O.S.B., *Le Psautier Romain et les autres anciens Psautiers latins*. Edition critique (Vatican City, 1953). Francis's switching from one version to the other is solid proof that he was quoting from memory, a practice not uncommon in the Middle Ages. Even in the time of the fathers of the church it was taken for granted that a monk knew the Psalter by heart. See St. Hilpisch, O.S.B., "Der Psalmenvortrag nach der Regula Benedicti," in *Stud. Mitt. Gesch. Ben. Ord.*, 59 (1941-42):105-15, esp. p. 115. See also Th. Klauser, "Auswendiglernen," in *Reall. Antike Christentum*, vol. 1, 1030-39.

auxilium tuum a me [R]. Deus meus, ad *auxilium meum respice* [R] (*Holy Father* [F] [John 17:11], do not remove Your help from me [R] (Ps. 21:20); my God, look to my assistance" [R] (Ps. 70:12).<sup>113</sup>

This psalm gives us a deeper insight into Francis's style of meditation. He lets the various events that happened in the Garden of Olives pass before his mind. We are amazed at the skill with which he is able to weave an ongoing narrative out of disparate psalm texts. We hear Jesus weep. We are there when He is condemned by the Sanhedrin. We share His dreadful loneliness as He is abandoned by those near and dear to Him. We look on while the traitor kisses Him and the soldiers seize Him.

Yet there is something more profound. Francis reveals a marvelous insight into the spiritual sufferings of the Savior, His unspeakable disappointment and grief, His agonizing vision of His coming passion and His unfailing trust in the support of His heavenly Father.

Francis was not the first to associate the hour of Compline with the arrest of Jesus. Abbot Rupert of Deutz (d. 1128) wrote: "Compline reminds us of that part of the Lord's passion, when after Judas's departure He began to fear and grow weary" (Mark 14:34).<sup>114</sup>

The rubricist does not offer us a definite introduction to Matins. And the psalm itself does not contain any verse evocative of a special scene from the passion. T. Sauser observes: "We have some inkling of the feelings of the Savior when the soldiers seized Him and dragged Him off to the court of the high priest."<sup>115</sup> J. Cambell, who seems to be unaware of Sauser's work, favors the more common title: "Prayer of Jesus When He Was Insulted by Some and Abandoned by Others."<sup>116</sup> Without imposing our personal interpretation on Francis, we can dis-

113. See the two preceding notes.

114. Rupert of Deutz, O.S.B., "De divinis officiis," I, 1, c. 7, *PL* 170, 15c. He generally takes a middle of the road position. He sees the reference to Christ's Resurrection as an applied meaning of the text. See Stadlhuber, *Laienstundengebet*, p.290. For a different, earlier view: *ibid.*, p. 289. For a later period, pp. 294, 300-1, 304 n. 136. But for Peter Damian (*Op.*, p. 10: "De horis canonicis," c. 5, *PL* 145, 227ab) Compline, no less than Prime, celebrates the mystery of the most blessed Trinity. Durandus speaks in the same way as Francis: *Rationale* bk. 5, chap. 10., no. 1, 377, while St. Bonaventure in *De sex alis Seraphim*, chap. 7, no. 6, and *Officium de Passioni Domini*, vol. 8, pp. 149a, 157b and 158b refers only to Christ's burial. See also J. Ryan, S.J., *Irish Monasticism. Origins and Early Development* (Dublin-Cork, 1931), p. 336, and the article by A. Nobels, "Le symbolisme liturgique dans les écrits du m.á.," in *Ann. Univ. Cath. Louvain*, 75 (1911), pp. 452-63, esp. 454-58. H. L'Abbé G. Payen has a short study which relies principally on Rupert of Deutz.

115. Sauser, *Officium de passione*, pp. 119-20.

116. Cambell, *Les écrits*, p. 237. For a broader treatment see Bracaloni, *Ufficio*, p. 256. As in Compline (see n. 109) "e con più pressante richiesta di aiuto nell'aggravarsi del pericolo mortale."

cern a certain appropriateness in the psalm as a night or early morning prayer. Francis's reasoning seems to correspond with Durandus's interpretation of nocturns in the ordinary time of the church year, and Bonaventure's for the Lauds of the *Office of the Passion*: "because it was in this night that Christ was seized and mocked by the Jews."<sup>117</sup>

This explanation finds support in more than one verse. At the outset, Francis hears the Savior cry out in the night to His Father for help: "Lord, God of my salvation, I cry to You *by* [R] day and by night" (Ps. 87:2). We are made aware of Jesus' union with the Father as expressed in the words of Psalm 21:10-12.<sup>118</sup> We are present that night in the house of the high priest as Jesus is mocked by the guards (Luke 22:63-65): "You know My disgrace, and My confusion, and My shame and My ignominy" (Ps. 68:20).<sup>119</sup> The historical reference is even clearer in the verse: "O God, the wicked have risen against Me, and they have sought My life in the assembly of the mighty, and they have not placed You in their sight" (Ps. 85:14).<sup>120</sup> A godless mob—significantly the psalm calls it a *synagoga*—attacks its helpless victim. Yet even in these straits Jesus submits His will unconditionally to the Father: "*You are My most holy Father* [F], my King and My God" (Ps. 5:3).<sup>121</sup>

Some may regret that the saint did not delineate more fully the historical details of the passion. But Francis is not interested in a photographic portrayal of the Gospel scenes, or in apocryphal stories. He goes straight to the heart of the mystery, to Jesus' obedient submission to His Father.

It is perhaps more difficult to find a connection in Prime with the sufferings of Christ. J. Cambell sees only "a morning meditation." L. Bracaloni finds "an appeal to divine mercy ... joined to a grateful remembrance of benefits received." Cambell refers to the rubric attached to the psalm: "Note that the above-mentioned psalm is always said at Prime." As a matter of fact it occupies this place on all Sundays

117. Durandus, *Rationale*, bk. 5, chap 3, no. 2, p. 345; Bonaventure, *Officium Passionis* (Laudes), vol. 8, p. 154b: "Domine Jesu Christe, qui hora matutina pro salute humani generis tradi, capi, ligari, flagellari, colaphis caedi et conspui voluisti...." Francis joins matins and lauds. Read also the remarkable study by Anselm der Schotte [von Dryburgh], O. Praem. Later, O. Carth. (d. 1212/3), "Liber de Ordine, habitu et professione Canonicorum O. Praem.," sermo 9, no. 8: *PL* 198, 526c. See also F. Petit, *La Spiritualité des Prémontrés aux XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1947), pp. 221-22; Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, p. 336. Peter Damian, "De horis canonicis," chap. 2, *PL* 145, 223-24, finds the Parousia in Matins. We must note, however, that with the exception of St. Bonaventure, the writers mentioned above are talking about the Office of the universal church.

118. *Op.*, p. 129. For the meaning of R, see n. 112 above.

119. *Ibid.*

120. *Op.*, p. 129.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 130. See also *2EpFid* 88: "Posuit tamen voluntatem suam in voluntate Patris...." For the meaning of F, see n. 111 above.

and feasts with the exception of the Christmas cycle.<sup>122</sup> This broader view may have determined the selection of the better-known verses. T. Sauser does not appear to be aware of this problem. He detects on the one hand the unjust judgment brought about by the testimony of false witnesses, and on the other hand Christ's praise of God who will bring to naught the designs of His enemies and punish His calumniators.<sup>123</sup> In Francis's time it was common to associate Prime with Pilate's condemnation of Jesus. Among others, Rupert of Deutz writes: "Our Lord, already spat upon, loaded with insults, and shackled for our sakes, stood before Pilate" (Matt. 27:11-31). The thought is repeated by Bonaventure and Durandus, and is found in many editions of the *Book of Hours*.<sup>124</sup>

We must realize that the text, with the exception of half of a verse and a short personal addition, is taken entirely from Psalm 5:6. In its mystical sense, which certainly occupied Francis's mind, the Savior expresses His unshaken trust in the powerful protection of His Father, and even as He calls upon Him He is certain that He will be heard. He speaks of His passion in the past tense. He recalls His victory over the craft of His enemies, and is moved to a song of praise: "I will cry to *My most holy Father* [F], the most high, to the Lord, Who has done good to Me" (Ps. 56:3). "God has sent His mercy (*manum*) [R] and His truth. He has *snatched My life* [R] (Ps. 56:4-5) from the strongest of My enemies and from those who hated Me, since they were *too strong* [R] for Me" (Ps. 17:18).<sup>125</sup>

We can understand why the saint chose this psalm<sup>126</sup> for Passiontide and for other feasts of the year. During Holy Week Francis's thoughts

122. Cambell, *Les écrits*, p. 237; Bracaloni, *Ufficio*, p. 256, n. 1. See also Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. 111. *Op.* p. 131 omits the addition.

123. Sauser, *Officium de passione*, p. 120.

124. Rupert of Deutz, "De divinis officiis," I, c. 2, *PL* 170, 13b. Anselm der Schotte, "Liber de Ordine ... O. Praem.," sermo 9, no. 8, *PL* 198, 526cd, brings together a number of events of the passion under *mane* (see also n. 117 above). Bonaventure, *De sex alis Seraphim*, chap. 7, no. 6, vol. 8, p. 149a. See also *Officium Passionis*, 154-55; Durandus, *Rationale*, bk. 5, chap. 5, no. 1, p. 363. Concerning the *Book of Hours*, see Stadlhuber, "Laienstundengebet," pp. 290, 294, 300 n. 108. See also p. 298 n. 100, p. 299 n. 106.

125. For the meaning of F and R, see nn. 111-12 above. *Manum* represents mercy in Ps. 56:4. For a prototype of evangelical conversion see Ps. 54:21. Here is another striking example of Francis's habit of quoting from memory. Because of the similarity of the opening words of Psalm 56:4 and Psalm 17:17, he unwittingly slips into the second one but then returns to Psalm 56. This peculiarity is a good argument for the authenticity of the work. Any writer who was forging the saint's authorship would certainly have been more consistent in quoting the psalms.

126. *Op.*, p. 130. The text of the Vulgate and the more recent one of the Pontifical Institute differ in many respects. Of course we must use the text that was available to St. Francis. For the meaning of his contemporary text see B. Peter Morant [von Oberbüren], O.F.M.Cap., *Das Psalmengebet* (Schwyz, 1948), pp. 651-55;

are focused on the trust of the suffering Savior. Despite the enormity of human malice and ingratitude, He looks forward to His victorious Resurrection and casts Himself into the arms of His Father. The psalm's reference to a "snare" and "pitfall" conjures up the perjured witnesses and the foregone decision of the Sanhedrin to condemn Him to death, though we cannot prove that all this was in the mind of Francis.

At first glance we seem to find the same problem with Terce as with Prime. Thus J. Cambell sees in the psalm only "the anguish of a totally crushed man."<sup>127</sup> One might well ask whether this idea exhausts its content. Since Francis lived amid the religious movements of his time, not in some isolated hermitage, a glance into the preceding and contemporary scenes is important. The author of *De Virginitate*, attributed to St. Athanasius, relates this hour to the passion of Christ. The association is repeated in the following centuries and concentrates on the condemnation by Pilate and the Crucifixion.<sup>128</sup> Closer to St. Francis's time, Rupert of Deutz linked Terce with the crowning with thorns and the crucifixion. Other historical parallels can be found in St. Peter Damian (d. 1072). Like St. Augustine, he solves the problem of the chronological discrepancies between Mark 15:25, Matthew 27:45, and Luke 23 as follows: "Mark states that the Lord was crucified by the tongues of the Jews at the third hour. The other evangelists say that He was fastened to the cross with nails at the sixth hour."<sup>129</sup>

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G. Castellino, S.D.B., *Libro dei Salmi* (Turin, 1955), pp. 153-62. For an interpretation of the text of the Vulgate, see St. Augustine, "Enarr. in Ps. 56," Corp. Christ. 39, 693-707; Ps.-Beda, "In Ps. Librum exegesis," PL 93, 779-82 (stammt jedenfalls von Manegold von Lautenbach, Can. A [d. c. 1103]. See also H. Weisweiler, S.J., in *Biblica*, 18 (1937), pp. 197-204).

127. Cambell, *Les écrits*, p. 237; Bracaloni in his *Ufficio*, p. 256, employs general terms: "Un lamento con implorazioni per le oppressioni dei peccatori contro il Giusto."
128. See Stadlhuber, "Das Stundengebet der Laien im christlichen Altertum," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.*, 71 (1949):177-83. Hippolytus (d. 235) must be reckoned as the first reliable witness (idem, p. 144). See also M. Aubineau, S., "Les écrits de S. Athanase sur la virginité," in *Rev. Asc. Myst.*, 31 (1955):140-73. For the medieval period, see Stadlhuber, "Laienstundengebet," pp. 289-90, 294, 299 n. 106, 300 nn. 107-8, 304 n. 136 u.Ö. See also the following notes.
129. Peter Damian, "De horis canonicis," c. 3, PL 145, 225bc. He depends on St. Augustine's text, "Enarr. in Ps. 63," 4: Corp. Christ., 39, 810: "Sed ille [Pilatus] dixit in eum sententiam, et iussit eum crucifigi, et quasi ipse occidit; et vos, o Judaei, occidistis. Unde occidistis? Gladio linguae...."—Anselm der Schotte, "Liber de Ordine ... O. Praem.," sermo 9, no. 8, PL 198, 526d: "Hora vero tertia linguis Judaeorum crucifixus est; hora tertia a Pilato flagellatus est; hora tertia corona a militibus spinea coronatus est, hora tertia coccinea veste indutus et in derisum adoratus est" (see n. 117). See also Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, p. 336; Rupert of Deutz, "De divinis officiis," I, 1, c. 3, PL 170, 13-14; Bonaventure, *De sex alis Seraphim*, chap. 7, no. 6, vol. 8, p. 194a (Geisselung); *Off. Pass.*, 155ab (Kreuzweg). Durandus, *Rationale*, bk. 5, chap. 3, no. 1, 369, combines the interpretations of Peter Damian and Augustine.

For T. Sauser, Terce in Francis's Office recalls the role played by the Roman procurator and the Jews' insistent demand for the death penalty.<sup>130</sup> His view deserves some attention. After Christ complained in the words of Psalm 55:2-3 that His enemies have trampled Him down, He continues: "All My enemies have been thinking evil things against Me; they set an evil plan against Me" (Ps. 40:8, 9).

The psalmist's expressions *verbum iniquum* ("evil word") and *consilium* ("an evil plan"—Ps. 70:10) can easily be referred to the death sentence wrung from Pilate. Verses from Ps. 21:8 and 30:12 follow and speak of mockery and derision (*deriserunt, abiectio, opprobrium*).

In any case, Terce has the physical and moral sufferings of the Savior in mind as He offers them to His heavenly Father. The psalm ends on a note of confidence: "*O holy Father* [F] (John 17:11), do not keep your help from Me, but look to My defense" (Ps. 21:20).<sup>131</sup>

Sext, since it coincided with the hour of the Savior's Crucifixion, already held a special significance for ecclesiastical writers.<sup>132</sup> Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235) explains the origin of Sext by the fact that the Savior hung upon the cross at the sixth hour.<sup>133</sup> Abbot Rupert of Deutz could write several centuries later: "At the sixth hour, Christ the Lord was raised on the cross for our sakes, that He might draw all things to Himself" (see John 12:32).<sup>134</sup>

Both Bracaloni and Cambell are very cautious in their interpretation of the psalms used for Sext. Bracaloni thinks that Francis "bemoans the evil the Just One suffers in return for the good He did, and He asks His Father for help." Cambell sees only "anguish at the prospect of His sufferings." T. Sauser on the other hand believes that the saint is following the way of the cross.<sup>135</sup> None of the foregoing explanations seem to do justice to the text.

130. Sauser, *Officium de passione*, pp. 120-21.

131. *Op.*, p. 132; Sauser, *Officium de passione*, pp. 120-21. For F see n. 111 above. In the psalm the four passages from Psalm 21 (the classical prophetic psalm of the passion) occupy a prominent place. For a resumé of the interpretation of the church fathers, see J. Daniélou, S.J., "Le psaume 21 dans la catéchèse patristique," in *La Maison-Dieu*, no. 49 (1957):17-34. For individual passages, see Castellino, *Libro dei Salmi*, pp. 68-76.

132. See n. 128 above.

133. Stadlhuber, *Stundengebet im Altertum*, p. 144, 154, 156, 176-83. For a further development see the work of the same author mentioned in n. 128.

134. Rupert of Deutz, "De divinis officiis," I, 1, c. 4, *PL* 170, 14a. See also Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, p. 336; Peter Damian, "De horis canonicis," c. 3, *PL* 145, 225b: "In patibulo crucis est pro omnium salute suspensus." See also Anselm der Schotte, "Liber de Ordine ... O. Praem.," sermo 9, no. 8, *PL* 198, 526d: "Hora vero sexta, ipse Sacerdos et hostia, in ligno elevatus est et clavis in ea affixus est." See also Bonaventure, *De sex alis Seraphim*, chap. 7, no. 6, vol. 8, p. 149a; *Off. Pass.*, 155-56; Durandus, *Rationale*, bk. 5, chap. 7, no. 1, 370.

135. Bracaloni, *Ufficio*, p. 256. The author misses the point of the psalm. Francis is not



In the first part, Francis quotes Psalm 141:2-5. Apart from the fact that he used this psalm on his own deathbed, the words "My spirit failed me" (Ps. 141:4) are an unmistakable allusion to the death agony of the Savior.<sup>136</sup> All the other verses, too, clearly refer to one suffering unspeakable agony on the cross. The Redeemer cries out in a loud voice to the Father (Ps. 141:2-3). His enemies spread the snare before His feet. The Crucified knows that He has been abandoned by all (Ps. 141:4, 5; 68:9). "Because of you I have sustained abuse, while confusion covers My face" (Ps. 68:8).<sup>137</sup> Francis has the Man of Sorrows continue: "Holy Father [F] (John 17:11),<sup>138</sup> zeal for Your house has consumed Me" (Ps. 68:10). With a selection of verses from different psalms he sees Christ looking back on His sufferings: the scourging (*flagella*), the bloodthirsty enemies and persecutors, the false witnesses, the unjust sentence and above all, man's ingratitude. The Redeemer breaks out once more in a cry of absolute trust: "You are My most holy Father [F], My King and My God" (Ps. 5:3).<sup>139</sup>

None, too, very early borrowed its special character from the Gospel. According to the Synoptics, the Savior yielded up His spirit at the ninth hour (see Matt. 27:45-50). Hippolytus's Ordo has a liturgical hour to commemorate the death of Christ.<sup>140</sup> St. Peter Damian is citing an early Christian practice when he writes: "None, too, has its own claim to honor, for at that hour the Lord is said to have completed the mystery of His passion and yielded up His spirit."<sup>141</sup> Although the psalm for None in the *Office of the Passion*, like that of Compline, is rich in content, Bracaloni gives it only passing reference.<sup>142</sup> Cambell sums up the prayer under the general headings: "Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection." T. Sauser, too, sees the None psalm proclaiming at once the sufferings of the cross, the redemptive death of the Savior and His victory.<sup>143</sup>

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praying to the Father; he is listening to Christ praying to the Father. See Cambell, *Les écrits*, p. 237; Sauser, *Officium de passione*, p. 121.

136. *1 Cel* 109.

137. Esser and Hardick, *Schriften*, p. p. 177.

138. For the meaning of F see n. 111 above.

139. *Op.*, pp. 132-33. For the meaning of F see n. 111 above.

140. Stadlhuber, *Stundengebet im Altertum*, p. 144. Likewise St. Cyprian, 156; for Athanasius, 177; for the Middle Ages see Stadlhuber's second study as given in n. 128.

141. Peter Damian, "De horis canonicis," c. 3, *PL* 145, 225c. See also Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, p. 336; Rupert of Deutz, "De divinis officiis," I, 1, c. 5, *PL* 170, 14b; Anselm der Schotte, "Liber de Ordine ... O. Praem.," sermo 9, no. 8, *PL* 198, 526-27; Bonaventure, *De sex alis Seraphim*, chap. 7, no. 6, vol. 8, p. 149a; *Off. Pass.* 156ab; Durandus, *Rationale*, bk. 5, chap. 8, no. 1, 371.

142. "Si rappresentano gli odiosi trattamenti contro il Giusto..., e segue il suo appello al Padre, che lo esalterà re e giudice della terra" (Bracaloni, *Ufficio*, p. 256).

143. Cambell, *Les écrits*, p. 237; Sauser, *Officium de passione*, pp. 121-22.



An analysis of the liturgical hour itself reveals its significance.<sup>144</sup> The psalm borrows from Lamentations 1:12: "O all of you who pass along the way, look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow." Whose voice is this? Since Christ speaks in the first person of His death and Resurrection, the question can be answered with certainty: the dying Redeemer looks for sympathy. Francis thus closes this self-portrait of the Man of Sorrows with a number of verses from Psalm 21:14–19.

We present the thoughts of the hour as they occur: "Many dogs have surrounded me; a pack of evildoers has closed in on me. They have divided my garments among them, and for my tunic they have cast lots. They have pierced my hands and my feet. They have opened their mouth against me like a lion raging and roaring. All of my bones have been scattered, and my heart has become like melting wax. My tongue clings to my jaws, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." In a bold leap from Psalm 21:16 to Psalm 68:27, Francis speaks of Jesus' death: "*They have led me into the dust of death* [R], and they have added grief to my wounds."<sup>145</sup>

In this synthetic psalm Francis is not limiting himself to any one event of the passion. After the verse quoted above, Francis has the Lord enter a conversation with the soul: "*I have slept and have risen* [R], and my *most holy Father* [F] has received Me with glory" (Ps. 3:6; 72:24).<sup>146</sup> The saint goes beyond the passion. Although he intended the psalm itself for Good Friday, he transcends the historical details of Jesus' death and moves on to the vision of the glorified Christ in heaven.

At the close of the hour, Francis reverses the direction of his prayer. Up to now he has Christ speak to the soul in psalm verses, either in their original form or adapted to suit his purpose. Now the saint himself addresses the Lord in praise: "[He] *has redeemed* [F] the souls of His servants *with His very own most holy Blood* [F], and will not abandon all who hope in Him" (Ps. 33:23).<sup>147</sup> He then lifts up his gaze to the end of time and affirms with marvelous faith: "*We know, for* [F] He comes, *for* [R] He will come to *judge justice*" [F] (Ps. 95:12).<sup>148</sup>

144. *Op.*, pp. 134–35.

145. *Ibid.*, p. 134. For the meaning of R see n. 112 above. Instead of "deduxerunt," Psalm 121: 16 has "deduxisti."

146. *Op.*, p. 135. For the meaning of R and F, see nn. 111–12 above. Since the two parts of the verse are intertwined, it is difficult to determine the precise influence of the Roman Breviary, which, however, is certainly there.

147. *Op.*, p. 135. For the meaning of F and R see nn. 111–12 above. For "de proprio sanguine," see Heb. 9:12. The Parisian Psalter, Bibliothèque Nationale, Coislin 186, and the Ambrosian have "in eo" instead of "in eum." See R. Weber, *Psautier Romain*, 68b.

148. *Op.*, p. 135. For the meaning of F and R see n. 111–12 above. The repetition of the word *quoniam* is noteworthy, as is the emphatic future *veniet*, which is found only

We can devote less space to Vespers. We plan to discuss the individual details of this hour in another article.<sup>149</sup> Besides, the passion theme is not stressed in Vespers. Bracaloni calls this hour: "A canticle of joy, because God has so wonderfully wrought our redemption through Christ." Or as Cambell puts it more succinctly: "Rejoice! You have been redeemed!" T. Sauser is more explicit in relating the content of Vespers to the triumph of the risen Savior.<sup>150</sup>

Unrestrained joy breaks forth in the opening verse, even in the sorrowful season of Lent for which the Office was composed. "All you nations clap your hands.... Shout to God with a voice of gladness" (Ps. 46:2). Francis gives us the reason for such great joy: "The most holy Father of heaven, our King before all ages, has sent His beloved Son from on high, and has brought salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps. 73:12).<sup>151</sup> At this point in history the Lord effected our redemption through His death on the cross. The very thought of it releases a new wave of praise in the soul of Francis. Significantly he employs the same verse for all the hours of the Christmas Office.<sup>152</sup> Here, too, he does not stop with words and feelings. We are called to respond to Christ's death with our own willingness to bear the cross. "Offer up your bodies and take up His holy cross, and follow His most holy commands even to the end" (Luke 14:27; 1 Pet. 2:21).<sup>153</sup>

He adds a verse that deserves further consideration: "Let the whole earth tremble before His face. Say among the nations that the Lord has ruled from a tree" (*a ligno*—Ps. 95:9–10). The words *a ligno* are found in the second edition of the *Office of the Passion*.<sup>154</sup> The interpolation dates back to an early Christian copyist. It is not found in any authentic text of the Psalter. It appears for the first time in the Veronese

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in the Mozarabic Psalter of Alcalá (Madrid, Univ. Centr., 31), though of course Francis was not aware of this detail (Weber, *Psautier Romain*, p. 237b) *Terram* is replaced by *iustitiam*. For an evangelical prototype, see Ps. 74:3, 71:2.

149. In the article *Die christologischen Anschauungen des hl. Franziskus*.

150. Bracaloni, *Ufficio*, p. 256; Cambell, *Les écrits*, p. 237; Sauser, *Officium de passione*, p. 122.

151. *Op.*, pp. 135, 136: "Quia sanctissimus Pater de caelo [F], Rex noster, ante saecula [R] misit dilectum Filium suum de alto [F]: et [F] 'operatus est salutem [R] in medio terrae'" (Ps. 73:12). The personal additions of Francis are a form of poetic license. See Gal. 4:4; John 3:17; Eph. 1:6; Ps. 143:7. "Ante saecula" is also found in 1 Cor. 1:7. See Cambell, *Les écrits*, p. 237.

152. *Op.*, pp. 147–48. We hope to explain this psalm in an article on the "Christmas piety of St. Francis." Meanwhile, see our article "De Kerstviering van Greccio in het licht van haar tijd," in *Franc. Leven*, 40 (1957):163–77, esp. p. 170, n. 41; 41 (1958):21–27.

153. *Op.*, pp. 136, 148. See n. 111 above. Cambell cites the sources for the text in *Les écrits*, p. 237 an: 1 Cor. 6:15; Luke 14:27; Matt. 16:24. See also Matt. 10:22; 11:29; Luke 9:23; John 19:17.

154. Berlin, *Cod. theol. lat.* 196, f. 95r (12. Jh); Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. LXI, and p. 114 n. 1. The reading is not found in the famous *Cod. 338, Bibl. Com.*, Assisi.

Psalter and was later incorporated in a number of Latin versions including the Roman Psalter, which Francis himself certainly knew.<sup>155</sup> From the time of Justin Martyr (d. 165) a numbers of fathers of the church, including St. Augustine, defended the reading. The words *a ligno* found a permanent place in the liturgy in the well-known hymn *Vexilla Regis*, by Venantius Fortunatus (died shortly after 600).<sup>156</sup>

Internal and external evidence makes it highly probable that these words were used in Francis's *Office of the Passion*. They show that in the mind of the saint the royal dignity of Christ on the cross was linked with the ancient Christian tradition of joy over the *beata passio*.<sup>157</sup>

As an appendix for the feast of the Ascension, Francis adds a profession of faith in the mystery celebrated on that day, and the verse from None about awaiting Christ's coming.<sup>158</sup> Without being aware of it, the saint once more draws on earlier Christian sources. As early as St. Cyprian (d. 258), Vespers had as its motif the Second Coming of Christ. Peter Damian wrote so beautifully: "At the time of Vespers, the holy church of the elect is led to her spouse."<sup>159</sup>

155. H. Lesêtre, *Le Livre des Psaumes* (Paris, 1897), p. 460, and esp. A. Allgeier, *Die altlateinischen Psalterien* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1928), p. 108. Besides the Psalters already mentioned, it is found in the Milanese, Saint-Germain, Corbie, Chartres, the Mozarabic, in two Coptic translations, and in a Greek-Coptic fragment (B. Capelle, O.S.B., "Regnavit a ligno," in *Quest. Liturg. Paroiss.*, 7 (1922):92-95, esp. p. 93). It is superfluous to point out that Francis often made use of the *Psalterium Romanum*.
156. Justin, "Apologia," I, no. 41, and "Dial. cum Tryph.," no. 73. See D. Ruiz Bueno, *Padres apologistas griegos: Bibl. Aut. Crist.* (Madrid, 1954), pp. 227 and 433-34; Tertullian, "Adversus Judaeos," c. 10, no. 12: Corp. Christ., 2, 1378; Commodian, "Carmen apologeticum," v. 295, *CSEL* 15, 134; Augustine, "Enarr. in Ps. 95," no. 11, Corp. Christ. 39, 1350; Arnobius the Younger, "Commentarii in Ps.," *PL* 53, 463-64. *Op.*, p. 136-37, esp. p. 135. He did not introduce the interpolation into the text, but commented on it. See also Leo the Great, "Sermo 55 de Passione Domini," c. 1, *PL* 54, 324a; Cassiodor, "Expositio in Psalterium," *PL* 70, 680cd; Venantius, *Vexilla Regis*, in "Miscellanea," I.2, c. 7, *PL* 88, 95-96 (first draft); Gregory the Great, "In Ezech." I.1, hom. 6, no. 13, *PL* 76, 834c; "Glossa ordinaria, Liber Ps.," *PL* 113, 1005-6 has both readings. See also Peter Lombard, "In Ps. davidicos commentarii," *PL* 191, 882cd, has our reading: "Vel secundum aliam litteram." This reading was used in the *Commemoratio Crucis* up to the time of most recent change in the Breviary. In any case it was known in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Rome. See G.M. Tommasi, C.R. and A.F. Vezzosi, C.R., *Op. Om.*, vol. 4: *Responsorialia et antiphonaria Romanae Ecclesiae* (Rome, 1749), p. 100ab. See also Bonaventure, "Vitis mystica," chap. 18, no. 2, vol. 8, p. 183b, n. 8, where most of the aforementioned writers are mentioned. In his *Livre des Psaumes*, 460 ad 10. Lesêtre does not give credit to Lactantius.
157. See in the Canon of the Mass: "Unde et memores": Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia*, vol. 2 (Vienna, 1958), pp. 273-74. For early Christian attitudes see, for example, B.J. Leclercq, in R. Dolle, O.S.B., *Léon le Grand: Sermons*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1949), pp. 14-15.
158. *Op.*, pp. 136-37, esp. p. 135.
159. For Cyprian, see Stadlhuber, *Stundengebet im christlichen Altertum*, pp. 157, 183. See also Peter Damian, "De horis canonicis," c. 4, *PL* 145, 226b. For more on the

We can conclude, then, that the *Office of the Passion* is certainly not to be considered "a work with no great significance for an historical evaluation of the saint," as W. Goetz writes in his otherwise excellent study of the sources.<sup>160</sup> On the contrary, it affords us a profound insight into Francis's thought—something very important for our understanding of his devotion to the passion.

The hours of the *Office of the Passion of Christ* reaffirm what is said in the other writings. His profound insight into the Savior's spirit of sacrifice and obedience to the heavenly Father is to be found in all his works about the passion.<sup>161</sup> Despite the occasional affective tone of Francis's meditations, we cannot find any emotional outbursts or detailed delineations of individual events. It is easy to detect here how he was influenced by the unadorned narrative of the evangelists and the austere simplicity of the Roman liturgy. And, like the rest of his writings, the *Office of the Passion* teaches us our obligation to carry the cross.

The *Office of the Passion* goes beyond the scope of his other writings in some respects. Thus Francis manifests an awareness of the *beata passio* as well as of the *passio dolorosa*. His unbounded joy over the Savior's victory always accompanies his deep compassion for the Man of Sorrows. Finally, we should point out that Francis was not unaware of the role of Christ as King reigning from the throne of the cross. In the third part of this study we shall investigate whether the biographer's picture of the saint is in accord with Francis's devotion to the passion as found in Francis's writings.

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Last Supper, see Rupert of Deutz, "De divinis officiis," I. 1, c. 6, *PL* 170, 15a; Anselm der Schotte, "Liber de Ordine ... O. Praem.," sermo 9, no. 8, *PL* 198, 526–27; Bonaventure, "De sex alis Seraphim," chap. 7, no. 6, vol. 8, p. 149a; Durandus, *Rationale*, bk. 5, chap. 9, no. 1, p. 373; Bonaventure, *Off. Pass.*, 157b deutet die Vesper auf die Szene der *depositio* und *Pietà*.

160. W. Goetz, *Die Quellen zur Geschichte des hl. Franz von Assisi* (Gotha, 1904), p. 48, n. 1. For an opposite view see P. Sabatier, "Examen de quelques travaux récents sur les Opuscules de saint François," in *Opusc. Crit. Hist.*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1903–14), pp. 159–60. Bracaloni, in his *Ufficio*, p. 262, doesn't seem to appreciate the depth of the *Officium Passionis*. He writes: "Questo Ufficio ... pure nella complessità dei suoi modi, si ha da dire alquanto povero di contenuto (!), di originalità limitata e di forma piuttosto primitiva."

161. The place of the Lord's Prayer in Francis's piety will be studied more in depth in the article mentioned in n. 29.

### Part 3

## Francis's Devotion to the Passion in the Light of Biographical Sources

There is a temptation to compare Francis's own writings about the passion with the oldest biographies. But with such a bewildering variety of sources, some grouping of passages is unavoidable. This of course entails the danger of breaking the sequence of events. We shall endeavor, however, through cross-references to preserve their internal and historical nexus. In this third part of our essay, we shall first discuss Francis's vision of the cross and his devotion to the passion; then we shall take a closer look at the role of the passion in his own striving for sanctity.

The modern reader of medieval hagiography is often taken aback by its heavy emphasis on supernatural occurrences. Where a modern writer would try to understand the saint's spiritual development in psychological terms, the medieval biographer felt compelled to explain it through the direct intervention of God. Thanks to the exhaustive work of the Bollandists, the critical Catholic hagiographer of today treads the middle ground between miracle mania and miracle phobia.<sup>162</sup>

Though we do not immediately accept every farfetched, unproven miraculous tale as Gospel truth, we should not reject the accounts of credible and reliable biographers, even when they relate extraordinary events. It would be both dishonest and unhistorical to exclude a priori the very possibility of miracles because of our intellectual or cultural bias.<sup>163</sup> This is not to say that medieval miracle stories do not require the application of sound critical norms to separate the wheat from the chaff. Franciscan miracle tales, like all others, cannot be detached from the background of their times. Their authors share to a greater or lesser extent the lack of critical acumen and the preoccupation to edify, commonly found in medieval writers.<sup>164</sup>

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162. See *CF*, 30 (1960):129-45. The most valuable studies of the Bollandists have been gathered recently by R. Aigrain, *L'Hagiographie: ses sources, ses methodes, son histoire* (Paris, 1953). See pp. 178-85 on medieval thirst for the miraculous. For a classical example see Caesarius of Heisterbach, O.Cist. (d. 1240); J. Zahn, *Einführung in die christliche Mystik* (Paderborn, 1922), pp. 448ff. For a study of the individual motifs that recur in hagiographical writings, see also H. Günther, *Psychologie der Legenden: Studien zu einer wissenschaftlichen Heiligen-Geschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1949). The author relies on the *Legenda aurea* of Giacomo da Varazzo (da Voragine), O.P. (d. 1298).

163. See A. Feder, S.J., *Lehrbuch der historischen Methodik* (Regensburg, 1921), pp. 224-31.

164. We have already made reference to it in our Introduction.

### A. Apparitions of the Crucified in the Life of St. Francis

What we have said about the need for a critical attitude is all the more important as we proceed to investigate the visions of the Crucified in the life of Francis and their significance in the framework of his devotion to the passion. Earlier writers were very naive. It is difficult to pass judgment on the supernatural origin of any given revelation or apparition with any degree of certainty.<sup>165</sup> We will therefore take a critical look at two apparitions which St. Bonaventure relates to Francis's devotion to the passion. Thereupon we must evaluate in particular the Crucified's speaking to the Poverello in the chapel of San Damiano.

If we are to take the Seraphic Doctor's account at face value, Francis had a night vision associated with the mystery of the cross as early as 1205. Celano already gave the gist of this event in both his lives, though in somewhat different form. According to Celano, the merchant's son and an unnamed nobleman were preparing to undertake a journey to Apulia. He had hopes of winning the spurs of knighthood by fighting with the papal forces. Since 1202, under the command of Walter of Brienne, they had been defending Pope Innocent III's right to act as guardian of Frederick II, then a minor, against the pretensions of one Markwart of Anweiler.

As the young warriors eagerly pressed forward to their rendezvous with destiny, Francis had a night vision in which he saw his home "filled with the trappings of war: saddles, shields, lances and other weapons."<sup>166</sup> Bonaventure adds some further details to Celano's story. Francis saw in his vision "a splendid palace full of military weapons emblazoned with the insignia of Christ's cross."<sup>167</sup> Hilarin Felder be-

165. See esp. J. de Guibert, S.J., *Leçons de théologie spirituelle*, vol. 1 (Toulouse, 1946), pp. 288-300. See also Gabriele Di S.M. Maddalena, O.C.D., *Visioni e rivelazioni nella vita spirituale* (Florence, 1941), esp. pp. 144-66 for the strict criteria required for judging the authenticity of the supernatural character of alleged visions. See also K. Rahner, S.J., *Visionen und Prophezeiungen* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1958), profusely illustrated by Th. Baumann, S.J.

166. *1Cel* 4ff. In *2Cel* 6 there is mention of a twofold vision "in quo varios apparatus armorum et sponsam pulcherrimam cernit." It is possible that the biographer derived this plausible detail later on from the confidants of the saint and made use of it in his *Second Life*. In view of medieval disregard for historical detail it is also possible that the biographer combines the vision of the bride (*1Cel* 7) with that of the weaponry. See F. Van den Borne, O.F.M., "Voornaamste feiten uit het leven van Franciscus in het licht van de historische kritiek," in *Sint Franc.* 3 (1957):176-81; A. Fortini, *Nova vita di S. Francesco* (Assisi, 1959), vol. 1, part 1, pp. 227-30, and vol. 2, pp. 183-86.

167. *LMaior* I 3. See also *LMaior* I 3; *AnPer* 5; V. van Ortroij, S.J., in *MisFran*, 9 (1902-5), p. 36b, writes: "... cruciatis resplendentibus clypeis." Through an oversight the editor omitted "cruciatis." See G. Abate, O.F.M. Conv., *Novi studi sulla leggenda di S. Francesco detta dei 'tre compagni'*, 39 (1939):249. This reading which

believes this detail to be authentic and links it with Francis's plan to take part in a crusade to the Holy Land.<sup>168</sup> But we should probably be more correct to look on it as a legendary trimming added by the Seraphic Doctor. A certain convention of medieval hagiography requires strong emphasis on the miraculous. Here, too, we detect Bonaventure's attempt to explain the spiritual career of the holy founder in terms of mystical theology. Another passage of his Major Life reinforces this conclusion, where he considers the vision of weapons decorated with the cross as a crucial turning point in Francis's spiritual development.<sup>169</sup> The unprecedented event of the stigmatization led Celano and Bonaventure, who was even more impressed by it, to base the entire spiritual life of the Poverello exclusively on the cross.<sup>170</sup>

After describing Francis's courageous retreat from his march to Apulia, and his kissing the leper, the Seraphic Doctor relates an apparition of the Crucified which antedates that of San Damiano:

One day while he was praying in such a secluded spot and became totally absorbed in God through his extreme fervor, Jesus Christ appeared to him fastened to the cross. Francis's soul melted at the sight, and the memory of Christ's passion was so impressed on the innermost recesses of his heart that from that hour, whenever Christ's crucifixion came to his mind, he could scarcely contain his tears and sighs, as he later revealed to his companions when he was approaching the end of his life. Through this the man of God understood as addressed to himself the Gospel text: "If you wish to come after me, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).<sup>171</sup>

This story is found only in Bonaventure. The other sources have nothing whatever to say about it. This fact taken alone cannot be used as grounds to reject it. The argument from silence on the part of the

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otherwise depends very much on *AnPer* does not contain the title "Legenda S. Francisci Assisiensis, tribus ipsius sociis hucusque adscripta." In both accounts some unknown person is introduced who shows Francis the palace hung with arms and answers his questions.

168. H. Felder, O.F.M.Cap, *Der Christusritter aus Assisi* (Zurich-Altstetten, 1941), pp. 48ff.
169. *LMaior* XIII 10. For Bonaventure's choice of the sevenfold division, see J. Ratzinger, *Die Geschichtstheologie des hl. Bonaventura* (Munich, 1959, pp. 20ff): "The number seven expresses in a special way the totality of any reality, whether of God, or man or the world." See p. 167b (index).
170. It is amazing that more recent biographers are silent about the differences and the resulting critical problems, e.g. O. Englebert, *Vie de S. François d'Assise* (Paris, 1947), pp. 64ff. F. van den Borne, in *Voornameste feiten*, seems to rely on Celano's account. See also Part 5 E 1 below: "Role Played by Francis's Devotion to the Passion according to Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure."
171. The passages borrowed from *2Cel* 10-11 are printed in a different type size by the publishers. See *LMaior* I 5. For Francis's return and the kiss of the leper see *LMaior* III 5. For the latter see Part 3 B 4 below: "Francis's Mystical Veneration of the Suffering Jesus in the Sick and in Nature Symbols."

earlier biographers is not definitive. Bonaventure himself seems to have been aware of the problem involved in being the first to speak about it, since he bases it on Francis's sharing it with his intimate companions.

But Bonaventure's general untrustworthiness in handling historical data raises some doubts. He likewise adorns the alleged apparition of Christ with phrases borrowed from Celano's account of the speaking-crucifix of San Damiano, and adds the further detail that the saint entered upon a life of self-denial as a result of the vision. In fact, Francis needed no visions to call him to a life of self-denial. According to Bonaventure's own account, his heroic renunciation took its inception from his kissing the leper, which occurred before the dubious apparition referred to above.<sup>172</sup> Further suspicion concerning the genuineness of the vision is aroused by the fact that the biographer later lists it among the "seven visions of the cross, which made him a living image of Christ crucified."<sup>173</sup> Given the critical problems involved, the alleged apparition deserves no further attention in our study of Francis's devotional history.

On the other hand, the so-called speaking-crucifix of San Damiano demands serious consideration. In a lengthy article, Leone Bracaloni investigated the miraculous crucifix mainly from an artistic and historical viewpoint, while Kajetan Esser was concerned about restoring the original text of the prayer Francis said after the crucifix spoke to him, and establishing its religious significance.<sup>174</sup> Although later biographers, including Bracaloni, have had occasion to discuss this extraordinary event, as far as we are aware a satisfying detailed study is still lacking. We shall make no pretensions about exhausting the subject. Our aim will be to scrutinize the sources and look at the content of the legend from the viewpoint of devotional history.

172. See nn. 10 above and 187 below, and Part 4 B below: "Francis's Following of the Cross through Self-denial." Our interpretation differs from that of Gratien (de Paris), O.F.M.Cap.: *S. François d'Assisi: Sa personnalité, sa spiritualité* (Paris, 1928), pp. 43ff, and Vitus a Bussum, O.F.M.Cap., *De spiritualitate franciscana* (Rome, 1949), p. 10, who presupposes the genuineness of the apparition.

173. See n. 8 above.

174. L. Bracaloni, "Il prodigio Crocifisso che parlò a S. Francesco," in *Studi Franc.*, 3d ser., 2 (1939):185-212; K. Esser, "Das Gebet des hl. Franziskus vor dem Kreuzbild in San Damiano," in *FSien* 34 (1952):1-11. See I B above: "Passion in Francis's Prayer-Life," esp. n. 34. There I enlarge on and add to the halting judgment of F. van den Borne in *Sint Franc.* 1 (1955):56. See L.U. Gnocchi, O.F.M., "In quale anno, mese e giorno il Crocifisso parlò a S. Francesco," in *Studi Franc.*, n.s., 12 (1926):274-79. "Probabilmente il colloquio del Crocifisso di S. Damiano a Francesco avvenne circa l'Esaltazione della S. Croce, forse il giorno stesso nel quale 18 anni dopo ricevette il santo le S. Stimmate sulla Verna." His "so-called proofs" are worthless.



First a few remarks about the setting of the San Damiano event. Shortly after kissing the leper, Francis visited the ancient chapel, which was about a kilometer south of the slope of Assisi. At the time it was in a sad state of disrepair. Obeying an impulse of grace, he cast himself down in prayer before the image of the cross.<sup>175</sup> The picture, still preserved in the Poor Clares' Convent of Santa Chiara,<sup>176</sup> is painted on a board cut in the form of a cross and is typical of the Umbrian school with its richly-adorned images of historical personages. Under eastern, and more specifically Syrian, influence the unknown artist surrounded the body of Christ with other figures. Painted on linen stretched over an untouched walnut frame, the figure of the Crucified is sharply delineated. He does not hang there as a man of sorrows, but stands straight up as the triumphant Redeemer, without pain, with His eyes wide-open. "The legs reach straight down, parallel to each other. The arms are outstretched in a gentle curve. The head, with its slight beard and long parted hair is framed by a halo and is slightly bent to one side. The open eyes look out in a friendly manner."<sup>177</sup>

Two panels open on either side of the body of Christ. To the left, as seen from the viewer, they portray Mary and John; and to the right Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, as well as the centurion and another hardly identifiable figure (a soldier?). In the two lower corners of the center panel are diminutive figures of Longinus with his lance, and Stefanatus with a reed and sponge. On the horizontal beam of the cross are six rather lifelike angels. The top of the vertical beam is

175. *2Cel* 10ff. Bonaventure (*LMaior* II 1) depends on Celano for his wording and is in essential agreement in his account of the occurrence. Although he still speaks of a self-revelation of the saint to his trusted companions, there can be no question of independent evidence, for reasons given in no. 2 of the text. The same must be said of *L3S* 13ff. See G. Abate, in *MisFran* 39 (1939):253ff, 386-88. For secondary witnesses see *2Cel*; *3Cel* II; *LMaior* XII 10, IX 9.

176. We rely on Bracaloni, *Il prodigioso Crocifisso*, esp. pp. 194-205. The author presents, though with some reservations and personal observations, the conclusions of the famous work of E. Sandberg and Vavalà, *La Croce dipinta italiana* (Verona, 1929), pp. 154ff, 622-24. Bracaloni deserves credit for calling attention to the Syrian influence. Syrian monks came to Umbria and built a monastery on the model of Mt. Athos on Monte Luco in Spoleto (p. 198, n. 1). To appreciate the meaning of this reference we must remember that the Syrians were the first to show signs of an affective devotion to Christ. J. Stierli, S.J., *Die Herz-Jesu-Verehrung vom Ausgang der Väterzeit bis zur hl. Margareta M. Alacoque* (Frieberg im Breisgau, 1956), pp. 78ff, and in the same book: *Cor Salvatoris, Wege zur Herz-Jesu-Verehrung*. The cross formerly was in the monastery of the Sisters of St. Clare in San Damiano. When they moved to their new home of Santa Chiara, they carried it with them (p. 191ff). The measurements are: Length (without the stand): 2.10 meters; width: 1.30 (p. 201).

177. K. Künstle, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*, vol. 1 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1928), pp. 457ff.

decorated with a group of happy angels bearing a medallion showing Christ's Ascension into heaven. The image of the Crucified, painted in lively colors, can be either over or underestimated from an artistic viewpoint. It was done shortly after the year 1100.<sup>178</sup>

In his *Second Life of St. Francis*, Thomas of Celano recounts for the first time how Francis entered the chapel of San Damiano, already changed interiorly but still uncertain about what direction his life should take. In this state of mind he knelt before the crucifix to get a clear idea of what the Lord's will for him might be. Suddenly the Savior called him by name: "Francis, go, repair my house, which, as you see, is falling completely to ruin."<sup>179</sup> Amazed and trembling, Francis almost fainted. But he had the presence of mind to declare his willingness to carry out the command of the Lord. It is easy to understand how he mistakenly thought it meant to rebuild the little chapel, crumbling with age and the neglect of its owners. Only later would he realize that his divinely given message referred to "that church which Christ redeemed with His own blood."<sup>180</sup>

Before examining the words themselves, we must establish the historical reliability of Celano's account. It is only natural to ask why the biographer makes no mention of the incident in his *First Life*. But if we recall the circumstances under which the two lives were written, the omission presents no great problem. Celano wrote his *First Life* as is well known, at the express command of Pope Gregory IX between 1228 and 1229, without having had a chance to study all the sources. The *Second Life* was commissioned by Crescentius of Jesi, minister general of the order. Celano worked on it between 1244 and 1247 and availed himself of the material provided by several companions of the saint.<sup>181</sup>

There is no reason to wonder why the biographer, who was not one of the first friars, only later came to know certain important event that took place in the early days of the order. A quick glance at the two passages in the *First Life* between which the apparition should logi-

178. L. Bracaloni, *Il Crocifisso*, pp. 191. 203. When the cross was restored by Rosaria Alliano in 1938, the series of saints under the footrest came to light once more, but it is not possible to determine their significance. The author suggests that they represent Saints Damian, Rufin (patron of Assisi), the Archangel Michael, St. John the Baptist, and Peter and Paul. The precise age of the church cannot be determined with any certainty. See *Storia di S. Damiano in Assisi secondo nuovo ricerche* (Assisi, 1926), pp. 1-25, esp. pp. 3-4.

179. In *L3S*. G. Abate writes: "Francisco, nonne vides quod (haec) domus mea destruitur? Vade igitur et repara illam mihi" (p. 387). If we are to accept the demonstrative *haec* as original, we must exclude any reference to the contemporary moral corruption of clergy and laity. This is a free rendering of Celano's text.

180. *2Cel* 11. For an account of Francis's work in reconstructing the church, see L. Bracaloni's *San Damiano*, pp. 27-56.

181. See Introduction above, n. 12. See also Grau, *Thomas von Celano*, pp. 32-33, 38-39.

cally appear shows that Celano was unaware of the historical sequence of events. After speaking of the beautiful bride Francis was to marry, he immediately goes on to tell of the sale of the bale of cloth and the horse in Foligno. Upon his return, the happy merchant noticed the dilapidated condition of the chapel and gave the local priest the money to pay for its restoration.<sup>182</sup> The biographer does not know what prompted this business deal, which was to have very serious consequences. However, if we are aware of the vision, we can understand why the merchant's son acted as he did. So the historicity of the event at San Damiano can be validated by biographical context, the unanimous testimony of the early writers, and vouched for by Francis's special veneration of the cross. From the viewpoint of critical norms, which will be discussed later, there are no serious difficulties, even though both Celano and Bonaventure relate the speaking-crucifix to the later stigmatization.<sup>183</sup>

Next we must consider a personal observation of Celano. He characterizes the appearance as "a thing unheard of in our times."<sup>184</sup> This is not true. It is surprising that Celano, a man otherwise so well versed in medieval hagiography, would overlook other instances. While St. Bernard was contemplating a crucifix lying on the floor before him and was about to kiss it, an arm reached out from the corpus and embraced him.<sup>185</sup> Rupert of Deutz relates that early one morning he kissed the crucifix behind the altar of our Lady's chapel and "as I gazed upon the cross I beheld the Son of Man alive."<sup>186</sup> The experience of St. John Gualbert is well known in Italy. After magnanimously forgiving the murderer of one of his kinsmen, he entered a church and "he saw the crucifix in this same church bow its head toward him as if to thank him, because out of respect for Him he mercifully pardoned his enemy."<sup>187</sup> We cannot concern ourselves here with the genuineness of these accounts, but they are not isolated. Ursmar Beliere tells of a number of similar occurrences found in the chronicles of the Benedictine Order.<sup>188</sup>

182. *1Cel* 7.

183. We shall take this up again in Part 3 B 1 below: "Impression of the Spiritual Wound of Love." See n. 8 above.

184. *2Cel* 10.

185. "S. Bernardi vita et res gestae," 1.7, chap. 7, *PL* 185, 419ff, quoted by E. Dumoutet, *le Christ selon la chair et la vie liturgique au m.â.* (Paris, 1932), pp. 25-27.

186. Rupert of Deutz, "De gloria et honore Filii hominis super Mt. 1:12," *PL* 168, 1590ff, and col. 1601. See E. Beitz, *Rupertus von Deutz: Seine Werke und die bildende Kunst* (Cologne, 1930), pp. 80ff. For the difference to Bernard's vision of the cross, see pp. 81-82.

187. Andreas von Strumi, O.S.B. Vall., (d. 1097), *Vita S. Joannis Gualberti*, chap. 1, no. 3; *Acta Sanctorum*, 3 July, 328 a. See also the commentary, 299b-300ab. The *Vita* is republished in *PL* 146, 767c. See also B. Quilici, "Giov. Gualberto e la riforma monastica," in *Arch. Stor. Ital.*, 99 (1941), disp. 2, 128-32, where the author defends the authenticity of the religious experience.

188. U. Berlière, O.S.B., *L'ascèse bénédictine des origines à la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris,

Must the talking-crucifix of San Damiano be considered a divine locution, or simply a pious self-deception, or even as a hallucination brought on by a fevered imagination? We can eliminate the last possibility in spite of the attempts of some rationalistic critics to depict the historical Francis as a victim of "religious madness."<sup>189</sup> If we assume that the speech was of divine origin, we must ask further whether there was a physical impression on the external sense organs of sight and hearing, or whether it was a subjective experience. In the first case there would be a question of external perception; in the latter, of an imaginative vision or hearing.<sup>190</sup>

There are other possible explanations. In accord with the teachings of the great Spanish mystics, St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila,<sup>191</sup> and the findings of modern religious psychology, such mystical experiences are to be considered as secondary divine operations. That is to say, God works "directly on the spiritual center of one's personality, either by means of sanctifying grace or through mystical gifts of the order of infused vision." This inner experience then overflows to the internal senses, producing sensations that have all the earmarks of external perceptions. Numerous traits common to hallucinations and supernatural visions lead to the conclusion that both are governed by the same psychological mechanisms. The distinction lies in the different effects produced, and in the content of the vision. If it is of supernatural origin, the content of the mystical experience exceeds the psychic capabilities of the visionary.<sup>192</sup>

If we could accept Celano's words as Gospel truth, we would be spared any further problems. He looked upon the speaking-crucifix as

1927), pp. 231ff. See also Cäsarius von Heisterbach, O.Cist., *Dialogi miraculorum* (J. Strange, I-II [Cologne, 1851-57]). See also N. Tamassia, *Francesco di Assisi e la sua Leggenda* (Cel) (Padua, 1906), p. 117. Another question is whether one will agree with the author that Celano simply borrowed the incident from the Cistercians and attributed it to St. Francis. Further accounts of the vision of the cross can be found in H. Günter, *Psychologie der Legende*, pp. 229ff.

189. G. Portigliotti, *S. Francesco d'Assisi e le epidemie mistiche del Medio-evo* (Palermo, n.d.), pp. 83-93. A psychiatric study. See esp. p. 84, where the author relies more on Murillo's well-known painting instead of historical sources. The following have come to the defense of Francis's mental health: F.P. Calamita, *La persona di S. Francesco d'Assisi* (Assisi, 1927), and L. Gualino, *L'Uomo d'Assisi* (Turin, 1927), esp. pp. 35-41.

190. See K. Rahner, *Visionen*, pp. 76-88; H. Lais, in *Lex. Theol. Kirche*, s.v. "Erscheinungen."

191. See Gabriele Di S.M. Maddalena, *Visioni e rivelazioni*, pp. 47-72.

192. See L. Monden, S.J., in *Lex. Theol. Kirche*, s.v. "Erscheinungen II. Psychologisch." J. Maréchal, S.J., *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1938), pp. 125-27, quoted by Gabriele Di S.M.M. in *Visioni*, p. 76, n. 47: "Io non voglio pretendere che la testi debba considerarsi come perfettamente dimostrata; ma non si può negare che le sue posizioni siano seriamente attendibili" (p. 77). See also K. Rahner, *Visionen*, esp. pp. 42ff.

a physical "vision" and "audition" produced by direct divine intervention. He writes: "The painted image of Christ crucified moved its lips and spoke."

Bonaventure makes no mention of this detail—that the lips of the crucified actually moved. But he does enlarge on the account of his predecessor, upon whom he depends in two instances for his choice of words, and explains the external nature of the message as follows: "He heard with his bodily ears a voice coming from the cross, telling him three times...."<sup>193</sup>

We cannot, of course, rule out a priori the possibility of a crucifix whose lips pronounced words. But taking into consideration the historical naiveté of medieval legends, and especially Celano's tendency to exaggerate, the modern reader would be hard put to accept his account without serious reservations. It bristles with so many difficulties that we can safely accept the story of the moving lips as a literary embellishment of something that had a historical basis in fact.<sup>194</sup>

The nature of the conversation has not been fully explained. The two biographers never doubted that the words from the cross were externally audible.<sup>195</sup> Such external phenomena can, of course, be an occasion for self-deception.<sup>196</sup> In view of the positive fruits of Francis's experience, the possibility of demonic influence must be ruled out.<sup>197</sup>

In his life of Francis, Francesco Tarducci suggests another explanation which moves the whole problem to a different plane. He believes that at the moment the Poverello entered the chapel he felt an intense compassion for and identity with the sufferings of the Crucified. In this exalted state of inner sorrow he became keenly aware of the sad state of the ruined chapel. Immediately the thought came to him that Christ was ordering him to restore it: "In the mystic condition of spirit in which Francis found himself ... this mental verbalization became a command proceeding from the mouth of the image, and in his highly emotional state he seemed really to hear the voice of the Crucified

193. *2Cel* 10; *LMaior* II 1. We may ignore the detail about the threefold (*ter dicentem*) address. It is just another proof of Bonaventura's predilection for putting a Trinitarian interpretation on historical events, and we can without any hesitation reject it as legendary. See Introduction, n. 14 above.

194. See L. Bracaloni, *Il Crocifisso*, p. 188, n. 1: "Non e necessario che le labbra del Crocifisso dipinto articolassero veramente la parole, dovendosi solo distinguere che l'allocuzione soprannaturale fu esterna ed auricolare, e non solamente interna." For the latter question, see our text. For Celano's biographical style, see Introduction above.

195. See n. 14 above.

196. Gabriele Di S.M. Maddalena, *Visioni e rivelazioni*, pp. 67ff.

197. We should remember that the widespread apostolate that Francis exercised in the church and continues to exercise through his sons was somehow inspired by this event. Bracaloni (*Il Crocifisso*, p. 190) rightly sees a connection between the *vade et repara* with the *tolle, lege* of St. Augustine.

sounding audibly in the silence of the church. And he answered with his own voice in an audible manner. The sound of his voice was like a confirmation of the sound he believed he heard from the mouth of the Crucified."<sup>198</sup>

What it comes to, then, is a pious illusion that God made use of to instruct Francis. Appealing as this explanation might appear at first sight, it cannot stand the test of closer scrutiny. In the first place, it assumes, without any evidence, that the saint was in an ecstasy of compassion before he entered the chapel. Such an assumption has no support whatever in Celano's biographies. The sight of an image of the Crucified while Francis was in a state of deep interior compassion did not set this extraordinary sequence in motion. Rather, as we shall show, it was the mystical experience that Francis had before the cross that unloosed a special outburst of devotion toward the passion. Furthermore, it is very unlikely that such varied impressions could have combined in a moment of time to create in the beholder the illusion of a formal command. We are not saying that there are no useful elements in the Tarducci theory which might help point the way to an acceptable solution.

Among all the possibilities we have raised so far, there remains the theory of a direct or indirect divine origin of the words emanating from the cross. Since it is highly improbable that there was some physical vision and externally audible speech, there remains the possibility of either a primary or secondary action of God on Francis's imagination. Of course we cannot adduce convincing evidence for either alternative. Celano's account can most easily be explained by assuming a direct divine action on Francis's internal senses. But since this would postulate a miraculous intervention on the part of God,<sup>199</sup> which is acceptable only after other possibilities are ruled out, it will suffice for our purposes to settle for an indirect divine origin.

The following considerations favor the latter view. Francis was praying before the image of the Crucified, anxiously awaiting divine guidance. The half-ruined chapel must have made a deep impression on his sensitive soul. In such a state of mind all that was needed for his lively imagination to assure him that the Crucified Himself was calling him to repair the church was an internal communication from God and, as we shall explain later, the impression of a mystical wound of love.<sup>200</sup>

198. F. Tarducci, *Vita di S. Francesco d'Assisi* (Rome, 1923), pp. 59ff; F. van den Borne, *Voornaamste feiten*, p. 189: "Toch lijkt het ons, met Tarducci, gemotiveerd hierin de mogelijkheid bewust open te houden, dat het eerder een inwendig 'gesprek' is geweest in Franciscus' ziel."

199. See Gabriele Di S.M. Maddalena, *Visioni e rivelazioni*, pp. 72-82, 144-62. See also J. DeGiobert, *Leçons de théologie spirituelle*, pp. 292-96; J. Hermitte, *Echte und falsche Mystiker* (Lucerne, 1953), pp. 53-66; Rahner, *Visionen*, pp. 55-75.

## B. Mystical Contemplation of the Passion in the Life of St. Francis

A number of subsequent expressions of Francis's devotion the passion must be linked with his experience before the crucifix of San Damiano. For the sake of brevity we shall mention only those which manifest a mystical nature.<sup>201</sup> Among them are (1) the impression of the mystical wound of love, (2) the affective compassion flowing from it, (3) devotion to the five wounds of Jesus, and (4) the extension of his love for the Crucified to the poor, the sick and certain symbols found in nature. His devotion to the cross, because of its predominantly ascetic-devotional character, will be treated in a separate section.

200. Here we must once more take up the problem of the meaning of Francis's prayer, which we have discussed above in I B: "The Passion in Francis's Prayer-Life." It would seem that the saint saw above all God in Christ who spoke to him interiorly. In our study of the place of Christ in the prayer life of St. Francis, we shall have an opportunity to make reference to similar passages in his writings. The biographical studies give three other aspects of the mystery of the cross. However, they treat of the extraordinary phenomena that the friars saw in the person of the holy founder. We can therefore prescind from a special treatment of the subject without sacrificing completeness. Thus Rufino, the former diocesan priest and canon of San Rufino, saw "crucem auream de ore prodeuntem Francisci" (2*Cel* 109; *LMaior* III 5; *AnPer* 12ff; F. van Ortro, 38ab; *L3S* 30ff). Likewise the onetime "King of Verses," Brother Pacificus, saw "Franciscum duobus transversis ensibus valde fulgentibus in modum crucis signatum" (2*Cel* 106). See also 3*Cel* III 273; *LMaior* IV 9. While St. Anthony was preaching at Arles in 1224, Brother Monaldus saw "b. Franciscum in aere sublevatum, extensis velut in cruce manibus, benedicientem fratres" (1*Cel* 48). See *LMaior* IV 10.
201. The term "mystical" is understood in different ways by different authors. We cannot treat here these very divergent concepts. We shall simply point out the various ways the term can be used. Mystical is used to indicate (1) in a broad sense, "every deep, vital grasp of the supernatural by a soul that loves God or at least is in search of him" (Stanislaus Grünwald [von München] O.F.M.Cap., *Franziskanische Mystic: Versuch zu einer Darstellung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des hl. Bonaventura* [Munich, 1932], vol. 1, pp. 1-8); (2) in a narrower sense, mystical is applied to "an unusual experience and love of God proceeding from an immediate spiritual consciousness of the natural and supernatural operation of God" (A. Mager, O.S.G., in *Lex. Theol. Kirche*, s.v. "Mystik"). We need not delve further into the various explanations provided by Catholic authors. We refer the reader to the literature on the subject. Without going into the psychologically oriented difference between mystical and non-mystical experience, we stress once more the wholeness of the Christian order of grace. This can be best safeguarded if we look upon mysticism in a wider sense as any specific supernatural experience. The believing soul attains the divine virtues immediately in their supernatural perfection even though it does grasp them in a reflective way. In the mystical state, God's supernatural reality is experienced as such, through the gradual operation of grace, even though in a confused manner. When there is question of Christian mysticism, as in our case, the different experiences of the mysterious union of the baptized with the Head of the Mystical Body must be taken into account. Besides the general literature, see C. Truhlar, S.J., *De experientia mystica* (Rome, 1951), pp. 4, 15; H. Vignon, S.J., *De virtutibus et donis vitae supernaturalis*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1948-53), pp. 49-113; R. Schnackenburg and O. Karrer, in *Lex. Theol. Kirche*, s.v. "Christus mystik." See



### 1. The Impression of the Spiritual Wound of Love

Speaking of the voice from the crucifix, Celano writes (2*Cel* 10): "But because he experienced this ineffable change within himself, something he himself was not able to express, it behooves us to remain silent. From that time on, he was filled with compassion for the Crucified, and, as we may devoutly believe, the stigmata of the passion were deeply impressed on his heart though not yet on his flesh."<sup>202</sup> The Seraphic Doctor speaks in similar terms after describing the apparition mentioned above.<sup>203</sup>

As the above text and others like it seems to indicate, the biographers have recourse to a mystical wound of love to explain the externally perceptible "compassion." The strong feelings of sympathy, which must have been set in motion by Francis's experience before the crucifix, can be understood by Celano and Bonaventure only in the light of a special imprinting of the love of the Savior in the soul of the holy founder.<sup>204</sup> Though the writings of the Poverello himself offer no explicit confirmation for this view, they do not contradict it. On the contrary, as often as they touch on the overwhelming love of Jesus for mankind manifested in His redemptive sufferings, they indirectly support the interpretation suggested by his biographers.<sup>205</sup>

If indeed Celano and Bonaventure are correct in their assumption, one cannot accuse them of artificial interpretation when they associate the voice from the cross with the stigmatization experienced by Francis eighteen years later on La Verna. As we are assured by the mystics, the wound of love flowing forth from the soul at times produces effects in the body as well.<sup>206</sup> This is the meaning of the oft-quoted sentence of

also n. 66 above.

202. 2*Cel* 10. See also 3*Cel* II: "Ex tunc profundo caractere impressa fuit cordi eius memoria dominicae Passionis..."

203. "...Et memoria Passionis Christi visceribus cordis ipsius adeo impressa medullitus..." (*LMaior* I 5). See Part 3 A above: "Apparitions of the Crucified in the Life of St. Francis."

204. The artistic representation of the crucifixion in itself certainly did not arouse this compassion in Francis. As we have mentioned above (Part 3 A: "Apparitions of the Crucified in the Life of St. Francis"), the Crucified is depicted in a painless attitude.

205. See A. Cabassut, O.S.B., in *Dict. Spir.*, s.v. "Blessure d'amour." The author's explanation does not entirely fit the case in question. According to him, the wound of love is that burning agony of a soul who loves God when she feels that her Beloved has withdrawn Himself. The activities described by the author, however (p. 1727), agree with Celano's account. For more details about the tradition of the wound of love in the bridal context, see M. Bernards, *Speculum Virginum: Geistigkeit u. Seelenleben der Frau im Hochmittelalter*, (Cologne-Graz, 1955), pp. 188ff. See also F. Ohly, *Hohelied-Studien: Grundzüge einer Geschichte der Hoheliedauslegung des Abendlandes bis um 1200* (Wiesbaden, 1958).

206. Cabassut, *Dict. Spir.*, s.v. "Blessure," where the reference is given. Of course the wound of love, as the author rightly points out, must not be confused with the stigmatization, though it is related to it. This whole question should be explored in



Celano: "Shortly thereafter, the love that was in his heart became manifest in his body."<sup>207</sup>

This explanation makes the spiritual ascent of the saint more comprehensible. We cannot at this time prove that Francis was a mystic in the strict sense of the word. We simply take it for granted.<sup>208</sup> The interior voice heard at San Damiano introduced the recently converted young man into the beginnings of his mystical vocation while impressing on his soul the wound of love as the foundation for his devotion to the passion.

## 2. Co-suffering with the Redeemer

Celano describes the effect of the speaking-crucifix in his Second Life: "From then on he could never keep himself from weeping, ever bewailing in a loud voice the passion of Christ which was always, as it were, before his mind. He filled the ways with his sighs. He permitted himself no consolation, remembering the wounds of Christ. He met a certain intimate friend, to whom he made known the cause of his grief, and immediately his friend was moved to tears."<sup>209</sup>

There is a parallel passage in another part of the Second Life. Celano tells of an hour-long rapture when St. Francis, overcome by a sudden burst of feeling, sang French songs, which he accompanied by pretending to play a violin on a stick of wood with an improvised bow. "This whole ecstasy of joy would often end in tears and his song of gladness would bring forth continual sighs, and amid groaning, he would be raised to heaven, forgetful of the lower things he held in his hand."<sup>210</sup>

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a separate study of Francis's stigmata.

207. *2Cel* 11. "Paulo post" meaning "eighteen years" is an egregious example of medieval chronological inaccuracy! In *LMaior* XIII 10, Bonaventure numbers Francis's experience of the crucifix as one of the six *apparitiones crucis* which led the saint to the seventh, that is, the stigmatization. See n. 8 above. The relationship is best brought out in *L3S* 14.

208. See the explanation given by Laurentius Casutt (of Falera), O.F.M.Cap., *L'eredità di San Francesco* (Rome, 1952). See Index s.v. "Vita di unione mistica." See also his *Die älteste franziskanische Lebensform* (Graz, 1955). See Index s.v. "Mystik."

209. *2Cel* 11. See also *Legenda ad Usum Chori* 10. St. Bonaventure, in *LMaior* I 5 writes that as a result of Francis's experience of the alleged apparition of the Crucified the thought of the passion was so impressed on his heart "ut ab illa hora, cum Christi crucifixio veniret in mentem, vix posset a lacrymis et gemitibus exterius continere, sicut ipse postmodum familiariter rettulit cum appropinquaret ad finem." *Leg. ant.* 37 (Delorme, pp. 22-23) places his meeting with his friend at St. Mary of the Angels. See Abate, *Nuovi studi*, p. 253.

210. *2Cel* 12; *LMaior* X 4. *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 93, pp. 270ff is in substantial agreement. The mystery of the passion is emphasized and the affective tone is more apparent. This is clear from the opening sentence: "Ebrius amore et compassione Christi..." We might mention, by the by, that the mystics single out this affective sharing in the sufferings of Jesus as a bodily effect of the wound of love. See A. Cabassut, in *Dict. Spir.*, s.v. "Blessure d'amour."

This second account reflects the knightly era in which the Poverello lived. With his well-known gift for mime and gesture, he played out the role of God's troubadour, until his merry song gave way to a deep-felt sorrow for the passion of Jesus. Yet we would completely miss the true meaning of the scene if we should see in it only the influence of chivalry. In both events the mystical dimension is evident. His acting is primarily a symbolic expression of an interior spiritual experience of Christ. The incidents show that the special mystical call of God was adapted to contemporary ideology, and the Gothic life-style of the time was eminently suited to Francis's natural gift for dramatic expression of his inmost feelings.<sup>211</sup>

If we were to compare the two scenes with the saint's *Office of the Passion*, we would immediately note a striking difference in the way he gives vent to his feelings. In the liturgical composition Francis immerses himself in the internal and external anguish of the Lord, in His incomprehensible love and absolute obedience to the Father, without going into any detailed account of his physical sufferings. Here, on the contrary, he expresses an emotionally charged empathy with the sufferings of the Redeemer.<sup>212</sup> There is no point in spending a lot of time probing the contrasts. We shall only point out that there are two episodes from the life of the Poverello that must have made a strong impression on anyone who happened to witness them. For an outsider the inner dimension of Francis's devotion to the passion would not be perceptible. We may say further that his absorption with the interior state of the Redeemer was his sorrowful lamentation over the passion.<sup>213</sup>

211. The following authors stress the theme of chivalry too exclusively: Felder, *Der Christusritter*, pp. 142ff, 112; Casutt, *L'eredità di S. Francesco*, Index s.v. "Cavalleria"; van den Borne, "Franciscus-geest en franciskaanse," in *Sint Franc.* 4 (1958):58ff. For a picturesque account see Felder, *Der Christusritter*, pp. 140-43; V. van Corstanje, O.F.M., "Franciscus, de Christuspeler," in *Sint Franc.* 2 (1956):7-25; S. Verhey, O.F.M., "Das Leben in der Busse nach Franziskus von Assisi," in *Wiss. Weish.*, 22 (1959):161-74. For the fondness for spectacles of the Gothic period, see J.A. Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia*, vol. 2, p. 630a (index). For the mystical meaning of the second account, see Cabassut, *L'eredità di S. Francesco*, p. 15.

212. For a theological evaluation of the "Condolere Christo et pie affici circa eum" see St. Bonaventure's I Sent. 1.1. d. 48 dub. 4, *Op. Omn.* vol. 1, p. 861b. We find the affective character of the scenes developed with countless variations in the writings of the Seraphic Doctor. See Bonifatius Strack (von Ramsen), O.F.M.Cap., "Das Leiden Christi im Denken des hl. Bonaventuren," in *FSien.*, 41 (1959):129-62, 133, 138ff, 145, 147.

213. We should mention here that the passion of Christ is not cited as the only reason for the gift of tears and the consequent gradual blindness of the saint. See Grau, *Thomas von Celano*, Index s.v. "Infirmity of the eyes" and s.v. "Tears." See *LMaior* V 8. There is an unconscious rhetorical exaggeration in *Legenda ad Usum Chori* 10: "...et sacram Passionem meditatur in gemitu, lacrimando die noctuque."

This internal perception was not completely unknown to Celano. For example, when he speaks about Francis's predilection for the expression "for the love of God," he adds the saint's admonition: "The love of him who loved us much is much to be loved." He goes to the heart of the matter when he locates the motivation for Francis's love in his contemplation of the passion.<sup>214</sup> The two texts cited above show clearly enough that the biographer does not limit himself to a description of purely subjective elements but goes on to take account of the mystical character of Francis's experience of the passion.

### 3. *His Veneration of the Five Wounds*

Before we investigate more closely Francis's mystical experience of the passion, we must point out that, surprising as it may seem, neither his writings nor the biographers make any reference to a special devotion to the five wounds or the pierced side of Jesus. The following text of Celano in which he describes the prayer life of the saint cannot be cited as evidence: "With fruitful devotion he frequented only heavenly dwellings, and he who had totally emptied himself remained so much the longer in the wounds of the Savior."<sup>215</sup>

A passage from St. Bonaventure's *Major Life* would seem to indicate Francis's devotion to the five wounds. After speaking of the vision of the Crucified (we must prescind from a critical evaluation of its historical character), the Seraphic Doctor writes: "Francis's soul melted at the sight, and the memory of Christ's passion was so impressed on the innermost recesses of his heart that from that hour, whenever Christ's crucifixion came to his mind, he could scarcely contain his tears and sighs."<sup>216</sup> As the wording indicates, St. Bonaventure is paraphrasing Celano's account of the speaking-crucifix. His additions to the earlier writer seem to be less a description of a historical event than an expression of his own devout sentiments.

It cannot be denied, however, that emphasis on the love theme in his contemplation of the passion, and Francis's stigmatization, are associated with the above-mentioned forms of devotion. But we are lacking source evidence as to its extent. At any rate, we can assume that the special character of Francis's devotion to the passion contributed to the

214. *2Cel* 196. It would appear that the redemptive love of Christ is at least implicit here, although in the context the general theme is the love of God. See *1Cel* 84 for the second passage: "Praecipue Incarnationis humilitas et charitas Passionis ita eius memoriam occupabant ut vix vellet aliud cogitare." For a critique see n. 52 above, and Part 4 E 1 below: "Role Played by Francis's Devotion to the Passion according to Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure."

215. *1Cel* 71. See also *2Cel* 11. See I. Bonetti, C.P.S., *Le Stimate della Passione. Dottrina e storia della Devozione alle Cinque Piaghe* (Rovigo, 1952), pp. 128-31.

216. *LMaior* I 4.

development of subsequent devotion to the five wounds and especially to the heart of Jesus among his sons.<sup>217</sup>

#### 4. Francis's Mystical Veneration of the Suffering Jesus in the Sick and in Nature Symbols

Several passages make it abundantly clear that Celano did not overlook the mystical element in Francis's contemplation of the passion.<sup>218</sup> This is evident in his story of how the Poverello punished and corrected a certain friar. During one of his preaching journeys he and his companion came upon a poor man who was also ill. While the saint felt deep compassion for him, his companion could not refrain from voicing a naturally human suspicion: "Brother (Francis), it is true that he is poor, but perhaps there is no one else in the whole world that is more covetous of wealth."

The saint severely rebuked him for his rash judgment and ordered the friar to apologize without delay. He explained: "Brother, when you see a poor man, you see before you a mirror of the Lord and His holy mother. See in a sick person the sufferings which the Lord took upon Himself for us."<sup>219</sup>

The biographer then draws a somewhat overpowering conclusion: "Indeed, there was always a bundle of myrrh with Francis (Song of Sol. 1:12). He always looked on the face of his Christ; he always touched the Man of Sorrows who was acquainted with infirmity" (Isaiah 53:3).<sup>220</sup>

217. This is especially true of St. Clare. It is said that she composed a special prayer to the five wounds of Jesus. See F. Pennacchi, "Leg. S. Clarae Virginis," *Assisi* (1910), p. 43. For Francis's devotion to the heart of Jesus, see L. Di Fonzo, O.F.M.Conv., "Il culto del Sacro Cuore di Gesù negli Ordinis Francescani," in *Cor Jesu: Commentationes in Litteras encyclicas Pii P. XII 'Haurietis aquas'* (Rome, 1959), pp. 101-3: "Pur non risultando da testimonianze 'dirette' un vero culto del Santo al S. Cuore e forse neanche alla piaga del Costato (p. 102)." See also pp. 103-37. As for this devotion on the part of his spiritual sons, we need only refer to the following for early writings: W. Lampen, O.F.M., "De spiritu S. Francisci in operibus S. Gertrudis Magnae," in *AFH* 19 (1926):733-52, esp. pp. 746ff, and Stanislas du Chambon-Feugerolles, O.F.M.Cap., *La dévotion à l'humanité du Christ dans la spiritualité de S. Bonaventure* (Lyon, 1932), p. 116; Colasanti, "I SS. cuori di Gesù nel 'Arbor Vitae' (1305) di Ubertino di Casale, O. Min.," in *MisFran* 59 (1959):30-69, esp. pp. 30-56.

218. For the meaning of "mystic," see n. 40 above.

219. *2Cel* 85. For parallels, see *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 37, pp. 97ff; *SpPer*, ed. Lemmens, no. 42, pp. 80ff; C. Andresen, "Franz von Assisi und seine Krankheiten," in *Wege zum Menschen* 6 (1954):37ff. As the author correctly notes, reference must be made to *1Cel* 76. In any case there is a question of the same event even though there is reference to only one poor man (no. 37). The very soul of medieval hospital care was the vision of Christ in the sick. See F. Meffert, *Caritas und Krankenwesen bis zum Ausgang des MA* (Freiburg, 1927), pp. 172ff, 268. See also below: Part 5 E 2: "True Position of Francis with Regard to the Passion within the Framework of Medieval Tradition."

220. In *LMaior* IX 2, Bonaventure has a similar passage about the bundle of myrrh. The image cannot be found in the writings of Francis. Because Mark (15:23) writes that a mixture of wine and myrrh was given to the Savior to drink before His crucifixion-

In a similar vein, Bonaventure tells how Francis took upon himself a humble and loving service of the lepers after the alleged apparition of the Crucified "because of Christ crucified, who according to the text of the prophet was despised as a leper" (Isaiah 53:3).<sup>221</sup> St. Bonaventure takes it as a historical fact that Francis's commitment to the service of the lepers had its basis in the apparition of the Crucified.<sup>222</sup> His account, as we have tried to show, is a legendary embellishment of an oral tradition. On the other hand, the thought of seeing a leprous Christ in a leper was by no means unusual for a devout Christian of the Middle Ages. The verse of Isaiah (53:4) must have led Francis to it.<sup>223</sup>

It would appear that the saint was already familiar with this concept. When he was riding outside Assisi in the year 1205 or 1206, he happened upon a leper and in an act of heroic self-conquest kissed him. His action might be interpreted simply as a sign of reverent love, but Celano adds a legendary detail in his *Second Life* which provided the contemporary reader with a deeper meaning. He writes that after Francis remounted his horse, he looked around and could see no trace of the leper.<sup>224</sup> The biographer's miracle story does contain a grain of truth. Christ did not personally appear to the saint in the guise of a

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circumstance that the church fathers incorrectly ascribe to the cruelty of the Jews who wanted to make the last drink of the hated Galilean bitter, and because myrrh was used for embalming the body of Jesus (see John 19:39)—this fragrant resin came to be a symbol of the sufferings of the Savior, and the "fasciculus myrrhae inter ubera" (Song of Solomon, 1, 12) signified meditation on the passion. See E. Levesque in *Dict. Bible s.v. "Myrrhe."* For examples of relevant passages from the church fathers, see Cassiodorus, O.S.B. (d. 583), "Expositio in Cant. Cant," PL 70, 1060cd; Wolbero, Abbot of St. Pantaleon, O.S.B. (d. 1167), "Comm. in Cant. Sant. Salomonis," 1.1, PL 195, 1080ff; Peter Damian, "Institutio monialis, Ad Blancam," 3, PL 145, 735cd; Bernard of Clairvaux, "Sermo 43 in Cant.," 1-2, nn. 1-4, in *S. Bernardi opera*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1958), pp. 41-43.

221. *LMaior* I 6.

222. See Part 3 A above: "Apparitions of the Crucified in the Life of St. Francis."

223. See C. Andresen, *Franz von Assisi und seine Krankheiten*, pp. 38ff. See also F. Meffert, *Caritas und Volksepidemien* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1925), pp. 133ff, 30ff. The Vulgate reading *quasi leprosum* was chosen by Jerome on the basis of an oriental idea of caring for the sick. It greatly influenced medieval care of the lepers. See Jerome, "Comm. in Is. Proph.," 1.14, chap. 53, PL 24, 525ff. Noteworthy is Rupert of Deutz, "De S. Trinitate et operibus eius. In Is. Proph.," 1.2, chap. 19, PL 167, 1337cd, since he compares the crucifixion of Jesus *extra portam* with the segregation of lepers from the rest of humanity. For the meaning of the passage in the original text, see J. Knabenbauer, S.J. and F. Zorell, S.J., *Comm. in Is. Prophetam*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1923), pp. 321ff, and A. Penna, C.R.L., *Isaia* (Turin, 1958), p. 532.

224. *2Cel* 9; *1Cel* 17; *Test* 1. See K. Esser, p. 100. In this connection read the lengthy explanation of A. Fortini, *Nova vita*, vol. 2, pp. 257-66. For a critical study of the addition, see van den Borne, *Voornaamste feiten*, p. 185: "waarschijnlijk legendarische traditie."

leper, but Francis encountered Christ mystically in the person of the sufferer.

Francis's devotion to the passion is further illustrated by his love for nature. Celano writes: "Even toward little worms he glowed with a very great love, for he had read this saying about the Savior: I am a worm and not a man (Ps. 21:7). Therefore, he picked them up from the road and placed them in a safe place, lest they be crushed by the feet of passersby."

With touching simplicity the Poverello looked on the worm crawling in the street, in danger of being crushed by the feet of careless passersby, as an image of the Savior tortured on the infamous gibbet of the cross. Such a direct awareness of a Christ symbol, and sharing compassion with the suffering Lord with animals, must be unique in the history of piety.<sup>225</sup>

In his *Second Life* Celano relates how Francis forbade his brothers to root out the stump of a fallen tree so that "it would still have hope of sprouting again." The saint is obviously referring to Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse, a scion thrusts from his roots." It probably inspired a passage from the *Mirror of Perfection*: "For the love of Him Who willed to redeem us on the wood of the cross."<sup>226</sup>

225. *1Cel* 80; Ps. 21:7. Francis used Psalm 21:7 for Terce of his *Office of the Passion*. See Part I D above: "Following the Crucified," or *Op.*, p. 132. Unfortunately L. Junge's excellent study, *Die Tierlegenden des hl. Franz von Assisi*. Studien über ihre Voraussetzungen und ihre Eigenart (Leipzig, 1932), p. 89, mentions the comparison only superficially. In the wealth of historical material that the author amasses to illustrate Francis's love for animals (pp. 82-120), we find no mention of the worm. For a patristic interpretation of Psalm 21:7 see Augustine, "Ennar. in Pss.," *Corp. Christi*, *PL* 38, 125: "Quare vermis? Quia mortalis, quia de carne natus, quia sine concubitu natus." See also Ambrose, "Expos. Evang. sec. Luc.," 1, 10, chap. 113, *PL* 14, 377: "Vermis in cruce, scarabaceus in cruce. Et bonus vermis, in ligno..." The various interpretations of the fathers have been collected by Cassiodorus, "Expos. Pss.," *ibid.*, 97, 193; Peter Lombard, "Comm. in Pss.," *PL* 191, 230cd. See also Bruno the Carthusian (d. 1101), "Expos. in Pss.," *PL* 152, 720c; Odo of Asti (ca. 1120), "Expos. in Pss.," *PL* 165, 1192ff; Bruno of Segni (Asti—d. 1123), "Expos. in Pss.," *PL* 164, 766ff; Remigius of Auxerre, "Enarr. in Pss.," *PL* 131, 252bc. We find the interpretation of Gerhoh Propst von Reichersberg (d. 1169) especially attractive: "Comm. in Pss.," *PL* 193, 999ff. Since the idea of "le ver, emblème du Christ humilié" is scarcely found in the history of iconography, Francis could not have been influenced by it. See L. Charbonneau and Lassay, *La mystérieuse emblématique de Jésus Christ: Le Bestiaire du Christ* (Brugge, 1940), pp. 835-39.

226. *2Cel* 165; *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 118, n. 4. Like Celano, the latter presents the account without solid foundation. Reference to the "Tree of the Cross" is made because of its liturgical use in the *Vexilla Regis* and *Ecce lignum crucis*. See G. Römer, "Die Liturgie des Karfreitags," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.* 77 (1955):75ff, 82-84, 86. It is impossible to determine whether the idea of the "Tree of Life" was associated with Francis's love of trees in general. See R. Bauerreis, O.S.B., *Arbor vitae: Der Lebensbaum, u. seine Verwendung in Liturgie, Kunst u. Brauchtum des Abendlandes* (Munich, 1938); H. Bergema, *De Boom des levens in Schrift en historie*. Bijdrage tot een onderzoek naar de verhouding van Schriftopenbaring en Traditie

These texts make it evident that Francis's contemplation of the passion did not rest on any superficial ethical considerations, but penetrated to that mysterious grace-filled reality which unites redeemed humanity, and indeed all of creation, with the Redeemer. Because of this profound insight and the living experience which underlay such expressions, we can speak of a passion mysticism in the strictest sense of the word.<sup>227</sup>

### C. Francis's Devotion to the Cross

Apparently Francis's devotion to the cross received a powerful impulse from his experience at San Damiano. Immediately after he heard the voice of the Crucified, the merchant's son handed over a sum of money to the priest who was in charge of liturgical services in the little church "to buy lamps and oil, so that the holy image would not be deprived for one moment of the honor of the light that was its due."

Francis's injunction to his first disciples to say the *Our Father* in place of the Divine Office, and to pray the *We Adore You, O Christ* must also be traced to his mystic experience of the crucifix. They said the little prayer whenever they entered a church or even saw one in the distance, as well as before every cross or cruciform object.<sup>228</sup>

St. Bonaventure adds an interesting detail: When the first brothers lacked liturgical books, "they had the book of Christ's cross, which they studied continually day and night, taught by the example and words of their father, who spoke to them constantly about the cross of Christ." Apart from the exaggerated "day and night," which means "always," the exercise of devotion at the sight of an image of the cross certainly is in accord with the early practices of the order.<sup>229</sup>

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betreffende den Boom des levens, binnen het kader der Oud Testamentische wetenschap (Hilversum, 1938).

227. For the meaning of mystic, see n. 40 above. It is very difficult to gain a deeper theological grasp of Christ-mysticism, especially passion-mysticism. One must keep in mind the role of the sacred humanity of Christ, which continually mediates our religious acts and confers on them an incarnational structure. See K. Rahner, S.J., "Probleme der Christologie von heute," in *Schriften zur Theologie* 1 (1956):169-222, esp. p. 209; W.A. van Roo, S.J., "The Resurrection of Christ: Instrumental cause of grace", in *Gregor.* 39 (1958):271-84, esp. pp. 271ff, n. 2 (bibl.). We must recall the mystical union of the faithful with Christ as their head. See E. Mura, "La dottrina del Corpo Mistico," in *Problemi e orientamenti di teologia dogmatica*, vol. 2 (Milan, 1957) pp. 373-405. See esp. the bibliog. pp. 396-405.
228. *2Cel* 11; *L3S* 13. As the text plainly indicates, there is no question here of the sanctuary lamp which was used in Italy only after the fourteenth century. See P. Browe, S.J., *Die Verehrung der Eucharistie in MA* (Munich, 1933), p. 5. See *1Cel* 45. For the adoration formulary, see Part 1 B above: "Passion in Francis's Prayer-Life." See also *3Cel* III; *AnPer* 19; F. Van Ortruy, p. 40ab; Abate, *Nuovi studi*, pp. 359ff; *L3S* 37.
229. *LMaior* IV 3. The practice of gazing on the crucifix while meditating seems to have come to the fore in the course of the twelfth century. See Dumoutet, *Le Christ selon*

Later on the saint carried his veneration of the cross further. Celano and the *Mirror of Perfection* group relate how Francis once spent a night in prayer before the crucifix in an isolated church, perhaps St. Peter's, in Bovara, near Trevi, during which time he had to endure violent attacks from Satan.<sup>230</sup> When Celano says that Francis "would go alone to pray at night in churches abandoned and located in deserted places," it would not be farfetched to assume that he was thinking of such nocturnal prayer before the crucifix.<sup>231</sup> This is all the more likely since cruciform tablets were to be found all over Umbria and, as at San Damiano, were hanging in chapels of ease where the Blessed Sacrament was certainly not reserved.<sup>232</sup> It appears that a crucifix was placed over every altar at the time.<sup>233</sup>

Francis manifested his devotion to the cross by frequently praying with outstretched arms,<sup>234</sup> and by tracing the sign of the cross upon himself and others.<sup>235</sup> The sources often speak of the miracles he wrought through the sign of the cross.<sup>236</sup>

*la chair et la vie liturgique au m.-à* (Paris, 1932), pp. 23ff. But even before the seventh century, witnesses from the Syrian area testify that it was customary to place a wooden cross on the east wall of a room and pray before it. See E. Peterson, "La Croce e la preghiera verso oriente," in *Eph. Liturg.* 59 (1945):52-68. See also Part 1 B above: "Passion in Jesus's Prayer Life," and n. 31 above.

230. *2Cel* 122ff. It is not expressly stated that Francis prayed before the crucifix. On the other hand, Brother Pacificus, who accompanied the saint, states that he came back the following morning and found Francis prostrate in prayer before the altar: "Oratque interim ipse (socius) coram cruce ferventer." The place is identified in *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 59, pp. 162-64. See *Leg. ant.* (Delorme), no. 23, pp. 13ff. See also A. Bonaca, "Le memorie francescane di Trevi," in *Studi Franc.*, n.s. 13 (1927):26-35, 113-48. The author maintains that the crucifix shown today could not have come from the time of Francis.

231. *1Cel* 71. On it depends *LMaior* X 3.

232. L. Bracaloni, *Il prodigioso Crocifisso*, pp. 196ff, with references to E. Sandberg-Vavalà, *La Croce dipinta italiana* (Verona, 1929), pp. 613ff. For the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, besides the works cited by Browe in no. 152 above, see L. Köster, O.F.M., *De custodia sanctissimae Eucharistiae disquisitio historico-iuridica* (Rome, 1940), pp. 59-64. In the time of Francis the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in cathedrals and parish churches for Communion of the sick, but not in other churches and chapels. See also Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia*, vol. 2, pp. 507-9. We cannot agree with S.J.P. van Dijk, O.F.M. and J.K. Walker, *The Myth of the Aumbry*. Notes on medieval reservation practice and eucharistic devotion (London, 1957). See I. Brady, O.F.M. in *AFH* 52 (1959):342ff.

233. The crucifix was placed on the altar since the eleventh century. See J. Braun, S.J., *Das christliche Altargerät in seinem Sein u. seiner Entwicklung* (Munich, 1932), pp. 469ff, quoted by Jungmann in *Missarum Solemnia*, vol. 1, p. 337, n. 37.

234. "Tibi (in a secluded place) visus est nocte orans, manibus ad modum crucis protensis..." (*LMaior* X 4). See *1Cel* 48; *2Cel* 123. Franciscus "prostratus in faciem, in modum crucis reperitur (by a companion) *2Cel* 178. Both forms seem to be inspired by monastic traditions. See L. Gougaud, O.S.B., "La prière les bras en croix," in *Rass. Gregor.* 7 (1908), pp. 343-54, and his *Devotions et pratiques ascétiques du m.à.* (Paris, 1925), pp. 1-42. For the practice of praying with outstretched arms, see Tertullian, "De oratione," chap. 14, *Corp. Christ.* 1, 265.



235. *1Cel* 8, 11; *2Cel* 122. For blessing others, see esp. *2Cel* 45. See also *1Cel* 72, 54; *2Cel* 137. To trace the cross on the forehead was a common practice of the church at least since the year 150. See F.J. Dölger, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Kreuzzeichens," I, in *Jahrb. Ant. Christ.* 1 (1959):5-13, especially p. 9. See also J. Sauer, in *Lex. Theol. Kirche*, s.v. "Kreuzzeichen." See also Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia*, vol. 1, pp. 383ff; Index, vol. 2, p. 638a, and pp. 544-54 for an explanation of the final blessing.
236. *1Cel* 65-68. For dismissal of the birds after his sermon see *1Cel* 65-68. For the red-hot iron before his eye surgery, see *2Cel* 41, 166. For the healing (after Francis's death) of a wounded leg with the sign of the Tau (the passage remains in the restored text), see *3Cel* XVII, CLIX. For the saint's veneration of the Tau, see the lengthy account given above in Part 1 C: "Francis and the Mystical Tau." In addition to the wealth of historical material we have presented, we must add that in Greek documents the signature was often abbreviated. This is why bishops and abbots place the cross before their signatures. See Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia*, vol. 2, p. 311, n. 9. See also F.J. Dölger, *Beiträge*, pp. 13-16.

## Part 4

### The Role of the Passion in Francis's Quest of Sanctity

The passion of Jesus influenced not only the prayers but the everyday life of the saint. For him the mystery of the cross was an ongoing impetus to strive for perfection. This is evidenced by numerous examples of his conformity to the cross. To provide an overview of the wealth of material, we shall treat in sequence: (A) his association of the cross with clothing, (B) his following of the cross through self-abnegation, (C) the rooting of his apostolic zeal in the mystery of redemption, (D) certain passion themes that are found only in Bonaventure's writings, and finally (E) his longing for a bloody imitation of the Crucified through martyrdom.

#### A. His Association of the Cross with Clothing

Francis recognized the connection of the religious habit with the mystery of the cross at an early date. When he heard the Gospel of the sending of the Apostles (Matt. 10:1-42 and parallels) on February 24, 1209, the feast of St. Matthias, in the chapel of the Portiuncula, he understood his own apostolic mission; and following the command of the Lord to His disciples, he laid aside his hermit's garb.

He immediately put off his shoes from his feet, put away his staff, was content with one tunic, and exchanged his leathern belt for a piece of rope. He designed a tunic that bore the likeness of a cross, so that he might beat off the temptations of the devil. He chose one of very coarse material so that he might crucify the flesh with all its sins and vices (Gal. 5:24).<sup>237</sup>

The significance of the religious habit as "a tunic that bore the likeness of a cross" has no support in the writings of St. Francis, but it is no less probable on that account. The saint was harking back to an ancient Christian tradition. Even the cenobites in the time of St. Pachomius (d. 346) stitched the figure of the cross on the hood of their garments. Philip Oppenheim notes: "This was to indicate that the life of the monk stood under the sign of the cross."<sup>238</sup> It is possible also that

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237. *1Cel* 22. See no. 19. See also *Leg. S. Francisci Assisiensis*, no. 25, but without reference to the cross. See Abate, p. 397. On the other hand, *3Cel* II is very explicit: "Nonne etiam in ipsa se cruce recludens, habitum paenitentiae sumpsit, crucis imaginem praefertentem? Qui habitus licet pro eo quod magis esset aemulus paupertatis, magis suo proposito conveniret, plus tamen in eo Sanctus mysterium comprobavit quatenus ut mens eius intro Dominum crucifixum induerat, sic totum corpus eius crucem Christi (Gal. 3:27; 6:14) foris indueret, et in quo signo Deus potestates aereas debellarat, in eodem suus exercitus Deo militaret." See *Major Life* Prol. 2: "habitum cruci conformis."

a text of John Cassian (d. 435) refers to the cross-symbolism of the religious habit: "We must spend our lives, therefore, in the shape and habit in which Christ hung upon the cross for our sakes."<sup>239</sup>

The mysterious Honorius Augustodunensis of Canterbury [or of Autun—Editor], a twelfth-century hermit who lived in the neighborhood of Regensburg, is more explicit: "And therefore, dearly beloved, let us take note that our habit is in the shape of the Lord's cross, that we are crucified to the world and the world to us as we patiently carry the banner of the cross."<sup>240</sup>

How are we to understand this association of the habit with the cross, which at first glance appears to have been little known? The reason stems from the very shape of the habit. If the hood is raised over the head and the arms extended (this manner of praying was already in use in the order), the Friar Minor had the appearance of being attached to and enveloped by the cross. He would look like a walking crucifix.<sup>241</sup> The long hood terminating in a point (this seems to have been its original shape) would form the top of the cross. If it were drawn over the head and viewed from the side, it looked somewhat like a square. As Angelus of Clareno remarks, the square cowl (*capucium quadratum*) should be of sufficient length to cover the head so that the crucifix-symbolism of the Franciscan habit might be all the more evident.<sup>242</sup>

238. Ph. Oppenheim, O.S.B., *Symbolik u. religioese Wertung des Mönchkleides im christlichen Altertum, vornehmlich nach Zeugnissen christlicher Schriftsteller der Ostkirche* (Münster, 1932), p. 48. See also pp. 58ff, 98ff.

239. Johannes Cassian, "De institutis coenobiorum," 1.3, no. 34: *CSEL* 17, 72.

240. Honorius of Canterbury [sic] (Augustodunensis), "Speculum Ecclesiae. In conventu Fratrum," *PL* 172, 1092ff [Augustodunensis is Latin for Autun. The *New Catholic Dictionary* calls him Honorius of Autun. Augustodunensis was his pseudonym.—Editor]. For its origins, see the study of R. Bauer and Reiss, "Honorius von Canterbury (Augustodunensis) u. Kuno I., der Raitenbucher, Bischof von Regensburg (1126–36)," in *Stud. Mitt. Gesch. Ben. O.* 67 (1956):306–13. In a similar vein, see O. Lottin, O.S.B., in *Bull. Théol. An. Méd.*, vol. 8, no. 690. For the literature on the symbolism of the religious habit, see M. Bernards, *Speculum Virginum. Geistigkeit u. Seelenleben der Frau im Hochmittelalter* (Cologne–Graz, 1955), p. 127, n. 444.

241. We cannot go into the problem of the Franciscan habit, especially its original form. For a good objective view of the question and references to relevant literature see Gratien (of Paris), O.F.M.Cap., "Saint François d'Assise au Musée du Trocadero: Notes d'iconographie franciscaine," in *Étud. Franc.* 38 (1926):507–993; R.M. Huber, O.F.M.Conv., *A documented history of the Franciscan Order. From the birth of St. Francis to the division of the Order, 1182–1517* (Washington, 1944), pp. 669–85. The reason for the cruciform shape of the habit is very clearly stated in the *Constitutiones Fratrum Minorum Capuccinorum*, no. 36 (Rome, 1931), p. 45: "...habitus noster crucis formam crucis praeseferat, et nos mundo crucifixos mundumque nobis, pro comperto habeamus."

242. Angelus of Clareno, *Historia septem tribulationum Ordinis Minorum*, Trib. 7; F. Ehrle, S.J., in *Arch. Lit. K.G.M.A.*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1886), p. 153, or A. Ghinato, O.F.M. (Sussidi e Testi per la Gioventù Francescana, 10, Rome, 1959), p. 222:

Moreover, the rough gray habit would be a palpable witness of a sharing in the sufferings of Christ. In this vein the same spiritual master writes: "(Francis) taught that the habit was to be made of cheap cloth, gray or undyed, signifying mortification of the body of Christ."<sup>243</sup>

The later Archbishop Odo Rigaud (d. 1275) could write of St. Anthony that he put on the cruciform habit. He speaks feelingly: "Bear the arms of Christ, the unconquerable King; bear His cross in the habit."<sup>244</sup>

People today find it more difficult to understand Francis's imitation of the nakedness of the cross in his life than the crucifix-symbol of the habit. When the merchant's son was hailed before Bishop Guido at the behest of his father in 1207, "immediately putting off his clothes and casting them aside he gave them back to his father. Moreover, not even retaining his trousers, he stripped himself completely naked before all" (*ICel* 15). The bishop threw his own cloak around the young man. The biographer concludes his account: "Behold, how he wrestles naked with his naked adversary, and having put off everything that is of this world, he thinks only about the things of the Lord."<sup>245</sup>

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"Capucium quadrum et tantae longitudinis, quod faciem operiret, ita quod habitus crucis formam repraesentaret et omnis mundanae gloriae et ornatus contemptum sua vilitate praedicaret et Fratrem Minorem mundo crucifixum et mortuum ostenderet, et esset nuditatis operimentum et necessitatis amatorum paupertatis fomentum, et professorum humilitatis signum, et portationis improprietatis crucis Christi verum indicium." The long pointed cowl, much as the Capuchins wear today, must have been the original form. See R.M. Huber, *History of the Franciscan Order*, p. 681. For the "capucium quadrum," see Adalbert Wagner (Vonstans), "Under Ordenskleid u. die 'viereckige' Kapuze," in *St. Fidelis* (Luzern) 15 (1928):124-27, 153-55, with illus. on pp. 128-29.

243. Angelus of Clareno, *Historia*, Trib. 7, 153 and n. 81, and esp. 221. Francis prescribed poverty and simplicity in clothing without however making reference to the cross. See *RegNB* II; *RegB* II; *Test* 4; K. Esser, p. 101. See also Bartholomaeus (de Rinconio) of Pisa, "De conformitate vitae b. Francisci ad vitam Domini Jesu, 1.2., fructus 16, pars 2," in *AF* 5:104ff; Wadding, O.F.M.Obs., *Annales Minorum ad an. 1208*, vol. 1 (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1931), nos. 48-50, pp. 52-54. For references to the ascetic aspect of the Franciscan habit, see M. Sticco, "I vestiti di S. Francesco," in *Vita Pens.* 32 (1949):415-20. The cross-symbol was expanded in one detail when the sources associated to the tonsure to the crowning with thorns suffered by Christ. But there is no proof of any original connection. That this meaning was not unknown is proved by A. Michael, in *Dict. Theol. Cath.*, s.v. "tonsure." There is no original source extant which associates the cord with the passion. Yet Bonaventure ("Expositio super Reg. Fratrum Minorum," no. 11, *Op. Om.*, vol. 8, p. 400v) believed that Francis was inspired by the arrest and binding of the Savior. Bernard of Besse, O.Min (d. 1300), in "Liber de Laudibus," chap. 5, in *AF* 3:675, cites humility as the motive. See n. 168 below.
244. Odo Rigaud, *Vita b. Antonii*, F. Conconi (Padua, 1930), p. 60. Here we find the cord linked with the idea of obedience. In the light of the text cited in nn. 81-83 above, we believe that the otherwise-excellent study of S. Verhey, O.F.M., "Das Leben in der Busse nach Franziskus von Assisi," in *Wiss. Weish.* 22 (1959):161-74, is not historically accurate in its treatment of the Franciscan habit. In addition to a consideration of places and cold climates, both Rules (*RegNB* III; *RegB* II) expressly demand *vilitas* and the bare essentials in the matter of clothing.

A passage from a homily of Gregory the Great helps us better understand the symbolism of the scene: "Naked we should fight with the naked." The well-known expression is a variation of the thought of St. Jerome: "Being naked, to follow the naked Christ, that is, the bare cross." This thinking was clearly understood in monasticism, where it meant a lack of all possessions. The concept of the naked Christ underwent a powerful development among the devotees of the evangelical renewal movement in the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries.<sup>246</sup>

Gregory's formulation was influenced by the sport of wrestling, which he used to describe the Christian's struggle with Satan. Although Celano adopted this image, St. Bonaventure, with good reason, we believe, deserves more credit when he writes: "The servant of the most high King was left naked, so that he might follow his naked crucified Lord, whom he loved."<sup>247</sup>

Francis removed the clothes from his body as a sign of total self-stripping and complete union with the naked, crucified Redeemer. In evaluating this symbolic gesture we must keep in mind the impetuous character of the saint, which led him to externalize his interior feelings.<sup>248</sup> It should be further remembered that Francis was endowed by nature and grace with a high degree of the virtue of simplicity. Without debating the hows and whys, and with no thought of self, he stripped himself, simply because he felt that in so doing he was able to imitate Christ in absolute fidelity.<sup>249</sup> Finally, we must not overlook the candor

245. *ICel* 15. The incident is also reported by *AnPer* 8; F. van Ortruy, 37; *L3S* 20; G. Abate, pp. 392ff, 254. See also the historically rich commentary of A. Fortini, *Nova vita*, vol. 2, pp. 223-37.

246. For a number of references, see Alcantara Mens (van Herselt), O.F.M.Cap., *Oorsprung en betekenis van de Nederlandse Begijnen en Begardenbeweging* (Antwerp, 1947), pp. 37-39, 71ff, 94, 200. See also M. Bernards, "Nudus nudum sequi," in *Wiss. Weish.* 14 (1951):148-51; R.L. Oechslein, O.P., G. Bardy, and H. Martin, S.S., in *Dict. Spir.*, s.v. "Dépouillement," which offers a historical overview of the concept of interior detachment from the N.T. to Francis (pp.456-69) and its theological implications (p. 497-502).

247. In *LMaior* II 4; XIV 4. *2Cel* 12 has: "Nudus igitur ad Dominum pergam." Less convincing is the Seraphic Doctor when he claims that Francis took the cloak offered him and "cum caemento ... ad modum crucis manu propria consignavit" (*LMaior* II 4).

248. Recall his loud lamentations over the passion and his improvised playing of the violin. See Part 3 B 2 above: "Co-suffering with the Redeemer." This tendency of the saint comes into even clearer relief in the creche scene at Greccio. See our article, "De kerstviering van Greccio in het licht van haar tijd," in *Franc. Leven* 40 (1957):163-77, and 41 (1958):21-27. W. Detloff, O.F.M., says in "Die Geistigkeit des hl. Franziskus in der Theologie der Franziskaner," in *Wiss. Weish.* 19 (1956):204: "He makes visible what he thinks." See also S. Verhey, *Leben in der Busse*, p. 167, n. 33.

249. See the excellent study of Esser and Hardick, *Der Weg der Einfachheit*, pp. 206-8. For witnesses contemporary with St. Francis, see H. Felder, *The Ideals of St. Francis*. For simplicity as a Christian virtue see H. Bacht, S.J., "Einfalt des

with which medieval man faced up to his sexuality. The ancient Christian baptismal rite prescribed a total disrobing of the catechumen before baptism which was administered by immersion.<sup>250</sup> More to the point is the observation of John Cassian that when a postulant entered the novitiate he was stripped of all his secular garments in the presence of the assembled community and then clothed with the habit of the order.<sup>251</sup> There was very likely only a question of relative nudity in the case of Francis, for Celano expressly states that the man of God was wearing a hair shirt around his body.<sup>252</sup>

Another scene in the Poverello's life has a similar spiritual connotation. Still weak from a bout with malaria, Francis had himself dragged one winter's day from the Cathedral of San Rufino with a rope around his neck and "stripped to his underwear" led through the streets to the Piazza Maggiore (now the Piazza del Comune) where criminals were punished. He accused himself of gluttony because he had relaxed his penitential practices on account of his impaired health.<sup>253</sup> The saint

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Herzens—eine vergessene Tugend?" in *Geist u. Leben* 29 (1956):416–26; R. Egenter, in *Lex. Theol. Kirche*, s.v. "Einfachheit," and J. Kürzinger, s.v. "Einfalt."

250. See E. Roff, *Lex. Theol. Kirche*, s.v. "Nacktheit." Ph. Oppenheim in *Religiöse Wertung des Ordenskleides*, pp. 8ff, believes it was absolute nudity, whereas A. Stenzel, S.J., *Die Taufe: Eine genetische Erklärung der Taufliturgie* (Innsbruck, 1958), p. 102, with F.J. Dölger, believes that *gymnos* is compatible with the wearing of some clothing (p.156). Cyril (Johannes?) of Jerusalem, in "Catecheses mustagogicae," 2, 2, *PL* 33, 1078a, is aware of the motif of the following of the Crucified: "Exuti, nudi fuistis, in hoc quoque nudatum in cruce Christum imitantes."
251. Johannes Cassian, "De institutis coenobiorum," 1.4, chap. 5, *CSEL* 17, 50ff; "Vitae Patrum," 1.3, 67ff, *PL* 73, 772. For these references we are indebted to N. Tamassia, *S. Francesco e la sua Leggenda* (Padua, 1906), pp. 48ff. Oppenheim in *Religiöse Wertung des Ordenskleides* points out that total stripping, when one was received into religious life in ancient times, must have been the exception. For the whole complex problem see J. Heckenbach, *De nuditate sacra sacrisque vinculis*, *Religions-geschichtl. Versuche u. Vorarbeiten*, vol. 9, 3 (Giessen, 1911), esp. pp. 64–68: "De nuditate Christianorum sacra."
252. *2Cel* 12; *LMaior* II 4. When Francis was dying, he had himself placed on sackcloth (see n. 177 below). Since the type of sackcloth varied greatly (see L. Gougaud, O.S.B., *Dict. Spir.* s.v. "Cilice"), and since the sackcloth preserved in the Basilica of St. Francis gives us no clue as to the time it was used, we can draw no certain conclusions. See B. Mariangeli, O.F.M.Conv., "Il cilizio di S. Francesco," in *MisFran* 18 (1917):96ff. See also the studies of the Bollandists, *Acta Sanctorum*, 2 Oct., 6, nos. 128–35; 569–71. Once again we must remember the candor with which medieval man accepted nakedness. See F. Meffert, *Caritas u. Krankenwesen*, pp. 275ff; W. Schöllen, *Actuelle Moralprobleme* (Düsseldorf, 1955), p. 268.
253. *LMaior* VI 2; *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 61, pp. 169–72; See Delorme, *Leg. ant.*, no. 39, p. 23, for more details. See For some interesting local traditions, see A. Fortini, *Nova vita*, vol. 1/2, pp. 136–40. P. Sabatier in *SpPer*, chap. 2, remarks: "C'est une procession qu'il organise et il y joue le rôle du pénitent du vendredi saint." It is possible that this motive was present, but Fortini (*Nova vita*, vol. 1/2, p. 139, n. 2) seems to be more correct when he writes: "E dunque chiara l'intenzione del Santo, il quale volle anche lui esporsi, come falsario, al pubblico disprezzo nel modo

must have associated his self-imposed public penance for his fault with the atonement of the Redeemer.

The following is a striking statement about the saint: "Francis once said that a great cleric must in some way give up even his learning when he comes to the order, so that having renounced such a possession, he may offer himself naked to the arms of the Crucified."<sup>254</sup>

Francis wished at the beginning of his new life to demonstrate his complete renunciation before Bishop Guido by public stripping. At the end, a few days before his death, he ordered his brothers to undress him and place him naked on the bare ground as a sign of his poverty and fellowship with Jesus on the cross. Then he accepted his clothes back from the father guardian as a loan.<sup>255</sup> While it is true that Celano links the incident with a struggle with Satan, the whole scene is evocative of the following of the Crucified. That the saint conceived his last days as a reenactment of the suffering and death of Jesus is clear from his imitation of the Last Supper. During the meal Francis handed each of the brothers a slice of bread and asked that the Gospel of the washing of the feet be read (John 13:1-20).<sup>256</sup> Bonaventure's interpretation seems to be correct when he writes: "In all things he wished to be conformed to Christ crucified, who hung on the cross poor, suffering and naked."<sup>257</sup>

In his *First Life*, Celano provides us with a further detail that confirms our view. After the Gospel passage was read: "The saint had himself laid on sackcloth and sprinkled with ashes, since he was soon to become dust and ashes."<sup>258</sup> This practice is not unique in medieval hagiography. It appears to have been a common custom at a deathbed in monasteries. After receiving the last rites, the dying monk was

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prescritto dalle leggi comunali. E poiché la sua carne aveva mangiato per eccessiva mollezza, essa doveva subire il contrario castigo del tormento del freddo." On the other hand, his immersion in the ice-cold water and his making snow-figures must have been tactics in his battle with Satan (see no. 170 above). See also *1Cel* 42; *2Cel* 116ff. *1Cel* 64: "Nec minus antiquens serpens nudum hominem fugit."

254. *2Cel* 194. See parallel *LMaior* VII 2. See also Esser, "Mysterium paupertatis," in *Wiss. Weish.* 14 (1951):179. "Clericus" here does not mean "clergy" in the modern sense but any educated person. See Landgraf, "Zum gebrauch des Wortes clericus im 12 Jh.," in *CF* 22 (1952):74-78. See also L. Hardick, O.F.M., "Gedanken zu Sinn u. Tragweite des Begriffes 'Clerici,'" in *AFH* 50 (1957):7-26.

255. *2Cel* 214.

256. *2Cel* 217. Here *1Cel* 110 is improved and clarified. For parallel passages with more details see *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 88, nos. 6-12, p. 262; *SpPer*, ed. Lemmens, no. 34, pp. 71ff; Fortini, *Nova vita*, vol. 1/2, pp. 341ff; van den Borne, *Voornaamste feiten*, p. 314. As with Gougaud, O.S.B., there is reference to a custom of the early days of the order. See also n. 83 above.

257. *LMaior* XIV 4.

258. *1Cel* 110.

sprinkled with blessed ashes and placed on the bare floor or on sackcloth marked with a cross.<sup>259</sup>

As he neared death, Francis ordered: "When you (my brothers) see that I am brought to my last moments, place me naked on the ground, just as you saw me the day before yesterday, and let me lie there after I am dead for the length of time it takes one to walk a mile leisurely." The same author repeats the impression of many eyewitnesses when he writes: The dead, stigmatized Francis "looked as though he had been just taken down from the cross."<sup>260</sup>

From the beginning of his new life until his death this stripping of the saint, which has many aspects, is not symptomatic of any morbid exhibitionism but an attempt to express symbolically his total detachment from all material things in association with the Crucified.

## B. His Following of the Cross through Self-denial

Francis's following of the cross manifested itself not only in the form of his clothing and his stripping, but also in his practice of self-denial. This association is nothing new. It is expressed in the New Testament and we find an echo in the works of the fathers and spiritual writers of the following centuries, as F. Wulf has shown.<sup>261</sup>

St. Bonaventure testifies to Francis's efforts to mortify his body through acts of penance: "In order to carry in his own body the armor of the cross, he held in check his sensual appetites with such a rigid discipline that he scarcely took what was necessary for the sustenance of nature." He thereupon paints an impressive picture of the saint's austerity in matters of eating and drinking, clothing and shelter.<sup>262</sup> Of

259. Gougau, *Dict. Spir.*, s.v. "Cendres," where the ascetic significance of the custom of strewing ashes is discussed. See the prescriptions of the "Constitutiones Hirsaugienses," 1.2, chap. 64, *PL* 150, 1334, where further details of "coram eo (morundo) passiones legere" are given. For many parallels see E. Martène, O.S.B., *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus*, vol. 4, 1.4, chap. 9 (Antwerp, 1764), pp. 249-50. See also Gougau, *Coutumes claustrales*, pp. 69-95, esp. pp. 80-82, and p. 77, n. 2, where reference is made to Th. Zachariae, "Sterbende werden auf die Erde gelegt," in *Arch. Rel. Wiss.* 9 (1906):538. For sackcloth, see n. 176 above. See also Oppenheim, *Religöse Wertung des Ordenskleides*, pp. 87-94; Geiger, in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, s.v. "Sterben."

260. *2Cel* 217; *1Cel* 112; A. Fortini, *Nova vita*, vol. 1/2, pp. 341ff. Because of the ambiguity of the *terminus a quo*, we cannot give a precise meaning to the *nudiustertius*. A Roman mile measured about one and a half kilometers (1472.05 meters). It would take a good quarter hour to walk it.

261. F. Wulf, S.J., "Selbstverleugnung u. Abtötung als Übung der Nachfolge Christi u. als Kennzeichen des neuen Lebens in Christus," in *Geist u. Leben* 25 (1952):4-24. See also E. Raitz von Frentz, S.J., *Selbstverleugnung. Eine aszetische Monographie* (Einsiedeln, 1936), *passim*.

262. *LMaior* V 1. For various penances practiced by the saint, see H. Felder, *Ideale*, pp. 214-27, and K. Esser, "Die Lehre des hl. Franziskus von der Selbstverleugnung," in *Wiss. Weish.* 18 (1955):162ff. See also Optatus, "De Orde van Boetvaardigheid: Over



course Celano also describes these particular forms of mortification; but as far as we can ascertain, he nowhere expressly bases them on the thought of the cross. On the other hand, like Bonaventure, Celano views the overall penitential life of the saint as growing out of the mystery of the cross. Thus in his *Second Life* he tells of the renunciation of Brother Bernard of Quintavalle. When Bernard told Francis of his decision, the two went the next morning to the Church of St. Nicholas where they first prayed and then opened the book of the Gospels. In doing so they came upon these passages: Matthew 19:21, Luke 9:3, Luke 29:23, and especially Matthew 16:24: "He who would come after me must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me."<sup>263</sup>

Jesus' call to His true disciples to prepare themselves for martyrdom and to die by means of daily mortification was one of the most powerful motivational forces of the early Franciscan life-style. Quite understandably they were incorporated by Francis himself in the Earlier Rule of 1221 and no doubt formed part of the first draft of the friars' way of life written in 1210, which unfortunately has been lost.<sup>264</sup>

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de boete in de geest van Franciscus," in *Franc. Leven* 42 (1959):33-43, esp. pp. 39-41. See also S. Verhey, *Leben in der Busse*, p. 165.

263. *2Cel* 19; *LMaior* III 3, where the church is identified as that of St. Nicholas, which once stood in the Piazza del Commune. Today its crypt still houses the Roman Museum. According to *AnPer* 10ff (van Ortroy, pp. 37ff; *L3S* 28; and G. Abate 399, 257) Peter of Catania was competent in both branches of law. For further details from the sources, see A. Fortini, *Nova vita*, vol. 2, pp. 278ff. M. Faloci-Pulignani, in "Il messale consultato da S. Francesco quando si convertì," in *MisFran* 15 (1914):33-43, investigates a book of the Gospels which a book dealer, J. Baer, of Frankfurt am Main, listed in his catalog simply as N. 4686. The author succeeds in showing that the volume very probably was in the Church of St. Nicholas at the time of Francis. The author concludes that this was the very book that Francis opened, or had opened for him. But we cannot have absolute certainty about it. See B. Bucchetti, O.F.M., in *AFH* 7 (1914):784ff. The pertinent Gospel passages are found in fol. 133r, 119v, and 250r. The last one (Matt. 16:24) is from the common of a martyr (pp. 39ff). *LMaior* I 5 relates Jesus' call to a following of the cross with the alleged apparition of the Crucified. As we have shown in Part 3 A above: "Apparitions of the Crucified in the Life of St. Francis," there is no historical evidence for it. *L3S* 14 (Abate, pp. 253, 388) links the *carnis maceratio* with the voice from the cross. This view can claim some internal probability. See n. 188 below.

264. For this text see among others K.H. Schelkle, *Die Passion Jesu in der Verkündigung des NT*. Ein Beitrag zur Formgeschichte u. zur Theologie des N.T (Heidelberg, 1949), pp. 217-23, esp. pp. 222ff. Unfortunately we were not able to see this work. See E. Dinkler, "Jesu Wort vom Kreuztragen," in *Ntl. Studien für R. Bultmann zu seinem 70 Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1954), pp. 110-129. For quotations from the Franciscan Rule, (chap. 1) see L. Casutt, *Franziskanische Lebensform*, pp. 77, 117ff, 140. Opening the Bible, and finding in the first words a personal message from God, is a practice used by Augustine on more than one occasion. Later we find many instances of this custom in religious literature and pious practice. Sometimes it was accompanied by solemn ceremonies. See Ch. du Cange and G.A.L. Henschel,

The events surrounding the deathbed of the Poverello are well known. Francis was afraid that he was going too far in pampering his body and shared his concern with a trusted confrere. The latter, however, did not agree with the sick man. He reminded him of the severe mortifications he had inflicted on his body. In the course of their conversation Francis promised that he would take better care of his body in the future. Celano remarks parenthetically about the futility of such a promise: "Francis was already dead to the world, but Christ was living in him. All the pleasures of the world were a cross to him because he carried the cross of Christ. And therefore the stigmata shone forth exteriorly in his flesh because they were rooted interiorly and sprouted forth from his heart."<sup>265</sup>

In his account of the speaking-crucifix of San Damiano, Celano makes reference here to Francis's stigmatization. In poetic terms he describes the marks of the wounds as the ripe fruit growing out of the saint's love for the cross as from a fertile soil.<sup>266</sup>

Since the sources support the idea that Francis was motivated in his overall practice of mortification by the cross of Christ, we can look for similar evidence in later compilers. According to the *Mirror of Perfection*, Francis called the Rule of the Friars Minor "the book of life, the hope of salvation, the pledge of glory, the marrow of the Gospel, the way of the cross."<sup>267</sup>

Although other types of penance, as far as we know, have never been expressly linked with the sufferings of Christ, scourging cannot be passed over. It is a way of sharing in the horrible pains of the flagellation endured by Jesus. The first historical reference to this ascetic practice dates back to the eighth century and concerns St. Pardulf, Abbot of Guéret (d. 737). The "discipline" became more prominent in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. St. Peter Damian was the foremost champion and propagator of the practice both within and outside his order.<sup>268</sup>

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*Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis*, s.v. "Sors Sanctorum." See esp. Boehm, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, s.vv. "Los" and "Losen." We must keep in mind the widespread use of this casting lots with the word of God and Francis's deep respect for the "divina verba scripta" (*EpOrd*) before we pass any moral judgments on his behavior. We shall return later to his reliance on the word of God.

265. *2Cel* 210ff.

266. We shall investigate the scope of this passage later. See n. 130 above.

267. *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 76, no. 3, p. 222. The parallel texts in *Verba S. P. Francisci*, no. 3; see Lemmens (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1901), pp. 101, and *2Cel* 208. Pages 249ff omit any reference to the cross. See also *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 85, n. 9, p. 254, where we read that Francis praised Brother Juniper's "summum desiderium imitandi Christum per viam crucis" (and also 70, n. 5, p. 202).

268. See *Dict. Spir.*, esp. L. Gougaud, O.S.B., s.v. "Dévotions et pratiques," and E. Bertaud, O.S.B., s.v. "Discipline." The author presents a still-earlier example:

Francis referred to this practice of penance a number of times. After he recommended prudent moderation in the treatment of Brother Body,<sup>269</sup> he emphasized, nevertheless, the need for mortification. He cited the example of the lazy beast of burden who remains stubborn in spite of being well fed. Celano writes: "Only in this teaching did the most holy father's actions differ from his words. For he subjected his own innocent body to scourging and want, multiplying its wounds without cause. For the warmth of his spirit had already so spiritualized his body that with his soul athirst for God, his most holy flesh also thirsted."<sup>270</sup>

One passage tells us of the way he scourged himself and the instrument he used. When Satan tempted the saint to sin against chastity, Francis "put aside his clothing and beat himself very severely with his cord, saying: 'See, Brother Ass, this is what you deserve. You should feel the whip. The tunic belongs to the order; stealing is not allowed. If you want to go your way, go.'"<sup>271</sup> The body, like a stubborn ass, wants to cast off the yoke of the Franciscan life that it took upon itself through the vow of obedience. It must be brought once more under God's control through a beating.

### C. Apostolic Zeal for Souls Rooted in the Mystery of Redemption

The early biographers associate both Francis's mortification and his apostolic zeal with the mystery of Redemption. As Celano writes: "He used to say that nothing is more important than the salvation of souls, and he often offered as proof the fact that the Only-begotten of God deigned to hang on the cross for souls. This accounts for his struggles at prayer, his tirelessness at preaching, his excess in giving examples.

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Kentigern, bishop of Glasgow (d. 603). Since his life was not written until 1185, there is some question as to whether the reference is an interpolation. See M. Bernards, *Speculum Virginum*, p. 134, n. 547. For Peter Damian, see *Op.*, p. 43, "De laude flagellorum," *PL* 145, 679-86. See also O.J. Blum, *St. Peter Damian, His teaching on the spiritual life* (Washington, 1947), pp. 114-19, and Index, s.v. "Discipline."

269. For understanding the meaning of "Brother Body" and "Brother Ass," see C. Andresen, "Asketische Forderung u. krankheit bei Franz von Assisi," in *Theol. Lit. Ztg.* 79 (1954):135. Maximilianus (a Moerdijk) O.F.M.Cap, in "Broeder Ezel," in *Franc. Leven* 42 (1959):15-16, points out an interesting parallel in Jerome's *Epist.* 107, "Ad Laetam de institutione filiae," no. 10, *CSEL* 55, 301, esp. no. 11, *PL* 22, 875: "Displicent mihi in teneris vel maxime aetatibus longa et immoderata jejunia, quibus iunguntur hebdomades et oleum in cibo ac poma vitantur. Experimento didici asellum in via, cum lassus fuerit, diverticula quaerere."

270. *2Cel* 129. For parallels see *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 97, pp. 280ff; *2Cel* 123 and *LMaior* IX 4.

271. *2Cel* 116. Nowhere in the sources is there any mention of scourging by others as mentioned in the life of St. Pardulph. See Gougau, *Devotions*, p. 185. Other forms of mortification, especially fasting, will be treated later.

He did not consider himself a friend of Christ unless he loved the souls that Christ loved.<sup>272</sup>

The overwhelming love of the Son of God which surpasses all human comprehension and by which He redeemed us through His death on the cross drove the apostolic man, despite his strong predilection for the contemplative life, into the streets of the Italian towns and villages and even into foreign lands. His exemplary conduct and his burning words strove to rob Satan of his plunder of sinners and thereby prevent the sufferings of Christ being made useless for any human being.<sup>273</sup>

#### D. Passion Motif as Found Only in St. Bonaventure

The Seraphic Doctor narrates more incidents from the life of St. Francis that are based on the cross. But since his tendency to exaggerate the passion motif has already been shown, his evidence must not be accepted at face value. According to him, the newly converted Francis put aside all shame out of love for the poor crucified Christ, in order to restore the chapel of San Damiano and begged alms from wealthy citizens.<sup>274</sup> Borrowing from Celano's *First Life*, the Seraphic Doctor tells how the saint sent out his first disciples. Francis and another brother came to a crossroads, perhaps in the valley of Rieti. "The remaining six [brothers] he sent in the other three directions, thus forming the pattern of a cross."<sup>275</sup> On his deathbed Francis adjured his spiritual sons with all the force he could command "to follow perfectly the footprints of the crucified Jesus." It is significant that the reference of the writings of Francis to "follow the footsteps of the Lord Jesus" should be specified as a following of the cross.<sup>276</sup>

272. *2Cel* 172. For parallels see *LMaior* IX 4: "Non se Christi reputabat amicum, nisi animas foveret, quas ille redemit." See also *LMaior* VIII 1 and XIV 1. Here we can give Francis's striking answer to a woman who complained to him about the cruelty of her husband: "Vade et invenies virum tuum (in) domo et dices ei ex parte mea, quod ipsum et te rogo amore illius Domini qui pro nobis salvandis crucis sustinuit Passionem, ut salvetis animas vestras in domo vestra" (See Delorme, *Leg. ant.*, no. 27, p. 17). It is somewhat different in *2Cel* 38. See K. Esser and E. Grau, *Antwort der Liebe. Der Weg des franziskanischen Menschen zu Gott* (Werl in Westphalia, 1958), pp. 263-78, esp. pp. 266ff.

273. Julian of Spire (d. ca. 1250), "Officium S. Francisci," in *AF* 10:375 calls Francis "vir catholicus et totus apostolicus."

274. *LMaior* II 7. *2Cel* 13 is not aware of this motivation.

275. *LMaior* III 7; *1Cel* 29, 30. In no. 24 Francis simply said: "Te ... bini et bini per diversas partes orbis... Franciscus vero cum uno socio aliam mundi partem, reliqui quattuor incedentes bini partes reliquas tenuerunt." Bonaventure's personal views are quite evident. For his sending them out in different directions in the valley of Rieti, see Grau, *Thomas von Celano*, p. 97, n. 103.

276. *LMinor* VII 4; *RegNB* I. For further passages see Esser and Hardick, *Schriften*, p. 248b, Index s.v. "Fussspuren." *LMinor* III 1 has something similar: "Insignis sectator crucifixi Jesu."

### E. Francis's Longing for Martyrdom

Francis's hope of following the crucified Savior on the road of martyrdom is a constantly recurring theme. For the sake of clarity we shall subdivide this rather lengthy section. This procedure has the further advantage of making the chronological order of events clearer. After (a) a general introduction to this motif, we shall speak (b) of Francis's abortive missionary expedition, (c) his journey to Egypt, (d) a possible pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and finally (e) his attempts to find a substitute for martyrdom in his last illness.

#### 1. Francis's Longing for Martyrdom

The idea of martyrdom as the most perfect way of following the Crucified took hold on early Christians.<sup>277</sup> Even after the first waves of persecution ebbed and the prospect of bloody martyrdom dwindled, a longing for this supreme proof of loyalty to Christ persisted. Since all spiritual growth was measured in terms of martyrdom, it is understandable, too, that the privations of monastic life came to be compared with it and looked upon as a substitute for it. The theory of a twofold martyrdom was expounded by Sulpitius Severus (d. 420), though he did not originate it. Because of the perennial impact of the life of St. Martin on future generations, a substitute martyrdom came to be one of the most influential concepts of early medieval monasticism. The Irish monks, especially, cherished this ideal. Such a historically-rooted concept lost, of course, none of its appeal in the later Middle Ages.<sup>278</sup> St. Bernard not only considered mortification as such a substitute, but celebrated Christ as the perfect martyr.<sup>279</sup> The launching of the crusades in the eleventh century offered Christians the prospect of shedding their blood on the battlefield for Christ. The ideal of following the cross was one of the most dynamic driving forces of the armed pilgrimages.<sup>280</sup>

277. M. Viller, S.J., and K. Rahner, S.J., *Ascese u. Mystic in der Väterzeit* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1939), pp. 30-33, esp. pp. 29ff (bibl.). See also K. Baus, "Das Gebet der Märtyrer," in *Trierer Theol. Zschr.* 62 (1953):19-32.

278. Viller and Rahner, *Ascese*, pp. 38-40. See also L. Gougaud, "Le désir du martyre et le quasi-martyre," *Devotions*, pp. 200-19. Of greatest importance is his treatment of Gregory the Great (pp. 203ff) and Ireland (pp. 205-14). Other works treating of the same topic are: E.E. Malone, "The Monk and the Martyr," in B. Steidle, O.S.B., *Antonius M. Eremita*, Studia Anselmiana, vol. 38 (Rome, 1956), pp. 201-28; E.E. Malone, "Spiritual martyrs and Irish Monks," in *American Benedictine Review* 2 (1951):393-409. Further examples of its later development, especially in the context of the ideal of virginity may be found in Bernard's *Speculum Virginum*, pp. 45, 180.

279. "In Cant. Sermo 30," no. 11, *S. Bernardi opera*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1957), p. 217: "Quamquam genus martyrii est, Spiritu facta carnis mortificare..." Idem, "Sermo 27," no. 5, vol. 2 (1958), p. 64: "Idem (Dominus Jesus) flos campi, martyr, martyrum corona, martyrii forma."

280. See among others E. Delaruelle, "Essai sur la formation de l'idée de croisade," in *Bull. Litt. Eccl. Toulouse*, 42 (1941):24-25, 86-103; 45 (1944):13-46, 73-90; 54

How eagerly the Poverello embraced this crusade mentality is seen from a remarkable passage from Brother Leo's *Sanctissimi Patris nostri Francisci intentio Regulae*: "The Emperor Charlemagne, Roland, Oliver, and all the paladins and valiant men who were strong in battle, attacking the infidels with great toil and effort even unto death, attained a glorious and memorable victory, and in the end became martyrs for the faith on the field of battle. And many there are who strive to receive honor and human praise just by narrating their deeds."

Like his contemporaries, Francis honored as martyrs the crusaders who fell in combat with the Saracens. The passage also shows how even after his conversion he was strongly influenced by the ideals of chivalry.<sup>281</sup>

## 2. Two Abortive Missionary Expeditions

Crusader fervor not only influenced Francis's religious thought and feelings. They impelled him to make several attempts to go to the missions. Celano tells us about his first try:

Glowing with love for God, the most blessed father Francis sought always to put his hand to courageous deeds; and walking the way of the commandments of God with a generous heart, he longed to attain the height of perfection. In the sixth year of his conversion, burning intensely with the desire for holy martyrdom, he wanted to take ship for the region of Syria to preach the Christian faith and penance to the Saracens and infidels. When he had gone on board a certain ship to go there, contrary winds arose and he found himself with the rest of his shipmates in the region of Slavonia.<sup>282</sup> But when he saw that he was deprived of attaining

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(1953):226-39; 55 (1954):50-63. See also P. Rousset, "L'idée de croisade chez les chroniqueurs d'Occident," in *X Congr. Intern. Scienze Stor.*, Rome, 4-11 sett. 1955 (Florence, 1955), pp. 547-63, where one may find more bibliography. See also P. Alphanéry and A. Dupront, *La chrétienté et l'idée de croisade*, vol. 1; *Les premières croisades*, vol. 2; *Recommencements nécessaires*, XII-XIII siècles (Paris, 1954, 1959). See also A. Waar, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, 2 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1956). For the concept of martyrdom and the crusades, see esp. H. Wolter, S.J., "Elemente der Kreuzzeugsfrömmigkeit in der Spiritualität des hl. Ignatius," in *Ignatius von Loyola. Seine geistliche Gestalt u. sein Vermächtnis*, ed. F. Wulf, S.J. (Würzburg, 1956), pp. 111-50, especially pp. 126ff, n. 52.

281. *IntReg* 10; L. Lemmens, (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1901), p. 92. Parallels with some slight differences are found in *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 4, nos. 4-6. For a possible origins of this concept see L. Oliger, "S. Franciscus cognovitne Pseudo-Turpinum?", in *Ant* 2 (1927):277-80. See also Felder, *Der Christusritter*, pp. 104ff. For the historical development of Francis's ideal of chivalry, see Joh. Auer, "Militia Christi: Zur Geschichte eines christlichen Grundbildes," in *Geist u. Leben* 32 (1959):340-81. The genuineness of the text cannot be doubted since it repeats a well-known concept from the *Op*. See Part 1 D above: "Following the Crucified."
282. We cannot determine with any certainty where Francis landed on the Dalmatian coast. B. Rode, O.F.M. favors Zara, in "De antiquitate provinciae Sclavoniae O.F.M., nunc Dalmatiae," in *AFH* 1 (1908):504-14, esp. pp. 504-8. As for the time, we have to think of the second half of 1212. See Grau, *Thomas von Celano*, p. 127, n. 212. See also A. Fortini, *Nova vita*, 1/2, pp. 12ff.

his great desire, after a short period of time he begged some sailors who were going to Ancona to take him with them, because it would hardly be possible for any other ship to sail for Syria that year.<sup>283</sup>

In the foregoing account the motives for his voyage are clearly spelled out. The man of God desired to lead the unbelievers, that is, the Saracens, to the true faith. The establishment of a Latin kingdom in Constantinople in 1204 and especially the coronation of John of Brienne as King of Jerusalem in the cathedral of Tyre in 1210 must have turned the thoughts of the West in that direction.<sup>284</sup> Francis may have hoped to enter Muslim-controlled territory more easily by way of the shrunken domain of the Christian kingdom. A longing for martyrdom obviously played an important role, together with his missionary objectives. The ancient Christian ideal was resurrected in a new guise. Because of Muslim fanaticism, a mission among them was a sure road to martyrdom.<sup>285</sup> It is also probable that a desire to visit the Holy Land accompanied his longing for martyrdom. That land, which the God-Man hallowed by His life and suffering, where Christ manifested the greatest proof of His love, must have held a very special fascination for Francis.

This desire for martyrdom was to become one of the strongest incentives for the missionary journeys of the first generation of friars. Even

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283. *ICel* 55. See parallel in *LMaior* IX 5: "Desiderabat ... per martyrii flammam hostiam Domino se offerre viventem (Rom. 12:1) ut et vicem Christo pro nobis morienti rependeret." A basic source for this topic is O. van der Vat, O.F.M., *Die Anfänge der Franziskanermissionen u. ihre Weiterentwicklung im nahen Orient u. in den mohammedanischen Ländern während des 13 Jahrhunderts* (Werl, 1934), esp. pp. 1-59. Other sources are Gonsalvus Walter (von Erlaheim), O.F.M.Cap., *Unter die Sarazenen. Ein Missionsbüchlein über den hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Paderborn, 1933), and P. de Anasagasti, O.F.M., in *El alma misionera de S. Francisco de Asis* (Rome, 1955), who neglects reliable sources and fails to use a scientific method. The same must be said for G. Basetti-Sani, O.F.M., in *Mohammed et saint François* (Ottawa, 1959), pp. 157-83, 261-70. At times he detects mystical connotations. We find a blend of phantasy and history in the writing of Fortini, *Nova vita*, 1/2, pp. 43-109. In what follows, we shall prescind from the missionary aspect and pay close attention to the thought of martyrdom.
284. For the Latin kingdom, see A. Fliche, "La chrétienté romaine (1198-1274)," in *Histoire de l'Église*, vol. 10, pp. 68-75. For the coronation of John, see L. Bréhier, *Dict. Hist. Eccl.*, s.v. "Brienne," and bibl. pp. 698-709, esp. pp. 699ff. Jerusalem itself remained in the hands of the Mohammedans. We must once more emphasize that "Syria" is not to be taken in our modern limited sense but often meant the entire Middle East. See n. 224 below.
285. K. Esser, "Melius catholice observemus," in *Werkbuch zur Regel des hl. Franziskus* (Werl, 1955), p. 257: In Mohammedan countries "any preaching of the faith of Christ, any attack on the teachings of the Koran, any baptism of a Mohammedan, was punishable by death, and any Saracen that allowed himself to be baptized would be executed." The implementation of such legislation was naturally all the more fierce when Islam was at war with the Christian west. See Lemmens, *Geschichte der Franziskanermissionen* (Münster, 1929), p. 10. See also van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen im Orient*, pp. 6ff.

St. Clare, though living a strictly cloistered life, could not escape its attraction, as reliable witnesses testified under oath at the process of her canonization.<sup>286</sup> These facts explain why Francis in his *Earlier Rule* lays down definite rules of conduct for missionaries facing martyrdom.<sup>287</sup> Nothing so clearly demonstrates his supernatural and evangelical concept of mission as a passage from the twenty-second chapter: Since Jesus called even the traitor His friend, "therefore our friends are those who for no reason cause us trouble and suffering, shame or injury, pain or torture, even martyrdom and death. It is these we must love, and love very much, because for all they do to us we are given eternal life."<sup>288</sup>

Celano also recounts a saying of the Poverello which is highly significant in this context. Francis said that obedience is the greatest, without anything of flesh and blood, by which one goes by divine inspiration among the infidels, either for the sake of one's neighbor's benefit or out of a desire for martyrdom.<sup>289</sup>

The desire to give bloody witness to his loyalty to Christ gave Francis no rest, despite the failure of his first attempt to go to the missions. After learning of the crushing defeat suffered by Sultan Al-Nasir at Navas de Tolosa at the hands of the Castilian forces under King Alphonse VIII on July 16, 1212, he set out on foot for Spain, accompanied by Bernard of Quintavalle, hoping to cross into Morocco. His biographers tell us what an important role the desire for martyrdom played in his decision: "He was carried along by so great a desire that at times he left his traveling companions behind and hurried to accomplish his purpose, drunk as it were in spirit."

286. See esp. Pancratius (van Strijp), O.F.M.Cap., "Het verlangen naar het Martelaarschap," in *Franc. Leven* 24 (1941), pp. 173-79, 204-15. For St. Clare, see p. 210, or Z. Lazzeri, O.F.M., "Il processo di canonizzazione di S. Chiara d'Assisi," in *AFH* 13 (1920), pp. 465, 468, 481; Boehmer, pp. 6ff, 18ff; van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen im Orient*, pp. 6-9, 26-28, 34-38, 57-59. He notes (p. 58) that we must not exaggerate Francis's desire for martyrdom especially in his third mission journey. It would be worthwhile to study how the great Franciscan theologians viewed martyrdom. See certain texts of Bonaventure given by Lemmens: "Franciscus vir catholicus et totus apostolicus," and "De primordiis Missionum Ordinis Minorum," in *Ant* 2 (1927):21-58.

287. *RegNB XVI*. See van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen im Orient*, p. 17ff; Esser, *Werkbuch*, p. 257. Since the authors give a somewhat abbreviated account of the first mission attempt, we must treat it at greater length.

288. Esser and Hardick, *Schriften*, p. 70.

289. *2Cel* 152: "Summam vero (scil. obedientiam) et in qua nihil haberet 'caro et sanguis' (Matt. 16:17) illam esse credebatur, qua divina inspiratione inter infideles iter, sive ob proximorum lucrum sive ob martyrii desiderium." There is a parallel in *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 48 no. 6ff, pp. 127ff. *Obedientia* here must be translated as 'obedience'. See Grau, *Thomas von Celano*, p. 378; K. Esser, "Gehorsam u. Freiheit," in *Wiss. Weish.* 13 (1950):142-50, esp. p. 149, n. 33. Van der Vat's "main purpose" in *Franziskanermissionen im Orient* does not give the exact sense.



While still in Spain he fell gravely ill. He must have heard in his sickness the voice of divine providence telling him to break off his mission and return to Italy.<sup>290</sup>

### 3. Missionary Journey to Egypt

This third missionary journey holds incomparably greater interest for the historian. Among the sources we find quite a few of non-Franciscan origin. Though they differ in detail, they are in complete accord as to essentials.<sup>291</sup>

After the Chapter of Pentecost at the Portiuncula in May 1219, and having received the Bull *Cum dilecti* of June 11, 1219, Francis, accompanied by Peter of Catania and perhaps by Brothers Illuminatus and Leonard, set sail from Italy at Ancona or Apulia. In all probability they were on one of the ships that was bringing reinforcements to the crusaders encamped before the walls of Damietta. We have no details about the voyage. The ship certainly arrived at its destination before August 29, the date when the Christians suffered a disastrous defeat.<sup>292</sup>

290. *ICel* 56; *LMaior* IX 6; van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen im Orient*, pp. 39ff; Ernest Marie de Beaulieu, O.F.M.Cap, "Le voyage de S. François en Espagne," in *EF* 15 (1906):384-99; A. Lopez, O.F.M., "Viaje de S. Francisco a España," 1214, in *Arch. Iber. Amer.* 1 (1914):13-45, 257-89, 433-69; or his "Viaje de S. Francisco per España," in *Curso de conferencias acerca de la personalidad de S. Francisco de Asts* (Madrid, 1927), pp. 141-91. It is very difficult to pinpoint the time of the missionary journey. The author believes that we can, with some degree of probability, place it after Pentecost 1214 to 1215 (p. 148).
291. G. Golubovich, O.F.M., has assembled a quite comprehensive collection of sources in *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente francescano*, vol. 1 (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1906), pp. 1-84. Some additions are found in L. Lemmens, "De S. Francisco Christum praedicante coram Sultano Aegypti," in *AFH* 19 (1926):559-78; and in van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen im Orient*, pp. 51-59, esp. p. 51, n. 51. For sources and bibliography, see M. Roncaglia, O.F.M., "S. Francesco d'Assisi in Oriente," in *Studi Franc.* 3d ser., 25 (1953):97-106, or his *Storia della Provincia di Terra Santa*, vol. 1: *I Francescani in Oriente durante le crociate*, Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente francescano, 4th ser. no. 1 (Cairo-Muski, 1954). For the first time the author employs Arabic sources for a better understanding of historical events even though Francis himself was not aware of them. See his "Fonte Arabo-Musulmana su S. Francesco in Oriente?" in *Studi Franc.* 3d ser., 25 (1953):258ff. See the bibliography in n. 207.
292. *ICel* 57; *2Cel* 30; *LMaior* IX 7. Here we follow especially M. Roncaglia, *S. Francesco in Oriente*, pp. 97ff, 98 n. 2. The author also refers to R. Grousett, *Histoire des croisades et du royaume de Jérusalem*, vol 3 (Paris, 1941), pp. 214-30. See also A. Waar, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, vol. 1, pp. 258-74, and Fortini, *Nova vita* 1/2, pp. 46-82; H.L. Gottschalk, *Al-Malik al-Kamil von Egypten u. seine Zeit*. Eine Studie zur Geschichte Vorderasiens u. Egyptens in der ersten Hälfte des 7/13 Jahrhunderts (Wiesbaden, 1958), pp. 58-79, 76-88. There is total agreement about the number and names of his companions. Here we follow van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen im Orient*, p. 51, n. 52. As far as dates are concerned, that of the chapter of Pentecost is certain (see n. 217 below). A number of manuscripts give the date of the pope's letter of recommendation in favor of Francis and his friars as June 11 (Gratien, in *EF* 33 [1921]:528ff). Golubovich in *Biblioteca* (p. 92) defends the stand that the friars joined the crusaders who left on June 24.

Unexpectedly, Sultan Al-Malik al-Kamil offered the crusaders a truce. Francis tried to realize his heart's desire of announcing the Gospel to the sultan and winning either his conversion or martyrdom only after the bitter struggle for the city had been renewed, not during the cessation of hostilities which lasted until September 26.<sup>293</sup>

Together with Brother Illuminatus of Acre, he committed himself to God's protection and at the risk of his life marched toward the Saracen camp. Before long the two were halted by sentinels and asked whether they were messengers or deserters. Francis declared himself without hesitation to be a Christian and asked to be brought to the sultan. They were immediately arrested, beaten and humiliated. Brought to the Al-Malik al-Kamil's pavilion, they were received by the sultan with surprising courtesy, as all witnesses testify.<sup>294</sup>

The saint remained for about a week near the Saracen ruler. There are serious discrepancies between the accounts of Ernoul and those of Celano and Jacques de Vitry concerning what happened during his visit. Odulphus van der Vat suggests that Ernoul based his story on

293. Writers have explored every possibility concerning the date of Francis's meeting with the sultan. G. Bassetti-Sani (*Mohammed*, p. 163) places it before the defeat of the Christians on August 29, 1219. His assumption is not impossible, if Francis had set out after the Chapter of Pentecost (May 26) or after June 11 (see H. Fischer, *Der hl. Franziskus von Assisi während der Jahre 1219-1221* (Freiburg-Switzerland, 1907, p. 26 and n. 216) and if we allow about a month for the journey. The author would certainly not be contradicting himself when he makes the permission of the papal legate for the visit dependent on the fulfillment of Francis's prediction of the defeat. However, his opinion is refuted by the eyewitnesses who place Francis's meeting with the sultan during the siege of Damietta. See Lemmens, *De S. Francisco praedicante*, pp. 561ff. For the same reason we must reject Fortini's view (*Nova vita*, vol. 1, 2, pp. 91ff. n. 1) according to which Francis went to the sultan on Nov. 4 or Feb. 1220, after the fall of Damietta. See opposing arguments in Fischer, *Der hl. Franziskus von Assisi*, pp. 28ff. A further opinion places the meeting during the time between Aug. 29 to Sept. 26, when truce negotiations were in progress. Thus Lemmens (*De S. Francisco praedicante*, pp. 560ff) and Roncaglia (*S. Francesco in Oriente*, pp. 99ff). But van der Vat (*Franziskanermissionen*, p. 52) has evidence from Franciscan sources on his side when he favors the period after Sept. 26, when the fighting was resumed. See for example *ICel 57*: "cum quotidie bella inter christianos et paganos ... ingruerent."

294. Van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen*, p. 52. For Brother Illuminatus, see Fortini, *Nova vita*, vol. 2, pp. 303-6. A reason for this gentle behavior was undoubtedly the conciliatory character of the sultan. See Gottschalk, *Al-Malik*, pp. 23-26; G. Fussenegger, O.F.M., in *AFH 52* (1959):331-33. On the other hand, we can with Roncaglia (*S. Francesco in Oriente*, pp. 100ff, and p. 101 n. 2) take into account the similarity of the Poverello with the ascetics of the Sufiyya. See T. Burckhardt, *Vom Sufitum: Einführung in die Mystik des Islams* (Munich, 1953). The Sufiyya also went about clothed in a rough garment girded with a rope and begged for their daily support. We might find here an additional psychological reason for the friendly reception accorded Francis. However, G. Bassetti-Sani (*Mohammed*, p. 263, n. 13) refutes Burckhardt's denial of the historicity of Francis's rough handling on the part of the Saracen sentries.

fragmentary reports. According to him, Francis had many more opportunities to discuss the faith than the other sources allow. It would seem that Francis's winning personality, his enthusiastic witness for Christ and not the least, his obvious contempt of the world made an impression on Al-Malik al-Kamil.<sup>295</sup>

A difficult problem stems from a statement of St. Bonaventure that Francis offered to undergo an ordeal by fire to prove the truth of the Christian religion. Since the Seraphic Doctor very likely relied on the eyewitness account of Brother Illuminatus, we cannot reject his story offhand as pure fiction. We must look for a kernel of historical fact in the three different versions found in Bonaventure's writings.<sup>296</sup>

It is evident that the Poverello was led by missionary zeal as well as by a desire for martyrdom. The saint's behavior is incomprehensible in terms of human prudence. The cardinal legate, Pelagius Galvan (d. 1222), with whom he shared his plan, considered it foolhardy, but it manifests his burning desire for martyrdom more convincingly than the statements of his biographers.<sup>297</sup> These pioneer incursions of Francis and his sons into Islamic lands to win them to Christ through their exemplary life and preaching, or else to offer the Lord the ultimate

295. Van der Vat, pp. 52ff. For the chronicle of Ernoul (d. 1227/29) see Golubovich, *Biblioteca della Terra Santa*, pp. 10-13.

296. Van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen*, pp. 53-55; *LMaior* IX 8; "Collationes in Hexaem.", coll. 19, no. 14; *Op. Om.*, vol. 5, p. 422, and visio 3, coll. 7, no. 14. See F. Delorme, *Bibl. Fran. Schol. Medii Aevi.*, vol. 8, (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1934), p. 217; "Sermo 2 de S. Francisco," no. 2, *Op. Om.*, vol. 9, pp. 579ff. Van den Borne has serious doubts (*Voornaamste feiten*, pp. 237ff), while Basetti-Sani (*Mohammed*, pp. 177-83) bases his questionable historical-theological theories on it. See *CF* 30 (1960):220ff. There seems to be no reason to doubt the essential historicity of the account. Various forms of trial by ordeal were quite widespread at the time of Francis despite the opposition of the church. We recall how the Empress Cunigunda (d. 1033/1039) underwent a trial by fire. The *Vita S. Cunegundis*, written by an unknown author after 1199, relates how the empress was suspected by her husband of infidelity and "expurgationis gratia ad vomeres cardentes ... sibi iudicium elegit." After she prayed, "vomeres candentes nudo vestigio calcavit et sine adustionis molestia secura transivit." See bibliography in Ch. Leitmaier, *Lex. Theol. Kirche.*, s.v. "Gottesurteil."

297. M. Roncaglia, *S. Francesco in Oriente*, pp. 102, n. 2; Van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen*, pp. 7, 58. The author writes: "The desire (for martyrdom) was not so prominent (as among his first followers) at least on his third mission journey." But the difference could not have been very great—only that the saint avoided any speech or behavior that might antagonize the Saracens, unlike Blessed Otto and his companions (pp. 46ff). While the first biographers may have exaggerated his desire for martyrdom, the language of the missionary enterprise is clear enough. Celano speaks of an "impetus animi" (*ICel* 57), and a "desiderium martyrii." *2Cel* 30 is even clearer: "fervore martyrii mare transierant (Franciscus et socii)." Bonaventure is most explicit in *LMaior* IX 7: "Verum caritatis ardore spiritum ipsius ad martyrium perurgente."

proof of martyrdom, gave birth to a new ideal of mission which was to have long-lasting effects in the years to come.<sup>298</sup>

#### 4. *Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*

The question of Francis's pilgrimage to the Holy Land after his return to the Christian camp bristles with difficulties. Only a single thirteenth-century account has come down to us. The unknown writer, who continues the historically reliable chronicle of William of Tyre (d. 1186) tells us how the Poverello witnessed with great displeasure many things that were taking place in the Christian camp, "and therefore he departed and spent some time in Syria, after which he returned to his own country."<sup>299</sup> We must note that "Syria" did not always have the same geographical meaning in medieval writings. Sometimes it was synonymous with the whole Levant, which comprised all the countries bordering on the eastern Mediterranean: Greece, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt.<sup>300</sup> The first biographers also employ this ambiguous terminology when they refer to Francis's missionary journey to Egypt simply as *ad partes Syriae*.<sup>301</sup>

Perhaps we can arrive at a positive solution of the problem with the aid of other sources. Brother Jordan of Giano states that Francis "appointed Brother Elias as minister for overseas" (*ultra mare*). As a

298. Peter the Venerable, O.S.B., had already translated the Koran into Latin, and on the basis of his translation he composed his "Tractatus adversus nefandam sectam Saracenorum," *PL* 189, 659–720. While he hoped to win converts by his *Tractatus*, his main purpose was to provide Christians with a textbook for use in their discussions with the Muslims. The Abbot of Cluny embraced the prevalent attitude, as St. Bernard put it in a letter: "Ad delendas penitus aut certe convertendas nationes illas" ("Epis. 457," *PL* 185, 651d). See V. Berry, "Peter the Venerable and the Crusades," in G. Constable and J. Kritzeck, *Petrus Venerabilis, 1156–1956*, *Studia Anselmiana*, vol. 40 (Rome, 1956), 141–62, esp. p. 142 (bibliography) and pp. 145ff. Francis seems to have been somewhat influenced by the Order of the Most Holy Trinity. It is known that the Trinitarians were already in Morocco in 1199 to ransom Christian slaves. See A. Romano, O.S.T., *I Trinitari*, in M. Escobar, *Ordini e Congregazioni religiose*, vol. 1 (Turin–Rome, 1951), pp. 131–56, esp. pp. 137, 143–47. For Jacques de Vitry's and Didacus of Azevado's missionary goals among the Saracens, see van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen*, p. 57, n. 11.

299. Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, p. 14. There are various titles: *L'Estoire de Eraclés, empereur, et la conquete de la terre d'oultremer* (or *Livre d'Eraclés, Livre de conquest, Estoire d'oultremer. Une piece* means 'a long time' (*ibid.*, n. 3). For an evaluation of the chronicle, see A. Molinier, *Les sources de l'histoire de France*, no. 2303, vol. 3 (Paris, 1903), pp. 29ff. Unfortunately its historical value has not been established; at least we are not aware of any relevant study. We must not overlook M. Bihl's statement in *Die Franziskaner-Missionen im Morgenlande während des 13 Jahrhunderts* (*Der. Kath.* 3 F. 35 (87) (1907):365–76, esp. p. 368: "In order that the evidence of the so-called Heracles be accepted, we must find out where the chronicler lived." For Archbishop William, see F. Cognasso, in *Enc. Catt.*, s.v. "Guglielmo di Tiro" (bibliography), or H. Claude, "Guillaume de Tyr," in *Catholicisme*, vol. 3, pp. 403ff.

300. M. Bihl, *Franziskaner-Missionen*, p. 368, or E. Ros, in *Enc. Ital.*, s.v. "Levante."

301. *ICel* 57; *LMaior* IX 7.

result of his preaching, a cleric by the name of Caesarius converted and was received into the order.<sup>302</sup> Scholars, however, assign different dates to Elias's appointment.<sup>303</sup>

Determining the place of Caesarius's reception is of great importance. G. Golubovich is inclined, though without any reliance on the sources, to place the meeting of the two men in Damietta.<sup>304</sup> But a letter of Jacques de Vitry, then bishop of Acre, makes it far more likely that the powerful personality of Brother Elias won over the subdeacon Caesarius together with a number of secular priests for the order in his episcopal see (Acre).<sup>305</sup>

Another witness may be cited for this event. Brother Jordan of Giano relates that when Francis was told of the disturbing situation of the order in Italy, he took Brother Elias with him on his return home.<sup>306</sup>

If this allegation is true, then we have every reason to believe that Francis spent some time in Acre and afterwards went to the Holy Land. The evidence from *L'Estoire de Eracles* is indirectly supported by Jordan and Jacques de Vitry. Moreover, H. Fischer shows the internal probability of the account of the anonymous writer. The immoral excesses, horrible cruelty and greed of many of the crusaders must have sorely grieved the tender heart of Francis. Consequently he must have returned to Acre shortly after the fall of Damietta which took place on November 5, 1219. If we place his return to Italy sometime early in 1220, it would leave about two months for the saint to visit the holy places.<sup>307</sup>

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302. *Jor* 9; Boehmer, 7ff; transl. from L. Hardick, *Nach Deutschland u. England* (Werl, 1957), p. 45.
303. The time has been placed between 1217 and 1218. See *Chronica*, 7, and van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen*, p. 41, n. 11. See also R.B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*. Elias to Bonaventure (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 23, 104ff.
304. Golubovich, "S. Francesco e i Francescani in Damietta," in *Studi Franc.*, n.s., 12 (1926), pp. 307-30; Roncaglia, *S. Francesco in Oriente*, p. 106, n. 3.
305. Van der Vat, *Franziskanermissionen*, pp. 68ff. See the relevant text of de Vitry in Boehmer, *Analekten zur Geschichte des Franciscus von Assisi* (Tübingen-Leipzig, 1904), p. 101. It is better than in Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, pp. 7ff. Among the additions we find: "...et dominus Mattheus, cui curam ecclesiae Sanctae Crucis (i.e. in Acre) commiseram..." Ibid., p. 102. As van der Vat remarks in *Franziskanermissionen*, it is remarkable that only in this letter, written in March 1220 in Damietta, and not in early ones, does de Vitry refer to the attraction exercised by the Franciscan ideal in Acre. Van der Vat rightly concludes from this that the event is not to be placed before Francis's arrival in Egypt. If Brother Elias was likewise in Damietta, then Francis must have been apprised of the reception of Brother Caesarius. It appears highly improbable to assume with Golubovich in *S. Francesco in Damietta*, p. 324, that all the clergy of Acre withdrew with the troops of King John of Jerusalem.
306. Boehmer, *Chronica fr. Jordani*, pp. 13ff, n. 4: "B. Franciscus assumptis secum fratre Helya et fratre Petro Cathanie et fratre Cesario ... aliis fratribus, rediit in Ytaliam."
307. Fischer, *Franziskus während der Jahre 1219-1221*, pp. 27ff and 41ff. Since we cannot pinpoint the day and month of subsequent events, there is no need to place

Although we are able to establish the probability of such a visit from the sources and fix the time frame in which it must have happened, we still have to face a basic problem: Did Francis visit Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which were under Muslim control? We have no solid evidence from thirteenth-century sources. It is not until Angelus of Clareno (d. 1337) that we find any mention of it. In his *History of Seven Tribulations* he tells us that the sultan "ordered that he (Francis) and all his brothers could have free access to the Holy Sepulcher without paying any tax."

Visits to the holy places are also mentioned in another place. After his meeting with Al-Malik al-Kamil, God is said to have appeared to Francis and ordered him to return home: "After this apparition, having visited the sepulcher of the Lord, he hastened to return to the land of the Christians."<sup>308</sup>

The story of the supposed apparition does not merit any credence. In fact, because of the impossible time frame demanded, it seriously weakens the credibility of the entire passage.<sup>309</sup> The alleged permission to preach everywhere reported in the *Acts of Blessed Francis* is untenable for internal reasons. For one thing, it would be contrary to the well-known practices of the Muslims. However, the unanimous testimony of the early sources concerning the friendly reception accorded Francis by the sultan gives us reason to suppose that he was exempted from the toll. We must assume that Al-Malik gave Francis some kind of pass which made it possible for him to visit the holy places unmo-  
lested.<sup>310</sup>

Given the lacunae in the account of Clareno, the historian must entertain some misgivings. But it is still possible that some grains of historical fact have survived from the maze of fiction and miraculous stories.<sup>311</sup> Consequently we can attribute a high degree of probability to

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the departure of the saint in 1219. Otherwise we are in conflict with the testimony of *L'Estoire de Eraclés*, which specifies his stay as "une pièce en Surie." See n. 223 above.

308. Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, 56a, 57a. See *Historia septem tribulationum*, Ed. A. Ghinato, sect. 1a, prima tribulatio (Rome, 1959), pp. 35-37.

309. Bihl addresses this difficulty in *Franziskanermissionen*, pp. 368ff.

310. *The Acts of Blessed Francis and His Companions*, chap. 27, nos. 6-7 (Sabatier, Paris, 1902, p. 90, or G. Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, p. 61) mention expressly "quoddam signaculum" given by the sultan and his followers "quo viso, a nemine laedabantur." Reference may be made (with Fortini, *Nova vita* vol. 1, 2, pp. 102ff, n. 3) to a text from Jacques de Vitry's *Hist. orient.* XXXII (Golubovich, 9 9f: "etiam Saraceni ... quando [Fratres Minores] causa praedicationis ad ipsos intrepidi accedunt, grato animo necessaria providentes, libenter eos recipiunt."). Roncaglia (*S. Francesco in Oriente*, p. 104) deserves credit for having placed this *signaculum* in the context of Islamic law.

311. One must be careful of Clareno's "Spiritual" tendencies. He sees Francis's rigorism supported by supernatural events. See Ghinato, O.F.M., "De Ordinis agendi ratione

the statements regarding Francis's Holy Land pilgrimage. The probability is somewhat reinforced by later expressions of his devotion to Christ. Significantly the Christmas celebration at Greccio and the stigmatization on La Verna came after, not before Francis left for the Fifth Crusade.<sup>312</sup>

##### 5. *The Sufferings of His Last Illness as a Substitute for Martyrdom*

Both early and later medieval monasticism liked to look upon religious life as an ascetic substitute for martyrdom.<sup>313</sup> The question is: To what extent was Francis influenced by this concept? There is no evidence in his writings or in the biographical sources that he founded the whole life of his friars on this ideal. In any case this ascetic ideal was overshadowed by the prospect of suffering death for Christ, made a reality once more as a result of the crusades. It is true, however, that Francis does compare patient enduring of sickness with martyrdom.

We shall cite a passage from the *Mirror of Perfection*. Francis recommends to his sons sensible care for the body in matters of eating and sleeping. Then he adds the following admonition:

If Brother Body is not able to get what he needs whether in good health or in illness, because of want and poverty, and he should ask such, humbly and simply from a brother or prelate for the love of God, and he does not receive it, let him bear it for the love of God, Who also looked for one to console Him and found none. And enduring this need with patience will be credited to him by the Lord as martyrdom. And since he did what he could, that is, because he humbly presented his need, he shall not incur any guilt of sin, even though his body would thereby become seriously ill (see Ps. 68:21; Isaiah 63:5).<sup>314</sup>

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ad Regulam S. Francisci," in *Ant* 35 (1960)3-48, esp. pp. 32ff. In any case, this tendency should not detract from the essential elements of his account. See also L. von Auw, *Angelo Clarenò et les Spirituels franciscains* (Lausanne, 1952). See *BibFranc* X 1306.

312. One must consider the following judgment in this light. "Que François ait profité de son séjour dans cette région pour visiter Jerusalem et les lieux saints, c'est un fait admis par tous ses biographes modernes. La chose est en tout cas de la plus haute vraisemblance" (F. van Ortrøy, S.J., "S. François d'Assise et son voyage en Orient," in *Anal. Boll.* 31 [1912]:451-62). See also Roncaglia, *S. Francesco in Oriente*, p. 106. Here we must call attention to a remarkable passage from the *Letter to the Entire Order*, written before Pentecost, 1224. See *Op.* From the fact "si sepulcrum (Christi) in quo per aliquod tempus iacuit, veneratur..." Francis concludes that *a fortiori* the Eucharistic mystery must be handled by the priest in a worthy manner. Does this Sacred-Tomb-Motif perhaps echo a personal experience?
313. See the reference above under Part 4, E 1: "Francis's Longing for Martyrdom," in nn. 202-4. How much alive this ascetic image was in the twelfth century can be seen in Honorius of Canterbury (Augustodunensis), "Speculum Ecclesiae: in conventu fratrum," *PL* 172, 1092c, quoted by Bernardus in *Speculum Virginum*, p. 45, n. 84.
314. *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 97, nos. 6ff, p. 281. See also the parallels in F. Delorme, p. 96, and *SpPer*, ed. Lemmens, no. 23, p. 54. See K. Beyschlag, *Die Bergpredigt u. Franz von Assisi*, (Gütersloh, 1955), p. 123. The text in question is lacking in the otherwise parallel *2Cel* 129. C. Andresen, in *Franz von Assisi u. seine Krankheiten*,



The meaning of the text is: Whenever, because of poverty, it is not possible to provide for the needs of the body, whether in good or bad health, a friar should bear the privation patiently in imitation of the Redeemer who too suffered without any consolation.<sup>315</sup> This behavior is considered blameless even though it should result in further aggravation of his illness. It will win him a reward from the Lord like that of martyrdom.<sup>316</sup>

Although we cannot accept all of the Mirror of Perfection uncritically, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the above quotation. Apart from the internal probability of the account and the extraordinary consistency of the three versions, the writings of St. Francis offer a parallel passage which appears to vouch for its truth.<sup>317</sup>

The resemblance of illness to martyrdom apparently did not escape the notice of the saint in his own afflictions. His delicate constitution suffered a breakdown in his youth as a result of his imprisonment from 1203 to 1204. Inhuman privations, exercises of penance, and the missionary journeys on foot which he undertook after his conversion, made demands on him far beyond his physical strength. In addition to other ailments, his trip to the Orient brought on a severe eye infection which was never to be cured despite heroic attempts. By April 1226 Francis showed so many and such serious complications that all could see that death was not far off.<sup>318</sup>

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pp. 33-43, does not quote this text, and in his other study, *Asketische Forderung u. Krankheit*, pp. 129-40, he contents himself with a brief reference.

315. C. Andresen, in *Franz von Assisi*, pp. 35, 41ff, and *Asketische Forderung*, p. 137, apparently misunderstands the text, when in reference to the *RegNB X*, he assumes that Francis at that time had decided not to take any medicines. The text in question says the contrary.

316. The idea of bodily suffering as a substitute for martyrdom is found among early monastic writers. See E.E. Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr*, pp. 224ff. The question whether Francis was led by such an idea of substitution in his care of the lepers must wait for further evidence. That the service of the lepers was esteemed as a "holy and precious martyrdom" is evidenced by Francis's contemporary Jacques de Vitry, *Hist. occid.*, XXIX 338, (Douai, 1597), quoted by Meffert, *Caritas und Volksepidemien*, p. 122, n. 1, and S. SVI (Lat. text).

317. "Attendamus, omnes fratres, Bonum Pastorem, qui pro ovibus suis salvandis crucis sustinuit passionem. Oves Domini secutae sunt eum in tribulatione et persecutione et verecundia, fame et siti, in infirmitate et tentatione et ceteris aliis" (*Adm VI*). See Part 1 D, "Following the Crucified," with n. 80 above.

318. We cannot recount all the details of Francis's sickness. All evidence shows how deeply he shared the physical and mental condition of the sick through his own personal experience. For a good overview of the illnesses suffered by the saint in the course of his life see C. Andresen, *Franz von Assisi u. seine Krankheiten*, pp. 33-36. "The reports indicate recurrent attacks of malaria as the cause of his death" (p. 36). The renowned ophthalmologist J. Strebel, "Diagnose des Augenleidens des hl. Franziskus von Assisi: Ein Beitrag zur Behandlung der Augenleiden im MA," in *Klinische Monatsblätter für Augenheilkunde*, 99 (1937):252-59, believes that his basic physical problem was tuberculosis which he probably contracted during his



When his illness finally confined him to bed and his pain became unbearable, a brother asked him which he would rather endure: this long drawn-out and wearisome sickness, or a cruel martyrdom at the hands of an executioner. Francis replied: "My son, that has always been, and still is, most dear to me and more sweet and more acceptable which pleases the Lord my God most to let happen to me and with me, for I desire always only to be found conformed and obedient to His will in all things. Yet this infirmity is harder for me to bear even for three days than any martyrdom. I am not speaking of the reward, but only of the intensity of suffering it causes."

Celano continues with an emotional outburst that sharply contrasts with the simple Gospel narrative: "O martyr and martyr, who smiling and rejoicing most willingly put up with what was most bitter and most difficult to bear! In all truth, not a single member of him remained free of the greatest suffering."<sup>319</sup>

Celano's version diverges only slightly from the aforementioned passage from the *Mirror of Perfection*. Francis's humility prevented him from claiming for himself the reward of suffering martyrdom for Christ—the recompense he held out to his sons for their patient enduring of suffering. But his sense of reality forced him to admit that the severity and length of his sufferings surpassed the agonies of the martyrs.

Celano and St. Bonaventure say nothing about Francis viewing his sickness in the perspective of Christ's passion. The *Mirror of Perfection* seems to give us a more authentic picture when it affirms this attitude on the part of the saint toward suffering. This is stated most expressly in the so-called *Legenda antiqua* [or *Ancient Legend*]. Francis refused medical treatment: "The love that filled his soul since his conversion to Christ was so ardent that, despite the prayers of his brothers and of many other men moved by compassion and pity, he did not trouble himself about taking care of his sicknesses."<sup>320</sup>

This passage is remarkable from a devotional viewpoint. If we take it literally, Francis did not see himself sharing mystically in the suffer-

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imprisonment in Perugia. It is of course beyond our competence to make any diagnosis.

319. *ICel* 107.

320. Delorme, *Leg. ant.*, no. 37, p. 22. Shorter parallels are in *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 91, no. 7, p. 268. See Andresen, *Asketische Forderung*, p. 137, and his *Franz von Assisi*, p. 41ff, where he renders the passage as follows: "...so intensiv setzte er sich täglich für seine eigene Passion den äusseren und inneren Bedrängnissen aus, dass er für seine persönlichen Krankheiten keine Kur zuließ." The translation is influenced by Francis's alleged refusal to take medicine (see n. 239 above). Certainly this is not the basic meaning of "curare de." See A. Blaise and H. Chirat, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens*, where 'curare de' is translated as 'se soucier, veiller sur' ('take care of oneself').

ing of Jesus. He simply forgot his own misery while he immersed himself in feeling and compassion for the suffering of the Redeemer. Questions about the extent to which this represents historical reality must unfortunately remain unanswered because of the lack of reliable evidence. No doubt Francis bore the intense suffering which the stigmata cost him and which the biographer rightly calls "signs of a martyr" in association with the sufferings of the Redeemer.<sup>321</sup>

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321. *1Cel* 113. Francis's knightly sense of honor would have staunchly resisted bearing the marks of the passion exteriorly without sharing in the pain of the Redeemer. See Felder, *Christusritter*, pp. 117ff. That the wounds were painful was evidenced when one of the brothers touched his side. See *2Cel* 138; *3Cel* IV. As we have already indicated, we are planning to publish a special study on the stigmata of St. Francis.

## Part 5

### A Comparative Look at the Sources

As we mentioned at the beginning of this study, we are limiting ourselves to presenting data from two sources, comparing and arranging them in their historical sequence. Thereby we hope to achieve an overall evaluation of Francis's devotion to the passion. With such an analytical study of the sources, we can clarify the essential elements of his devotion to the passion.

#### A. Francis's Devotion to the Passion in the Light of the Writings of St. Francis

##### 1. *In the Passion Meditations of the Writings of St. Francis*

The love and sacrifice of the Good Shepherd always hovered before the eyes of the Poverello. Without singling out any special scenes of the passion, he focused on the interior sentiments of Jesus.<sup>322</sup> Through it all, a warm personal relationship of the beholder to the Redeemer is discernible. Meditation on of the sufferings of Jesus was for him an ongoing drive to a personal following of the Crucified.

##### 2. *In the Passion Prayers, Excluding the Office of the Passion*

The restrained style of the Roman liturgy and the influence of the monastic cult of the cross are clearly seen in the objective tone of the *We Adore You, O Christ*. But even here a personal note is found inasmuch as Francis broadens the locus of adoration to include all the churches in the world. We also encounter more intimate prayers in which the loving concern of the Redeemer, especially under the image of the Good Shepherd, comes to the fore.

In his *Prayer before the Crucifix* in San Damiano and in the *Canticle of Brother Sun*, composed after he received the stigmata, there is no mention of the mystery of the passion.

##### 3. *Francis's Devotion to the Mystical Tau*

This is no novelty. Based on Ezekiel 9:4ff, it dates back to a centuries-old tradition of the fathers. It is found in medieval sermon literature, art and popular piety. Francis seems to have been introduced to this form of veneration of the cross on the occasion of his stay in Rome (1210) with the Hospitalers of St. Anthony. At least in the beginning, his humble service of the lepers is associated with the veneration of the Tau.

At the Fourth Lateran Council, Pope Innocent III placed the new crusade against the Muslims under the sign of the Tau. Very likely

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322. Hereafter we shall abstain from quoting individual references except when they present new points of view.

Francis attended the council as an unofficial observer. In 1216, Jacques de Vitry, the former spiritual director of the Beguines in Liege, introduced him to a strongly Eucharistic-oriented cult. The fact that Francis was at that time placing great emphasis on penance and the Eucharist in his messages he sealed with the Tau leads one to assume that he had linked his apostolate of ecclesiastical and Eucharistic reform with this symbolic sign.

Francis signed his letters with the mystical sign; he had it traced on the walls of cells and oratories and placed it on the drawing of the head found on the parchment blessing which very likely represents Brother Leo. The Tau was also for him a symbolic expression of the friars' call to penance. A radical renunciation of the world and total turning to God unites the everyday penances of the Franciscan way of life closely with the mystery of the cross and provides the friars with the hope of eternal redemption.

#### *4. Following the Cross*

The following of the cross led the saint to practice the virtues of humility, fortitude and patience in suffering in the form of persecution, illness and finally in the love of enemies. Through it all, the thought of martyrdom is clearly evident.

One fact must be noted: his view of the sufferings of Jesus was not limited to historical details. Taking St. Paul literally, Francis excluded all self-exaltation when he contemplated the cross. His devotion brings out the social dimension of human guilt and communal responsibility for the passion. The only glory the Christian can claim is to follow Christ crucified by enduring one's own sufferings daily.

#### *5. The Office of the Passion*

It is so called because it is inspired by the sufferings of Jesus. In its historical background it is related to a form of private devotion that was cultivated since the Carolingian era.

In this Office, Francis follows the hours of the Divine Office for the liturgical season beginning with Compline of Holy Thursday and ending with Vespers of Good Friday, during which he contemplates the various scenes of the passion: the agony in the garden, the night arrest and humiliations, the trial before the Sanhedrin, the sentence of death, the patient suffering of the God-Man on the cross and in His final hours, which more or less are reflected in the psalms of the Divine Office.

In each hour except the hour of None, Francis listens to Jesus praying to the Father with unfailing trust and complete obedience.<sup>323</sup>

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323. There can be no doubt that Francis learned his devotion to the passion from the example of the praying church. We shall quote only the judgment of F. Vandenbroucke, O.S.B., *Les Psaumes et le Christ* (Louvain, 1955), p. 66: "C'est

He does not depict the various moral and physical sufferings of the Savior. Rather he contemplates His interior dispositions.

In the hour of None, the Man of Sorrows speaks directly to Francis and tells him of His intense suffering. Toward the end the Poverello turns to the Savior in words of praise.

In Vespers, despite the day of sorrow, there is rejoicing over the complete fulfillment of the work of Redemption. Francis's gratitude is not limited to words and feelings, but proves its genuineness in a generous following of the cross. Going beyond the royal victory of Christ, the saint raises his sight to His parousial coming as judge of the world.

### **B. Francis's Devotion to the Passion according to Biographical Sources**

Among the visions of the mystery of the passion, the speaking-crucifix at San Damiano plays a decisive role. The historicity of Celano's account cannot be seriously questioned, though the event is not unheard of, as the biographer seemed to believe. Similar experiences are recorded of earlier saints.

Considering the nature of the event, we can deduce the following: The idea that the lips of the crucifix actually spoke to the saint about his mission can very likely be dismissed as a later legendary accretion to the original story. The dialogue does not appear to have been carried on by the external senses, contrary to what Celano and St. Bonaventure take for granted.

Nevertheless there is not a question of pious self-deception brought about by the subjective state of Francis and by the surroundings of the little church. Rather it was a matter of a primary, or more probably secondary, divine operation on his internal vision and hearing. The deep spiritual experience of an internal voice and the impression of the mysterious wound of love had such a powerful effect on the senses of the saint that he imagined that he saw and heard the crucifix speaking to him.

The following can be listed among the effects of the speaking-crucifix on the newly-converted Francis: (1) the mystical wound of love in his soul, which the biographers rightly consider an internal preparation for the external impression of the stigmata; and (2) his extraordinary affective compassion with the suffering Jesus.

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avec fréquence extraordinaire, et en quasi exclusivité, que le cycle pascal ... christianise les psaumes par en bas (i.e. as 'vox Christi ad patrem') pour exprimer les sentiments rédempteurs du Christ." This is especially true of Holy Week (ibid., p. 66, n. 9, with references).

The sources offer no grounds for Francis having a special devotion to the five wounds or the pierced side of the Savior. Certain forms of his passion mysticism are noteworthy, however.<sup>324</sup> He sees the Redeemer mirrored not only in the poor, the lepers and other sick humans, but he associates the worm on the road and the wood of the trees to the Crucified, that is, to the cross.

The immediate and lively manner with which Francis sees the passion as present in the sick and in natural symbols shows the mystical character of his experience. We look in vain for such insights before Francis's time.

His veneration of the cross soon took on manifold expressions as a result of the events in San Damiano. Even before his conversion, Francis endowed an oil lamp to be kept burning before the crucifix. He composed the *We Adore You, O Christ*, and taught his disciples to say the prayer. He loved to remain in prayer before the crucifix in out-of-the-way churches. He marked himself and others with the sign of the cross and prayed with outstretched arms.

The mystery of the passion had a many-sided effect on Francis's personal striving for holiness. The habit is an image of the cross because the Friar Minor, when he raises his hood and stretches out his arms in prayer, appears to be fastened to the cross and enveloped in it. Similarly he feels a tangible participation in the sufferings of Jesus by wearing a cheap, coarse cloth.

Francis wished to be conformed symbolically with the crucified Savior by disrobing before Bishop Guido of Assisi, by his penitential march while half-naked, and finally by his stripping at the approach of death.

The holy founder understood the life of self-denial and renunciation which the Friar Minor freely assumes as a total following of the cross, although biographers do not associate particular forms of mortification with the mystery of the cross. Yet the well-documented practice of taking the discipline by its very nature includes a participation in the sufferings of Jesus.

Francis nourished his apostolic zeal with the thought of the Redemption. Through preaching and example, he would prevent Christ's suffering on the cross from being endured in vain. Certain particular events in St. Bonaventure's *Life* appear on closer analysis to reflect the personal views of the biographer or fictional trimmings.

In his eager longing for martyrdom Francis strove to reach the summit of perfection through a bloody participation in the passion of Christ. Consequently he tried, though unsuccessfully, to reach Syria

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324. See Part 3 B, nn. 125, 151 above: "Mystical Contemplation of the Passion in the Life of St. Francis."

early in 1212. Between 1214 and 1215 he walked to Spain, intending to cross over to Morocco. Illness forced him to return home.

His participation in the Fifth Crusade to Egypt and his death-defying march with Brother Illuminatus of Acre to Sultan Al-Malik al-Kamil in 1219 brought him much closer to his goal.

As we can learn from the sources, Francis found his only substitute for martyrdom in patiently enduring illness—not in the religious calling of the friars as such. The sources afford some evidence for his visit to the holy places of Palestine. We can even determine the approximate time in which it would have occurred. But we can ascribe only some probability to it.

### C. Comparison of the Two Sources

#### 1. *Points of Agreement*

We find certain themes both in the writings of the saint and in the biographies, which show substantial agreement. We might mention his devotion to the cross, his thoughts on the loving submission of the Savior to His Father, his respect for the mystical Tau, and his longing for martyrdom.

#### 2. *Points of Difference*

The reader of Franciscan literature will notice first of all that the thought of the passion is less emphasized in the writings of Francis than in the biographies.<sup>325</sup> Also, the two sources place a different emphasis on Francis's relationship to the Redeemer. The writings stress Jesus' unflinching submission to the Father and His love for the redeemed. The biographies, on the other hand, stress compassion with the suffering of the God-Man. Both Celano and Bonaventure describe the mystical element in Francis's contemplation of the passion much more clearly than the writings do.

The biographers read things into the writings of St. Francis. We might mention the speaking-crucifix of San Damiano and the impression of the mystical wound of love; the significance of the sick as mirrors of the Redeemer; the association of trees with the cross; the following of the cross in the wearing of the habit; stripping; and taking the discipline. Only the biographers inform us that the saint looked on sickness as a substitute for martyrdom.

#### 3. *Resolution of the Differences*

The aforementioned differences between Francis's devotion to the passion as portrayed in the writings and in the lives becomes less serious if we take note of their different purposes. His writings are not an autobiography and make no claim to be such.<sup>326</sup> They were composed

325. We will take up this problem more in detail below. See H. Goossens, O.F.M., "De Gods—en Christusvisie van St. Franciscus," in *Sint Franc.* 1 (1955):7-42.

for special occasions. No matter how irreplaceable they may be, and no matter how invaluable the insights they give us into the various facets of Francis's spirituality, they do not present us with a total picture of his personality. Viewed in this light, the new viewpoints introduced in the sources are complementary to the writings. Apart from some passages that still await critical analysis, their historicity cannot be seriously challenged, especially since they are in harmony with what we know of Francis's interior life.

It is more difficult to arrive at a solution of the problems raised by their different emphasis. It was difficult, if not downright impossible, for an outside observer to describe a personal relationship such as that of Francis with the suffering Jesus accurately and without any distortion. Consequently the biographers had to make use of externally perceptible events, whose total significance they were for the most part unable to evaluate. Nor must we overlook Francis's extraordinary reticence when it came to revealing his intimate spiritual experiences.<sup>327</sup>

The biographies present certain religious events in Francis's life in a more objective way than he himself experienced them. Both Celano and Bonaventure exaggerated the saint's expression of his emotions. With regard to the *Office of the Passion* in particular, the fixed liturgical text of the Psalter may have inhibited the free flow of his feelings. As for the mystical element, we must recall once more Francis's fear of carelessly revealing God's secrets. Finally we must remember that Francis's writings and the biographical writings give almost equal emphasis to the following of the cross as the lodestar of his spiritual life.<sup>328</sup>

#### D. Genetic Development of Francis's Devotion to the Passion

The evolution of Francis's devotion to the passion begins with his kissing the leper in whom he encountered the crucified Christ.<sup>329</sup> Shortly thereafter he had the experience of the speaking-crucifix in San Damiano which laid the foundation for his relationship to Christ and influenced the rest of his career. It was at this time of his life that the most significant facets of his devotion to the passion make their appearance: the mystical wound of love, his deep compassion, his veneration

326. See Introduction above.

327. See for example 1*Cel* 96; 2*Cel* 117, 128, 133, 203. See also J. Lortz, *Der unvergleichliche Heilige* (Düsseldorf, 1952), p. 47.

328. This is not to say that we shall not find differences in the various accounts of his following of the cross. For example, there is no application to the religious habit in the writings of St. Francis.

329. See the chronological table in Grau, *Thomas von Celano*, p. 550-52 for the time of composition of the writings. Esser and Hardick, *Schriften*, pp. 43-47.



tion and following of the cross. This of course, does not mean that his relationship to the Savior was immutably fixed for all time. Various aspects appear one by one at certain periods of his life. Francis first perceived the relationship between clothing and nakedness in the mystery of the cross when he stripped himself in the presence of Bishop Guido of Assisi. Francis and Brother Bernard of Quintavalle heard the call of Christ to follow the cross in Matthew 16:24 in the beginning of 1209 in the Church of St. Nicholas in Assisi. His veneration of the Tau very likely had its inception during his stay with the Hospitalers of St. Anthony near the Lateran in 1210. His longing for martyrdom appeared, as far as we know, for the first time in the second half of 1212, again in 1214–15, and finally with some hope of attainment in 1219.

In all probability the holy founder took part in the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 as an unofficial observer and at that time listened to Pope Innocent III preach the opening discourse about the *triplex transitus*, the urgently-needed reform of the church, and the mystical sign of the Tau. His devotion to the Eucharist dates from his meeting with Jacques de Vitry at the deathbed of the great pope in 1216. The call to penance in the letters signed with the Tau at this time show that since 1215–16 Francis associated his goal of ecclesiastical and Eucharistic reform with his veneration of the mystical sign.

His *First* and *Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful* must be assigned to the year 1221 because of its affinity with the *Earlier Rule*. It shows for the first time his insight into Jesus' obediential relationship to the Father. Because of the important place it gives to the internal feelings of Christ, the *Office of the Passion* probably must be assigned to this time.<sup>330</sup> Without more definite points of reference, it is not possible to determine the sequence of events such as his finding of the Crucified in the poor and sick. However, his letter to Brother Leo proves that by the fall of 1224 Francis looked on the Tau as the symbol of the life of the Friars Minor. Since the Testament, which was written between September and October 1226, speaks about the *We Adore You, O Christ* in the past tense,<sup>331</sup> we may assume that in his later years the objective cult of the cross had receded somewhat to the background.

There can be no doubt that the passion spirituality of the saint reached its climax in his mystical crucifixion on La Verna in September 1224. From that time the Poverello's love of the passion metamorphosed from a passive-experiential phase to a more and more active-as-

330. Otherwise we lack points of reference for dating the *Office of the Passion*. Since Francis quotes Ps. 21:7, we are of the opinion that this detail of his passion-mysticism (*vermis et non homo*) gives us a closer cue.

331. *Test* 2: "Et Dominus dedit mihi talem fidem in ecclesiis, ut ita simpliciter orarem et dicerem 'Adoramus.'" See K. Esser, 101.

cetic state.<sup>332</sup> During the last two years of his life the wounds remained substantially unchanged and the mysteries of the passion naturally occupied most of his meditations. He endured the terrible pains of his last illness in a close union of suffering with the Redeemer. He looked upon his death, which occurred on October 3, 1226, as a mystical complement of the death of Jesus on the cross.

Our portrayal of the development of Francis's veneration of the passion of Jesus must necessarily remain fragmentary. Nevertheless, we can conclude that its origins and evolution were initiated and guided by divine intervention and then developed according to the laws of natural growth. In an overall perspective, its place within the context of his Christ-centered spiritual life, and its sources in medieval religious tradition must be further determined.

### **E. Francis's Veneration of the Passion in the Context of His Christocentric Piety and the Religious Tradition of the Middle Ages**

We cannot present a comprehensive evaluation of every detail. Each aspect of Francis's Christocentric piety would have to be explored individually. But we can be certain that the biographers grossly exaggerated the role of the mystery of the passion in the spiritual development of the Poverello. If we were to accept at face value certain statements of Celano, and especially of St. Bonaventure, the spiritual life of Francis consisted exclusively, or at least primarily, in devotion to the sufferings of Jesus.

#### *1. Role played by Francis's Devotion to the Passion according to Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure*

Celano certainly ignores historical accuracy when he writes in his treatise on miracles: "All the thoughts and actions of the man of God, whether in public or in private, were directed to the cross of the Lord."<sup>333</sup> Even if we make allowance for the frequently intemperate style of the writer, this statement goes far beyond literary license. Since Celano expresses his judgment in conjunction with "new and marvelous miracle" of the stigmatization, the psychological ground for his exaggeration is immediately apparent. Celano betrays this causal connection even in his *First Life*: "Because he always bore and preserved Christ Jesus and Him crucified in his heart with a wonderful love, he was marked in a most glorious way above all others."<sup>334</sup>

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332. We shall discuss the pertinent questions more thoroughly in our *Wundmale des hl. Franziskus*.

333. *3Cel* 2. See *1Cel* 84.

334. *1Cel* 115. See also *2Cel* 109.

St. Bonaventure goes even further. The words with which he concludes his account of the miracles are so remarkable that we feel obliged to share them with our readers:

This great and wonderful mystery of the cross, in which the gifts of grace, the merit of virtue, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3) are so deeply hid that they remain concealed from the wise and prudent of the world, was so clearly revealed to this little one of Christ (Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21) that his whole life was taken up with following the way of the cross (1 Pet. 2:21), with savoring the sweetness of the cross, with preaching the glory of the cross.... O glorious standard bearer of Christ! Glory, therefore, now that you are safe in the glory of the cross, for having begun with the cross, you moved forward according to the rule of the cross and finally made perfect in the cross, you make known to all the faithful, through the testimony of the cross, what great glory is yours in heaven.<sup>335</sup>

In another place the Seraphic Doctor divides the spiritual ascent of the holy founder not into three stages but according to the "seven visions of the cross" that marked his life. The stigmatization, as might be expected, is presented as the culmination of the saint's career.<sup>336</sup>

## 2. True Position of Francis with Regard to the Passion within the Framework of Medieval Tradition

It is understandable that the extraordinary event of the stigmatization blurred the sight of the biographers for a genuine historical appraisal of the Poverello's devotion to the passion. The critical historian is left with the task of eliminating false or biased interpretations. An unprejudiced look at the writings of St. Francis, and especially at the *Office of the Passion*, will prove to be of invaluable help.

Something like the following picture emerges: Francis drew upon scenes from the history of the passion as the framework of his meditations, but he never sees them in realistic detail. He concentrated on the moral and physical sufferings of Jesus and felt deep empathy with them, but they did not constitute the central theme of his contemplation.

Francis immersed himself first and foremost in the unflinching submission of Jesus to His Father and His love for men. From this flowed his sentiments of gratitude and his longing to complete the sufferings of Jesus through his following of the cross. Given that such a state of mind, it is comprehensible, from a human viewpoint, that he felt an extraordinary attraction to the mystery of the Passion and longed to

335. *LMaior* X 8-9. For the history and problem of dividing the various steps, see K. Rahner, S.J., "Über das Problem des Stufenweges zur christlichen Vollendung," in *Schriften zur Theologie*, vol. 3 (Einsiedeln, 1957), pp. 11-34, esp. pp. 12-19. See P. Pourrat, S.S., in *Dict. Spir.*, s.v. "Commencants."

336. *LMaior* XIII 10. See Part 3 A above: "Apparitions of the Crucified in the Life of St. Francis."

live it mystically in his own person. However—and this must be stressed—the holy founder did not experience the sufferings of Jesus as a self-contained, isolated mystery. Rather he viewed them in the broader context of salvation history, in relation to the Incarnation, the Eucharist, the Resurrection and the Second Coming of Christ.

We must admit, however, that his association of the penitential life of the Friars Minor with the mystical Tau, and the symbolism of the habit, show that the Passion occupied a predominant, indeed a central place in the thinking of the saint, above and beyond all the other mysteries of the Savior's life. It does not mean, of course, that devotion to the passion exhausted his whole spiritual life. In any area priority does not necessarily entail exclusivity but only a certain relationship to other values. In one point we must agree with the biographers. Because of the circumstances surrounding the last years of the holy founder, the passion occupied the center of the stage.

This was all the more true after he received the stigmata.<sup>337</sup> We must read the following from Celano's *Second Life* in this context:

When Francis was ill and filled throughout with pain, his companion once said: "Father, you have always sought refuge in the Scriptures, and they have always given you remedies for your pains. I pray you to have something read to you now from the prophets; perhaps your spirit will rejoice in the Lord."

The saint said to him: "It is good to read the testimonies of the Scriptures; it is good to seek the Lord our God in them. As for me, however, I have already made so much of Scripture my own that I have more than enough to meditate on and revolve in my mind. I need no more, son. I know Christ, the poor crucified one" (1 Cor. 2:2).<sup>338</sup>

As this passage shows, the conversation occurred when Francis was half blind and seriously ill. We must not overlook the fact that in his answer the dying saint mentions expressly Christ's poverty in conjunction with the cross. It was the concept of poverty that most impressed him on hearing the Gospel of the sending of the Apostles when he heard it read in the Portiuncula.<sup>339</sup> It would be erroneous to overlook the

337. It is interesting to note that in his *Canticle of Brother Sun*, which he wrote between September and October 1226, there is no explicit mention of the passion of Christ. For a discussion of its date see G. Abate, "La nascita del 'Cantico di Frate Sole' nel palazzo vescovile di Assisi," in *MisFran* 56 (1956):403ff, 410-15, esp. p. 411.

338. *2Cel* 105. *Legant* 38 has a different version. See Delorme, p. 23. The question concerns the "quidem minister" who suggested that Francis's companions consult the Bible. The saint's answer differs markedly from Celano's text: "Frater, tantam dulcedinem et consolationem invenio quotidie in mea memoria ex meditatione humilitatis vestigiorum Filii Dei, quod si usque in finem saeculi viverem, non multum necesse esset mihi alias Scripturas aurire vel meditari." Celano's accurate summation indicates the greater originality of his version.

339. *1Cel* 22. The date was Feb. 24, 1209. See H. Felder, *Die Ideale des hl. Franziskus*

influence that the poverty of Jesus' birth and itinerant ministry exercised on Francis during his last years on earth.<sup>340</sup>

Recently attention has been called to the great role that eastern thought and the concept the glorified Christ plays in the writings of Francis and the writings of Celano.<sup>341</sup> In many places in the writings, Francis manifests a strong Parousia mentality. We find the theme expressed in his Credo in the *Earlier Rule*. After he thanks the Father, the Lord and king of heaven, for the creation of the world, for the Incarnation and the passion of Christ, he continues: "We thank you, for your Son Himself will come again in the glory of His majesty, to send the wicked ones who have not done penance and who have not known you into the eternal fire, and to say to all those who have known you and have adored you and have served you in penance: 'Come, you blessed of my Father; receive the kingdom, which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world'" (Matt. 25:34).<sup>342</sup>

As this one text shows, there was no danger that the holy founder would be so absorbed in the contemplation and following of the suffering Christ that he would lose sight of the glorified Lord. Despite the prominent place he accords it, the passion of Christ was for him not an end in itself but a means to an end, and he never let his following of the cross degenerate into a kind of masochism.<sup>343</sup>

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von Assisi (Paderborn, 1951), pp. 6ff. Laurentius Casutt, O.F.M.Cap., *L'eredità di S. Francesco* (Rome, 1952), pp. 53ff; Van den Borne, "Voornaamste feiten," in *Sint Franc. 3* (1957):196ff; Fortini, *Nova vita di S. Francesco*, vol. 1, 1, p. 317, n. 1.

340. This was true at least for Christmas 1223. See *1Cel* 84, and our study: "De kerstviering van Greccio in het licht van haar tijd," in *Franc. Leven* 40 (1957):163-77; 41 (1958):21-27. We should further note that the dying saint recommended poverty to his spiritual sons: "Setting the counsels of the Gospel above all other prescriptions" (*1Cel* 216).
341. K. Esser, "Homo alterius saeculi: Endzeitliche Heilswirklichkeit im Leben des hl. Franziskus," in *Wiss. Weish.* 20 (1957):180-97, or Esser and Grau, *Antwort der Liebe* (Werl in Westphalia, 1958), pp. 57-73, and I.É. Motte, O.F.M. and G. Hégo, O.F.M., *La Pâque de saint François* (Paris, 1958). These authors write for a wider circle of readers and consequently are less concerned with the historical accuracy of the texts than with their relevance for the liturgical movement.
342. *RegNB* XXIII. See Esser, *Homo alterius saeculi*, p. 182. Note that Francis does not use the Vulgate edition but a translation of *Vetus Latina* when he quotes Matt. 25:34: *percipite* and *ab origine* instead of *possidete* and *a constitutione*. The same is found in Augustine's *In Jo. Evangelium tract.*, chap. 14, no. 8.
343. Somehow St. Bernard too warns against giving absolute priority to the contemplation of the passion. See J.A. Jungmann, S.J., "Die Abwehr des germanischen Arianismus," in *Zschr. Kath. Theol.* 69 (1974):91. The tendency became greater in the following centuries. See J. S. Stadlhuber, "Das Laienstundgebet von Leiden Christi in seinem mittelalterlichen Fortleben," *Zschr. Kath. Theol.* 72 (1950):281-325, esp. pp. 288ff, with certain exaggerations. Naturally the Franciscan authors have a great part in this movement, e.g. St. Bonaventure. See Bonifatius Strack (von Ramsen), O.F.M.Cap., "Das Leiden Christi im Denken des hl. Bonaventura," in *FSien* 41 (1959):129-62, and his *Christusleid*

We can subscribe without reservation to the judgment of Carl Andresen with respect to the relationship between Francis's devotion to the passion and his equally tender devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament:<sup>344</sup> "Just as the mystery of transubstantiation of the Eucharist occupied the center of his sacramental worship of Christ, the passion of the crucified Savior was the focus of his contemplative life."<sup>345</sup> We must keep in mind, however, that the two forms of devotion were not equally developed in each period of Francis's life. His Eucharistic piety in all probability matured only after 1216.<sup>346</sup>

Francis's relationship to the Redeemer cannot, therefore, be labeled simply as passion-piety, passion-sensitivity, mysticism of the cross, the following of the cross, and the like. It somehow embraces all the above. We would miss the point completely if we were to try to lay down rigid lines of demarcation and set definite boundaries between them. Devotional attitudes and practices are not fixed constants. Often first one, then another aspect emerges more clearly, depending on particular circumstances in the life of a saint.

As for the historical setting of Francis's spirituality, we can say that with respect to the mystery of the passion it can be located midway between the early and later medieval piety. We must certainly take into consideration the attempts he made to give dramatic expression to the mystery of the passion. We recall again his disrobing, his loud bewailing of the sufferings of the Lord, his penitential march and the holy drama of his death. Symbolism is important in all these events. They are very different from the naturalistic realism of the later Middle Ages.<sup>347</sup>

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im Christenleben. Ein Beitrag zur Theologie des christlichen Lebens nach dem hl. Bonaventura, (Werl in Westphalia, 1960). Hubertino of Casale is even more biased. See van den Borne, "Ubertino van Casale en de 'Spiritualen' - richting," in *Sint Franc.* 5 (1959):163-217. esp. pp. 198-203.

344. See B. Cornet, O.F.M., "Le 'De Reverentia Corporis Domini' Exhortation et lettre de S. François," in *EF*, n.s., 6 (1955):65-91, 167-80; 7 (1956):20-35, 155-71; 8 (1957):33-58. See also Esser and Grau, *Antwort der Liebe*, pp. 89-105; Esser, "Missarum sacramenta: Die Eucharistielehre des hl. Franziskus von Assisi," in *Wiss. Weish.* 23 (1960):81-108.

345. C. Andresen, "Franz von Assisi u. seine Krankheiten," in *Wege zum Menschen* 6 (1954):39.

346. That is, since Francis's meeting with Jacques de Vitry at Innocent's deathbed in Perugia. See Fredegand Callaey, O.F.M.Cap., "Origine e sviluppo della Festa del 'Corpus Domini'," in *Euntes Docete* 10 (1957):3-33, esp. pp. 5ff (bibl).

347. In this matter the Seraphic Doctor relies far more definitely on late medieval devotion to the passion. See Bonifatius Strack, "Das Leiden Christi," in *FSien* 41 (1959):129-62, and his *Christusleid im Christenleben*. We recall here only the example of the Sorrowful Mother. According to the sources, Francis did not have a special devotion to Mary at the foot of the cross. But this devotion was developed by our doctor of the church. See Bonafatius, *Leiden Christi*, pp. 155-58, and our study: "De seraphici Patris Francisci habitudine erga beatissimam Virginem Mariam," in

We will look in vain for realistic descriptions of the various scenes of the passion in Francis's writings. It seems to us that St. Bernard went much further in this respect. Nor must we imagine that Francis's devotion to the passion had its source entirely in his sensitive nature. His simple reverence for the suffering Lord did not evolve into a multitude of independent forms of devotion. We can see in his expressions of passion-piety the influence of certain monastic practices. We might mention, for example, praying with outstretched arms in the form of a cross, the association of the religious garb with the cross, and the custom of dying in sackcloth and ashes. He manifested a spiritual affinity with St. Peter Damian in his readiness to follow the cross, but Francis took a gentler and more humane tack.<sup>348</sup> He also differs from the female mystics of the Middle Ages in his lack of any visions of the passion. Only the stigmatization and its accompanying inner sharing of the passion with the Crucified point to a later mysticism of the passion.<sup>349</sup>

Francis's love for the passion was strongly influenced by chivalry and the enthusiasm of the crusades.<sup>350</sup> The influence of the crusades is evident in his longing for martyrdom and in his missionary journey to Egypt. Perhaps this same spiritual current also gave direction to his devotion to the cross, at least indirectly. His view of the sick, especially of the lepers as mirrors of the suffering Lord, is related to the hospital care provided by some of the orders of knighthood.<sup>351</sup>

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*Regina Immaculata*, Melchior a Pobladura, O.F.M.Cap. (Rome, 1955), pp. 15-47, esp. p. 21, n. 27.

348. See especially V. Vailati, "La devozione all'umanità di Cristo nelle opere di s. Pier Damiani," in *Divus Thom.* (Piac.), 3d ser., 20 (1943):78-93, esp. pp. 85-90. The question of the immediate dependence of Francis's veneration of the passion on the zealous reformer cannot of course be definitely established. We can find some striking resemblances to some passages of the writings of Francis in Peter Damian's "Opusc. 12 apologeticum de contemptu saeculi," *PL* 145, 251-92. See in our study *De Francisci habitudine*, p. 31, the observation of J. Leclercq, O.S.B., "Fragmenta mariana," in *Eph. Liturg.* 72 (1958):296, n. 22. See also his *S. Pierre Damien, ermite et homme d'Église* (Rome, 1960).
349. See W. Lampen, O.F.M., "De spiritu S. Francisci in operibus S. Gertrudis Magnae," in *AFH* 19 (1926):733-52, esp. pp. 744-47.
350. See bibl. given in Part 4 E 1, n. 204 above: "Francis's Longing for Martyrdom." See also the following notes. For Francis, see Felder, *Der Christusritter aus Assisi*, pp. 101ff, 110-20. Andresen expresses his view very clearly in *Franz von Assisi und seine Krankheiten*, p. 40: "Franciscan devotion to the passion is the spiritual child of contemporary reverence for the cross which found its prototype in the passion-mysticism of Bernard of Clairvaux and reached the broad masses of the people through the Crusades."
351. See especially G. Schreiber, "Byzantisches u. abendländisches Hospital," in his *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, vol. 1: *Gemeinschaften des MA* (Münster, 1948), pp. 3-71, esp. pp. 3-10 (bibl). We are speaking here of at least an indirect dependence insofar as Francis had contact with the Antonians. See Part 1 C above: "Francis and the Mystical Tau." Francis also had contact with the Italian Crociferi. The two

Lack of reliable evidence makes it impossible to say whether Francis's unusual practices of penance are to be interpreted as a vicarious sharing in the privations and battles of the crusaders.<sup>352</sup> Since St. Bernard of Clairvaux played a decisive role in arousing crusader-piety, the Poverello was at least indirectly affected by the preaching of that mystic. However powerfully the ideals of Christian knighthood and the crusades influenced Francis, his devotion to the passion cannot find a complete explanation in these movements.

Finally, with Kajetan Esser, we may indicate one negative factor operating on Francis's devotion to the passion. The Albigensian heresy was threatening the medieval church from within far more seriously than the Muslims were from without. Francis was made all the more aware of the danger since the Albigensians had established one of their dioceses in the valley of Spoleto. For these Docetist heretics, the passion of the Lord was an illusion. Christ could not suffer and die because He did not possess an earthly body.<sup>353</sup>

We can detect a number of clear, though not explicit, statements against these errors in Francis's writings. We shall quote only one, from his *Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful*: "The will of the Father was such that His blessed and glorious Son, Whom He gave to us and [Who] was born for us, should, through His own blood, offer Himself as a sacrifice and oblation on the altar of the cross; not for Himself, through Whom all things were made (John 2:3), but for our sins, leaving us an example that we should follow in His footprints" (1 Pet. 2:21).

The emphasis the saint places on Redemption through Christ's own blood (we find this repeated in several places) implies a deliberate rejection of the Docetism of the Albigensians.<sup>354</sup> Insofar as Francis symbolically embodied the reality of the passion of Jesus, he providentially contributed to the overthrow of this most dangerous heresy of the Middle Ages.

orders were born of the crusader movement. See *LMaior* IV 8. So it is not unlikely that he learned of the exemplary care of the sick carried out by the Knights Hospitalers by firsthand observation during his trip to the Orient.

352. W. Maurer says this for example of St. Elizabeth: "...ascetical services carried out in the light of the perils and victories of the crusades." See "Zum Verständnis der hl. Elizabeth von Thüringen," in *Zsch. K.G.* 65 (1953-54):16-64, esp. pp. 30ff. See also H. Wolter, S.J., "Elemente der Kreuzzugsfrömmigkeit in der Spiritualität des hl. Ignatius," in *Ignatius von Loyola*, ed. F. Wulf, S.J. (Würzburg, 1956), pp. 129ff.
353. K. Esser, "Franziskus von Assisi u. die Katharer seiner Zeit," in *AFH* 51 (1958):225-64, esp. pp. 230, 239, 253-55. The pertinent evidence is given by A. Borst, *Die Katharer* (Stuttgart, 1953), pp. 167, 239.
354. *Op.*, pp. 88ff; See K. Esser, "Franziskus von Assisi u. die Katharer seiner Zeith," in *AFH* 51 (1958):254. See also Part 1 A above: "Contemplation of the Passion."



### 3. Holy Scripture and the Liturgy, and How They Influenced Francis's Devotion to the Passion

No matter how real and important the above-mentioned influences may have been, they cannot be compared with that of the Bible. It is well worth our while to point out once more how often Francis applied verses from the psalms to the passion of Jesus.<sup>355</sup> In the New Testament the perennial influence of the Johannine Gospel is most evident.<sup>356</sup> Again we single out the themes of the Good Shepherd and Jesus' submission to the will of His Father.<sup>357</sup> Of course the synoptic writers, too, especially Matthew,<sup>358</sup> contributed to the concepts and expression of his spirituality of the cross. Nor was St. Paul's theology of the cross completely unknown to the Poverello, as his exhortation on the glory of the cross evidences. Nevertheless, we must admit that in comparison to other New Testament sources, the Pauline writings play a minor role.<sup>359</sup> From our historical vantage point, therefore, we can confirm the

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355. We need not enumerate the verses of the *Office of the Passion* which refer to the sufferings of Jesus. It is interesting to note that of the seventeen psalm-verses quoted in the other writings of St. Francis, none relates to the passion. For other Old Testament passages which Francis applied to the passion of Jesus, see Isaiah 50:7, Lam. 1:12, Exek. 9:4, ff.
356. Based on Esser and Hardick, *Schriften*, pp. 241a-42a, 243b and our own observations on the *Office of the Passion* (see Part 3 above: "Francis's Devotion to the passion in the Light of the Biographical Sources"), of the fifty-eight quotations from John, 1 John, and Revelation (more or less freely quoted), twenty-eight make some reference to the sufferings of Christ, either by reason of the biblical text itself or by Francis's application.
357. Here we present the opinion of the exegete K.H. Schelkle, *Die Passion Jesu in der Verkündigung des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg, 1949), p. 114: "The obedience of the Son to the Father is therefore, according to the whole (New Testament) tradition, the basic motive for his undergoing the passion" (pp. 112-14). Note how Francis was influenced by exegetical thinking.
358. Out of a total of seventy-one quotations from St. Matthew, we found seventeen that were influenced by the thought of the passion. For Luke and Revelation, the proportion is nine out of fifty-two, and for Mark, two out of eight. We must recall that the medieval liturgies seldom quoted Mark. See for example a number of pericopes from the early and medieval church in G. Godu, in *Dict. Arch. Liturg.*, s.v. "Evangiles."
359. Of the thirty-five passages quoted from the Pauline epistles and five from Hebrews, we counted seven and three respectively that had a passion motif. Remarkable, too, is the proportion from 1 Peter (three out of nine). The four quotations from James have no reference to the passion. See H. Boehmer, *Chronica fr. Jordani*, p. 15 (Paris, 1908): "Et videns h. Franciscus fr. Caesarium sacris Litteris erutum, ipsi commisit, ut Regulam, quam ipse simplicibus verbis conceperat, verbis evangelii adornaret. Quod et fecit." The cooperation of the learned brother in choosing biblical texts, which Jordan of Giano mentions only in connection with the *RegNB*, must be accepted to some extent for Francis's other writings. It is consequently very difficult to delineate the respective roles of Francis and his secretary. K. Beyschlag, in *Die Bergpredigt u. Franz von Assisi* (Gütersloh, 1955), p. 62, offers a good norm when he distinguishes between the ornamental, meditative quotations of the secretary and legislative texts of the saint. For our purposes we may prescind from any attempts

judgment of W. Detloff. Francis "did not so much quote the Bible as to speak simply in the language of the Scriptures."<sup>360</sup>

Many passages of this essay make clear the extent to which the Poverello nourished his devotion to the passion with the sacred liturgy. This dependence is especially evident in his *We Adore You, O Christ* and in many passages of the *Office of the Passion*. We may assume that the Poverello derived many scriptural passages from the pericopes of the liturgy and through listening to homilies rather than from a direct reading of the Bible text itself.<sup>361</sup>

And so we hope to have treated the main points of Francis's devotion to the cross.<sup>362</sup> We do not claim to have completely covered every point of view, or to have definitively solved every problem. The relation of Francis to the Redeemer is too complicated for that. We also need further research into the broader field of medieval piety. Our somewhat unreliable sources do not provide us with a clear solution in every case. We realize from example how hidden is a person's interior life, and even the most talented historical critic cannot, in the last analysis, penetrate it.<sup>363</sup>

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to specify more exactly the assistance of the learned brethren, since Francis, without any doubt, personally selected the passage. For other viewpoints and the relevant bibliography for Jordan's statement, see R. Koper, O.F.M., *Das Weltverständnis des hl. Franziskus von Assisi: Eine Untersuchung über das "Exiit de Saeculo"* (Werl in Westphalia, 1959), pp. 132ff.

360. W. Detloff, O.F.M., "Die Geistigkeit des hl. Franziskus in der Theologie der Franziskaner," in *Wiss. Weish.* 19 (1956):197-211. On page 211 he says: "The Christian greatness of St. Francis lay precisely in this, that he had no ideas of his own that were contrary to the Gospel."
361. An example for Matt. 16:24 was given above in Part 4 B, "Francis's Following of the Cross through Self-denial." We must mention a noteworthy statement by Brother Leo in an appendix to St. Francis's Breviary: "Fecit (Franciscus) etiam scribi hoc evangelistare (i.e. evangelarium) et eo die, quo non posset audire missam occasione infirmitatis vel alio aliquo manifesto impedimento, faciebat sibi legi evangelium, quod eo die dicebatur in ecclesia in missa." See L. Lemmens, O.F.M., *Testimonia minora saeculi XIII de S. Francisco Assisiensi* (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1926), p. 61. See also *SpPer*, ed. Sabatier, chap. 117, nos. 1-3, p. 329. It would be an attractive task, which lies beyond the scope of this essay, to search out the readings of the liturgy from which the biblical quotations of the writings of St. Francis seem to be taken. See Godu, *Évangiles*, and the literature mentioned by Jungmann, S.J., *Missarum Solemnia*, vol. 1, pp. 514-16. See also S.J.P. van Dijk, O.F.M. and J. Hazelden Walker, *The Origins of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, The liturgy of the papal court and Franciscan Order in the thirteenth century (London, 1960), p. 573b (Gospel book).
362. Except for the stigmatization. See, however, n. 256 above.
363. For a completely rounded picture, the history of his influence of St. Francis on the first generation of his order and on late medieval devotion to the passion would have to be written. But because of the complexity of the problems and the multiplicity of personalities involved, such a work demands special treatment if we are not to be satisfied with vague and unsupported theories.