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## EDITORIAL

# CLARE OF ASSISI 800 YEARS ON

On 28 March 2011 we have celebrated the 800 anniversary since Clare of Assisi left her paternal home in Assisi and went down to the Portiuncula chapel, to be received by Francis and his brothers into their evangelical form of life. On that night of Palm Sunday in 1211 the Second Franciscan Order, today known as the Order of Saint Clare, was born. The Clares will be celebrating this event during this centenary year, starting from Palm Sunday, 17 April 2011. As usual, we will be flooded with literature about St. Clare (this issue of our review is already an example), as well as with official documents celebrating this unique event in the history of religious life in the Church. For the more thoughtful, however, any centenary celebration should be an occasion to pause for reflection and plan ahead. What should the Clares think about their spiritual mother and her message for them and the Church in the world of today? Surely they must continue to be steadfast in their faithfulness to their contemplative calling and to their simple and poor lifestyle which has characterised the Order of Clares for centuries. Yet, they still have a very actual message to give to the world of today. “Clare was silent, yet her fame was proclaimed,” wrote Pope Alexander IV when he declared her a saint in Anagni on 15 August 1255. These words still sound important today. Clare must remain silent in the monasteries of her sisters, if they are to remain faithful to her charism. At the same time, however, her silence must be proclaimed. Clare and her sisters remain an eloquent sign of genuine Christian feminine ideals in the Church and in the world today. They speak out courageously about the true dignity of women in today’s society and in the Church. Clare’s courage in confronting danger is a reminder of the strong personality of a woman who was aware of her dignity and stood up against violence and abuse. But she did so with the power of prayer and never lost sight of her specific place in society and in the Church. True to say, the figure of the woman in the Middle Ages was different to what it is today. But the values that a mediaeval woman like Clare believed in have not changed. In our world today we need women like Clare. We need women religious of prayer and action, of great ideals and strong beliefs. We need women who never forget that their maternal vocation cannot be substituted, and who respect the sacredness of life without saying that the decision to transmit it or not belongs to them. We need women who, through their suffering because of the pseudo-cultures that oppress them in so many ways, continue to shine forth like Clare as luminaries of hope and courage for a better future in which women will be respected and will respect their unique vocation without confusing it with its male counterpart.

*Noel Muscat ofm*



# THE NIGHT WHEN CLARE OF ASSISI LEFT HER PATERNAL HOUSE (28TH MARCH 1211)

*Noel Muscat ofm*

On Palm Sunday night in many monasteries of the Order of St. Clare the nuns celebrate an important event in the life of their spiritual mother. This year marks a special anniversary marking 800 years since this event, since according to renowned scholars of the life of Clare of Assisi, it was the night of 28<sup>th</sup> March 1211, which was the night concluding the feast of Palm Sunday, when Clare left her paternal house in the piazza of the cathedral church of San Rufino and proceeded towards the Portiuncula chapel to begin a new way of life under the direction of Francis and the first brothers.

The exact method used by Clare to accomplish this unique feat for a woman during the Middle Ages is still an object of mystery, and many questions are left unanswered. The biographical sources for the life of St. Clare, dating from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, offer some insights as to what might have occurred, but their descriptions are rather vague. That is why we have to make recourse to other more modern studies regarding the life of Clare of Assisi in order to have a more clear view of such an important event that marks a watershed in the life of the little plant (*pianticella*) of Francis of Assisi.



*Piazza San Rufino, Assisi*

Our aim is that of studying the account of Clare's flight from her paternal house given to us by the anonymous author of the *Legenda Sanctae Clarae Assisiensis*. The information given to us in this text has to be seen against the background of the Assisi environment in which Clare and Francis grew up. With the help of the famous Assisi historian Arnaldo Fortini, who is an authority in the study of the ancient mediaeval documents pertaining to the 13<sup>th</sup> century setting of the town of Assisi, we can try to understand better what actually occurred during that night of Palm Sunday of 800 years ago.



*Back of Santa Maria Maggiore, Assisi*

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### *The paternal house of St. Clare*

Arnaldo Fortini dedicates a special chapter of his monumental *Vita Nova di San Francesco* to a study regarding the paternal house of St. Clare, the house of Favarone di Offreduccio di Bernardino and Madonna Ortolana, the parents of Clare of Assisi.

The town of Assisi during the first decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century was still under the shock of the civil strife of 1198, when the *homines populi* or *minores*, who were the emerging middle class of craftsmen and merchants, had attacked and ransacked the castles and town palaces of the *boni homines* or *maiores*, the feudal nobles who were constrained to flee and take refuge in the neighbouring Perugia. Perugia was much larger and stronger than Assisi. It was a papal stronghold. The Assisi nobles soon declared war against the new *comune* of Assisi in order to regain their territorial possessions. The result was the bloody battle at Collestrada and Ponte San Giovanni, in which the young Francis took part in 1202, when he was imprisoned in Perugia. Clare was then a young girl of 11 years, and the memories of those days of violence were certainly fresh in

her mind when she returned with her family to Assisi in 1203, as a result of the treaty of peace signed between the *maiores* and the *minores*, the so-called *charta pacis*. A direct result of this peace treaty was that the Assisi citizens were bound to restore the ancient possessions of the feudal lords back to the noble families to whom they belonged. These would have included the country estates and castles, but also the mansions and palaces in the town itself.

Assisi was characterised by a split between the aristocratic part where the nobles would live and the popular sections of the merchants and traders around Piazza del Comune. Fortini shows with convincing arguments that, whereas the paternal house of Francis of Assisi is to be looked for close to Piazza del Comune, and exactly at the beginning of Via Portica, just some metres below the mediaeval church of San Nicolò *ad pedem plateam*, the paternal house of Clare is to be located in the upper part of the town, in the area around the cathedral church of San Rufino.<sup>1</sup> This was the aristocratic section of Assisi. The paternal house of St. Clare was found just some metres away from the old cathedral of San Rufino, overlooking the Piazza in front of the principal church of Assisi. We have a proof of this in the words of Sr. Pacifica di Guelfuccio, the first witness during the Process of the Canonisation of St. Clare. Pacifica states that, between the house of her family and the



house of Favarone di Offreduccio, there was only the Piazza that separated the two noble houses.<sup>2</sup>

When Arnaldo Fortini was writing the *Vita Nova di San Francesco*, he was in the midst of a scholarly discussion with another historian, the Conventual Franciscan Giuseppe Abate,<sup>3</sup> regarding the exact spot where the paternal house of St. Clare would have stood. Visitors to Assisi nowadays are shown a plaque on the edifice adjacent to the Romanesque façade of the cathedral of San Rufino, which states that the building stands in the place where Clare's paternal house once stood. However, according to Fortini, this is not possible, since when Clare was still a young girl the present cathedral façade was not yet finished. Indeed, Clare would have known the old cathedral of San Rufino, built by bishop Ugone (1036-1052) of which visitors can still see the crypt underneath the entrance to the present cathedral. This means that the old cathedral would have been smaller than the present church, and that if its apse now lies underneath the entrance to the cathedral, then it would have stood further out into the Piazza. In other words, when the prior and canons of San Rufino decided to rebuild the cathedral in 1134, they extended it further to the east and the façade ultimately ended up standing on the place where the crypt of the old cathedral once stood. Hence the Piazza was enlarged in such a way that the famous Romanesque bell tower built upon an ancient Roman cistern found itself adjacent to the façade of the new cathedral, whereas before it used to stand at the back of the old basilica of bishop Ugone.

These details are important. Abate insisted that the paternal house of St. Clare is the first building on the left-hand side of the façade of the cathedral, where the plaque stands. Fortini simply answers that this was impossible, since during the time of Clare's childhood that house, known as the *casa del campanile*, would have touched the northern section of the church and not faced the Piazza, as is evident in the sources. Fortini is of the opinion that Clare's paternal house would have stood in the place where nowadays stands the *Palazzo Sermattei*, since that section would always have faced the Piazza, even when the upper section of the Piazza was still occupied by the ancient basilica of bishop Ugone.

The whole issue was raised by the discovery of an ancient document of 1148, in which Favarone di Offreduccio, Clare's father, binds himself and

his descendants not to build any towers or raise the edifice where this family of knights lived, in such a way as to ruin the majestic façade and tower of the new cathedral of San Rufino, designed by Giovanni da Gubbio. Fortini interprets this document as another proof that the house of St. Clare could not possibly have stood adjacent to the old basilica, but that it was detached from it, since otherwise it could not have been possible to ask Favarone not to build towers or raise his mansion to a height that would impede the majestic beauty of the new cathedral of Assisi.

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### *The account of the flight of Saint Clare from her house to the Portiuncula*

We shall now take a look at what the mediaeval sources for the life of St. Clare have to tell us regarding the event that took place on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> March 1211, which is the date we shall choose as the one marking Clare's flight from her paternal house to the Portiuncula chapel.<sup>4</sup> The historical account is given to us by the anonymous author of the *Legenda Sanctae Clarae Assisiensis*, which was commissioned by Pope Alexander IV between 1255 and 1256, probably on the occasion of the canonization of St. Clare by the same Pope in the cathedral church at Anagni on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1255.

"The Solemnity of the Day of the Palms was at hand when the young girl went with a fervent heart to the man of God, asking [him] about her conversion and how it should be carried out. The father Francis told her that on the day of the feast, she should go, dressed and adorned, together with the crowd of people, to [receive] a palm, and, on the following night, *leaving the camp she should turn her worldly joy into mourning* the Lord's passion (Heb 13:13; Jas 4:9).

Therefore, when Sunday came, the young girl, thoroughly radiant with festive splendor among the crowd of women, entered the Church with the others. Then something occurred that was a fitting omen: as the others were going [to receive] the palms, while Clare remained immobile in her place out of shyness, the Bishop, coming down the steps, came to her and placed a palm in her hands. On that night, preparing to obey the command of the saint, she embarked

upon her long desired flight with a virtuous companion. Since she was not content to leave by way of the usual door, marveling at her strength, she broke open with her own hands that other door that is customarily blocked by wood and stone.

And so she ran to Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, leaving behind her home, city, and relatives. There the brothers, who were observing sacred vigils before the little altar of God, received the virgin Clare with torches. There, immediately after rejecting the filth of Babylon, she gave the world “*a bill of divorce*” (Dt 24:1). There, her hair shorn by the hands of the brothers, she put aside every kind of her fine dress.

Was it not fitting that an Order of flowering virginity be awakened in the evening or in any other place than in this place of her, the first and most worthy of all, who alone is Mother and Virgin! This is the place in which a new army of the poor, under the leadership of Francis, took its joyful beginnings, so that it might be clearly seen that it was the Mother of mercies who brought to birth both Orders in her dwelling place.

After she received the insignia of holy penance before the altar of the blessed Virgin and, as if before the throne of this Virgin, the humble servant was married to Christ, Saint Francis immediately led her to the church of San Paolo to remain there until the Most High would provide another place.”<sup>5</sup>

The vocation of Clare to follow in the footprints of Francis along the way of the Gospel was prepared by a series of meetings that took place between her and Francis at the Portiuncula. We know this detail from the witness given by Lady Bona di Guelfuccio, who was Clare’s nurse in her paternal home, and who accompanied her on these occasions. In her witness included in the *Acts of the Process of Canonization*, Bona, who was the sister of Pacifica di Guelfuccio, states:

“Lady Clare was always considered by everyone a most pure virgin and had such fervor of spirit she could serve God and please Him. Because of this, the witness (Bona di Guelfuccio) many times accompanied her to speak to Saint Francis. She went secretly as not to be seen by her parents. Asked what Saint Francis said to her, she replied he always preached to her about converting to Jesus Christ. Brother Philip (Longo) did the same. She listened willingly to him and consented to all the good things said to her. Asked how long ago these things had been spoken, she responded more than forty-two years, because it was forty-

two years since she had entered religion. [...] Asked how Lady Clare was converted, she replied Saint Francis had cut off her hair in the church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, as she had heard, because she, the witness, was not present since she had already gone to Rome to observe Lent.”<sup>6</sup>

The testimony of Bona raises a few important questions. If Bona was in Rome on Palm Sunday of 1211, so with whom could Clare have possibly gone down to the Portiuncula in the middle of the night? The *LegCl* states that Clare went to the Portiuncula *cum honesta societate*. The English translation, “with a virtuous companion” expresses what the Latin means in very fluid terms. *Societate* implies accompaniment, but does not in any way indicate whether the companion is one or many. We have to take a closer look at the account in order to try to understand what might have occurred.

Obedying Francis’ command, on Palm Sunday in the morning Clare went to the cathedral church of San Rufino together with the other noble ladies of Assisi, in order to participate in the solemn blessing of the palm branches. According to the liturgical rite in use in the Middle Ages, the faithful would first assist at the blessing of the palms or olive branches. Then they would proceed to the railings around the altar to receive the branches from the bishop. Clare was invited to go dressed splendidly for the solemn occasion, just as she would normally do on such moments. Being of noble birth there would have certainly been a place reserved for her family in the cathedral church. Indeed, Clare would only have to walk a short distance from her house in the piazza to enter the cathedral and find her place among the other noble ladies. But while the other ladies literally ran in order to receive the palms from the bishop’s hands (*caeteris ad ramos currentibus*), Clare remained immobile in her place “because of shyness” (*Clara prae verecundia suo in loco manet immota*). So Bishop Guido went down the steps and came towards her, placing the palm in her hands (*pontifex per gradus descendens, usque ad eam accederet, et palmam suis in manibus poneret*).

The description is very vivid. The layout of the cathedral church would have still been that of Bishop Ugone, with a presbytery raised up high above the crypt. The faithful would fill the aisle below the presbytery while the clergy would officiate the liturgy on the high altar well above the other faithful. Probably the noble ladies would hurry up to climb the stairs and arrive at the railings,



*The Moiano Gate*

and after receiving the palm they would go down again to their places. Since Clare remained down in the aisle and did not move from her place, for some unknown reason, the bishop himself went out of the presbytery, down the stairs and into the aisle, in order to place the palm in Clare's hand. Such an action could be interpreted as a chivalrous act of courtesy, which would be a common thing to do in the Middle Ages in front of a noble lady. However, Bishop Guido was not a young man trying hard to win Clare's hand, and his position as bishop of Assisi made his social standing as high and noble as that of all the other knightly families that lived around the cathedral of San Rufino. So why did he go down to Clare? Indeed, how come he noticed that, among all those noble ladies, Clare alone had not come up to receive the palm?

The only plausible explanation to this question is that Bishop Guido used this occasion as a sign of approval for what Clare was going to accomplish the following night. Francis would never have accepted Clare to the Portiuncula without first consulting with Bishop Guido. The plan had certainly been thought out days before right down to the most intricate details, and it

was so well organized that it worked out with clockwork precision. Neither could it be true that Clare did not move because of "shyness". She could not possibly have felt shy in the company of so many other noble girls and ladies she knew, and with whom she probably went to Mass every Sunday. Clare was simply acting out her role and waiting for the bishop's approval. The following night she would leave her paternal house and go down to the Portiuncula.

In the dead of the night between Palm Sunday and Monday of Holy Week, that is on 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> March 1211 Clare secretly left her paternal house and went down to the Portiuncula. The biographer says that Clare did not go out of the usual door (*ostio consueto*), that is the main door of the Favarone palace. She could not possibly have done so. There would certainly have been guards at the main door of such a noble house of a knight. It was unthinkable that anyone, let alone a young lady, would venture out in the Assisi streets at night. The curfew bell would have sounded long before, warning all to stay indoors until dawn. So it was a risky business for Clare and her "virtuous company". But it seems





*Sant'Angelo di Panzo*

that this “virtuous company” did not go out of the house with her, since the account states that “she broke open with her own hands that other door that is customarily blocked by wood and stone” (*Cumque ostio consueto exire non placuit, aliud ostium, quod lignorum et lapidum pondera obstruebant, miranda sibi fortitudine, propriis manibus reseravit*). This side-door or back-door would have certainly been blocked by masonry and wooden planks, since it was not normally guarded.<sup>7</sup> Clare used superhuman strength to break open the door, as another witness, Sister Cristina di Messer Bernardo di Suppo, states in the *Acts of the Process of Canonization*.<sup>8</sup>

Another important detail is that regarding the person, or persons, who accompanied Clare on her flight to the Portiuncula. We have already ruled out Bona di Guelfuccio, who was in Rome. Fortini is of the opinion that Clare was accompanied by Pacifica di Guelfuccio, who met her in Via del Parlascio, which would correspond to the present Via Porta Perlici, leading to the Roman amphitheatre.<sup>9</sup> Clare, however, did not go up the street, since it leads in the opposite direction up to Mount Subasio. She rather went down towards the lower part of the town, along the narrow alleyways and stairways going down to Via Moiano, in the section of the town where the old cathedral of Santa Maria Maggiore stands.

This street passes just behind the apse of the church and goes down straight to Porta Moiano, and from there the way continues down into the Valle Umbra towards the Portiuncula. It is also hard to imagine how Clare could possibly have gone out of the city gate at night, which would be guarded and shut for security reasons. Maybe the *honesta societate* that accompanied Clare were the friars who, somehow, managed to make her slip out of the town unseen and continue in their company towards the Portiuncula. The fact that the Vescovado, or bishop’s palace, is to be found in this part of the town, alongside Santa Maria Maggiore, could also explain the possibility that the friars, with the bishop’s consent, could have convinced the guards of the gate leading up to the bishop’s quarter, to let out Clare in the middle of the night.

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### *From the Portiuncula to San Paolo delle Abbadesse to Sant'Angelo di Panzo*

Clare hurried on to the Portiuncula chapel, where Francis and the brothers were eagerly waiting to receive her with lighted torches. In front of the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Angels Francis and the brothers cut her tresses and after abandoning her splendid clothes, she wore the sackcloth of penance. The author of the *Legenda* states that it was in this chapel that the Mother of



*Church and Convent of San Damiano*



mercies gave birth to the two Orders of the friars Minor and of what were to become known as the Poor Ladies (*ut liquido videtur utramque religionem Mater misericordiae in suo diversorio parturire*).

As soon as Clare had consecrated her life to Christ, Francis and the brothers immediately sent her to a female monastery some 4 kilometres away from the Portiuncula in Isola Romana, or what is nowadays called Bastia Umbra. This was the Benedictine monastery of San Paolo delle Abbadesse. It was a very rich monastery for noble ladies, and fell under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Assisi.<sup>10</sup> This also explains why Francis sent Clare to this place, most probably with the consent of Bishop Guido. Moreover, the monastery was protected by various papal privileges, and that placed Clare in a secure place in her resolve to follow Christ against the will of the members of her family who soon came to take her away. We know that the monastery was protected by an interdict against all those who violated the cloister, and that is why Clare's relatives could do nothing to convince her to go back to her paternal house, especially after Clare clutched the altar linens and showed them her shorn hair, a symbol of religious consecration.

After some time Francis thought it wise to place Clare in a place closer to Assisi, and maybe more easy for the brothers to visit. In the Benedictine monastery Clare might not have found herself at ease, since the life of those noble nuns might have reminded her of her past life in her parental house. So, according to the *Legenda*, "after a few days, she went to the church of San Angelo in Panzo".<sup>11</sup>

According to the witness of Sister Beatrice, the sister of St. Clare: "Then Saint Francis gave her the tonsure before the altar in the church of the Virgin Mary, called the Portiuncula, and then sent her to the church of San Paolo de Abbadesse. When her relatives wanted to drag her out, Lady Clare grapped the altar cloths and uncovered her head, showing them she was tonsured. In no way did she acquiesce, neither letting them take her



*Dormitory where St. Clare died*

from that place, nor remaining with them. Then Saint Francis, Brother Philip, and Brother Bernard took her to the church of Sant'Angelo di Panzo, where she stayed for a little time, and then to the church of San Damiano where the Lord gave her more sisters for her direction."<sup>12</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> ARNALDO FORTINI, *Nova Vita di S. Francesco*, Vol. II, Appendice. Le Fonti. Questioni Francescane, Tipografia Porziuncola, Santa Maria degli Angeli, Assisi 1959, 351-382 [La casa paterna di santa Chiara].

<sup>2</sup> *The Acts of the Process of Canonization of Clare of Assisi* [ProcCan] I,2, in *Clare of Assisi. Early Documents* [CAED], Revised Edition and Translation by R.J. ARMSTRONG, New City Press, New York – London – Manila 2006, 144-145: "(Sister Pacifica de Guelfuccio of Assisi) said that Saint Clare began the Order that is now at San Damiano through the admonition of Saint Francis. She entered it as a virgin, and always remained such a virgin. When she was asked how she knew these things, she responded that when she was in the world she was her neighbour and distant relative and that only the piazza was between her house and that of the virgin Clare".

<sup>3</sup> GIUSEPPE ABATE, *La casa paterna di S. Chiara e falsificazioni storiche dei secoli XVI e XVII intorno alla medesima santa e a San Francesco d'Assisi*, Casa Editrice Francescana, Assisi 1946; *Nuovi studi sull'ubicazione della casa paterna di S. Chiara*, Casa Editrice Francescana, Assisi 1954.

<sup>4</sup> The chronology of St. Clare is based on three dates, namely the date of her death, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1253; the date of her flight from her paternal house on the night of Palm Sunday, 42 years before her death (ProcCan I,3 [witness of Pacifica di Guelfuccio]); and the date of her birth, 18 years before her entry in religion. Basing ourselves on the ProcCan and the *Legend of St. Clare* [LegCl], we can place the date of Clare's flight from her home on 28<sup>th</sup> March

1211. This would mean that Clare was born in 1193 (Z. LAZZERI, *Il Processo di santa Chiara*, 434-435; F. CASOLINI, *Vita di santa Chiara vergine d'Assisi fi Fra Tommaso da Celano*, Santa Maria degli Angeli 1962, 34; C.A. LAINATI, *Santa Chiara f'Assisi*, Assisi 1969; *Temi spirituali dagli scritti del Secondo Ordine Franciscano*, Assisi 1970); according to other scholars Clare's flight from her paternal house is to be placed on the night of 18<sup>th</sup> March 1212, which was Palm Sunday in that year (D. CRESI, *Cronologia di santa Chiara*, SF XXV [1953] 260-267; L. HARDICK, *Zur Chronologie im Leben der hl. Klara*, in FS XXXV [1953] 174-210; A. TERZI, *Cronologia della vita di san Francesco d'Assisi*, Roma 1963, 56-62). This would place Clare's birth in 1194.

<sup>5</sup> *LegCl* 7-8 (CAED 285-286). Latin text: *Legenda Sanctae Clarae Assisiensis*, 7-8, in *Fontes Franciscani*, a cura di E. MENESTÒ e S. BRUFANI, Edizioni Porziuncola, Assisi 1995, 2419-2420:

7 "Protinus ne speculum illibatae mentis mundanus pulvis ulterius inquinet, aut contagio saecularis vitae azymam fermentet aetatem, properat Claram educere pius pater de saeculo tenebroso.

Instatat Palmarum dies sollemnis, cum ad virum Dei puella fervido corde se confert, sciscitans de sua conversione, quid et qualiter sit agendum. Iubet pater Franciscus, ut in die festo compta et ornata procedat ad palmam cum frequentia populorum, ac nocte sequenti exiens extra castra (cfr. Heb 13,13), mundanum gaudium in luctum convertat (cfr. Iac 4,9) dominicae passionis. Die itaque dominico veniente, in turba dominarum splendore festivo puella perradians, cum reliquis intrat ecclesiam. Ubi illo digno praesagio contigit, ut caeteris ad ramos currentibus, dum Clara prae verecundia suo in loco manet immota, pontifex per gradus descendens, usque ad eam accederet, et palmam suis in manibus poneret. Nocte sequenti ad Sancti mandatum se praeparans, optatam fugam cum honesta societate aggreditur. Cumque ostio consueto exire non placuit, aliud ostium, quod lignorum et lapidum pondera obstruebant, miranda sibi fortitudine, propriis manibus reseravit.

8 Igitur domo, civitate et consanguineis derelictis, ad sanctam Mariam de Portiuncula festinavit: ubi fratres, qui in arula Dei sacras excubias observabant, virginem Claram cum luminaribus receperunt. Mox ibi reiectis sordibus Babylonis, mundo libellum repudii (cfr. Mat 5,31; Deut 24,1) tradidit: ibi manu fratrum crines deponens, ornatus varios dereliquit. Nec decuit alibi florigere virginitatis Ordinem ad vesperam temporum excitari, quam in eius aula, quae prima omium atque dignissima, sola exstitit mater et virgo. Hic locus est ille, in quo nova militia pauperum, duce Francisco, felicia sumebat primordia, ut liquido videtur utramque religionem Mater misericordiae in suo diversorio parturire. Cum autem coram altari beatae Mariae sanctae poenitentiae suscepisset insignia, et quasi ante torum huius Virginis, humilis ancilla Christi nupsisset, statim eam ad ecclesiam sancti Pauli sanctus Franciscus deduxit, donec aliud provideret Altissimus, in eodem loco mansuram."

<sup>6</sup> *ProcCan* 17,2-3.5 (CAED 192-193).

<sup>7</sup> The Assisi historian Arnaldo Fortini describes this second door of the paternal house of St. Clare. ARNALDO FORTINI, *Francis of Assisi*, English translation of the *Nova Vita di S. Francesco*, by HELEN MOAK, Crossroad Publishing Co., New York 1980, 329: "Despite the fact that their ancestors had assumed an obligation not to raise towers or bartizans that would rise above the nearby cathedral, their palazzo was strengthened like a fortress and provided with two doors, one for the days of truce, the other for the days of battle." In her footnote the translator mentions the popular belief that Clare slipped out of her house through the "door of the dead". This door is a typical architectural feature in mediaeval houses in Assisi. It is believed that it was always closed with masonry and would be opened for funerals, since it would have been easier to carry the bier through an open space in the ground floor and out into the street. Maybe the true use of the secondary door would have been, as Fortini states, that of defence, in the sense that it rose higher than the street and would have provided a safe refuge in times of war since people would go up and down through a ladder, which

would then be withdrawn indoors at night. Another popular belief mentioned by the translator is that the door was the way used by brides on their wedding day, to symbolise their definite departure from their paternal house. If this was truly the case, Clare's action on the night of Palm Sunday would find a logical explanation.

<sup>8</sup> *ProcCan* 13,1 (CAED 185): "Sister Cristiana, daughter of Sir Bernardo da Suppo of Assisi, a nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath the same as Sister Beatrice about her manner of living. She added that the virgin of God, Clare, left the worldly house of her father in a wonderful way. Because she did not want to leave through the usual exit, fearing her way would be blocked, she went out by the house's other exit that had been barricaded with heavy wooden beams and an iron bar so it could not be opened even by a large number of men. She alone, with the help of Jesus Christ, removed them and opened the door. On the following morning, when many people saw that door opened, they were somewhat astonished at how a young girl could have done it."

<sup>9</sup> FORTINI, *Francis of Assisi*, Eng. Translation MOAK, 340. *Pacifica* di Guelfuccio was certainly close to Clare and was Bona's sister. However Pacifica herself, who later became a nun at the monastery of San Damiano, does not state that she was the "virtuous companion" who accompanied Clare down to the Portiuncula. We have no way of knowing who accompanied Clare in the streets of Assisi during the night, although it is highly probable that she would have found the friars waiting for her outside the city gates, since it is hard to conceive how two women could possibly have made it all by themselves in the dead of the night along the alleyways of the countryside leading down from Assisi to the Valle Umbra where the Portiuncula chapel stands.

<sup>10</sup> FORTINI, *Francis of Assisi*, Eng. Translation MOAK, 341-343: "The monastery of San Paolo delle Ancelle di Dio, more commonly called 'delle Abbadesse', was famous through all the region for its wealth, its influence, its noble status. In the oldest official records it is also called San Paolo del Chiagio or San Paolo del Fonte Tiberino, because it stood along the last stretch of the Chiagio river [...] A bull of Innocent III dated May 5, 1201, directed 'to beloved daughters in Christ Sibilia, abbess of the monastery of San Paolo of Fonte Tiberino, and her sisters', confirms that the monastery followed the Rule of Saint Benedict [...] The bull also proclaims special papal privileges granted to the nuns. No one could impose tithes or exactions on them. The diocesan bishop was forbidden to put their chapel under interdict. In time of excommunication they had the right to celebrate the divine offices with doors closed, without songs or sound of bells [...] There were severe prohibitions against anyone's molesting them [...] Those who did so and persevered in their offences would, after a third warning, incur interdict and divine anathema [...] The church was small and quiet, as may be seen from what remains of it in the chapel of the Bastia cemetery, where the apse still oversees the field of humble crosses and the dead."

<sup>11</sup> *LegCl* 10 (CAED 287).

<sup>12</sup> *ProcCan* 12,4-5 (CAED 183-184). According to the authors, in footnote a on page 184: "Sant'Angelo di Panzo was a dwelling of women *incarcerate* (confined to one place) or *penitenti* (penitents) that would have been closer to the Beguine expression of women religious rather than the Benedictine or Cistercian expressions." Cfr. ARNALDO FORTINI, *New information about Saint Clare of Assisi*, in *Greyfriars Review* 7 (1993) 27-69.





PAUL SABATIER

# «LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI»

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## Chapter XV THE RULE OF 1221

[252] The winter of 1220-1221 was spent by Francis chiefly in fixing his thought by writing. Until now he had been too much the man of action to have been able to give much thought to anything but the *living word*, but from this time his exhausted forces compelled him to satisfy his longing for souls by some other means than evangelizing tours. We have seen that the chapter of Septem-[253]ber 29, 1220, on one side, and the bull *Cum secundum* on the other, had fixed in advance a certain number of points. For the rest, complete liberty had been given him, not indeed to make a final and unchangeable statement of his ideas, but to set them forth. The substance of legislative power had passed into the hands of the ministers.

That which we call the Rule of 1221 is, then, nothing more than a proposed law, submitted to a representative government at its parliament. The head of authority will one day give it to the world, so thoroughly modified and altered that Francis's name at the head of such a document will give but small promise, and quite indirectly, that it will contain his personal opinion.

Never was man less capable of making a Rule than Francis. In reality, that of 1210 and the one which the pope solemnly approved in November 29, 1223, had little in common except the name. In the former all is alive, free, spontaneous; it is a point of departure, an inspiration; it may be summed up into two phrases: the appeal of Jesus to man, "Come and follow me," the act of man, "He left all and followed him." To the call of divine love man replies by the joyful gift of himself, and that quite naturally, by a sort of instinct. At this height of mysticism any regulation is not only useless, it is almost a profanation; at the very least it is the symptom of a doubt. Even in earthly loves, when people truly love each other nothing is asked, nothing promised.

The Rule of 1223, on the other hand, is a reciprocal contract. On the divine side the call has become a command; on the human, the free impulse of love has become an act of submission, by which life eternal will be earned.

At the bottom of it all is the antinome of law and love. Under the reign of law we are the mercenaries of God, [254] bound down to an irksome task, but paid a hundred-fold, and with an indisputable right to our wages.

Under the rule of love we are the sons of God, and coworkers with him; we give ourselves to him without bargaining and without expectation; we follow Jesus, but because this is well, but because we can do no otherwise, because we feel that he has loved us and we love him in our turn. An inward flame draws us irresistibly toward him: *Et Spiritus et Sponsa dicunt: Veni.*

It is necessary to dwell a little on the antithesis between these two Rules. That of 1210 alone is truly Franciscan; that of 1223 is indirectly the work of the Church, endeavoring to assimilate with herself the new movement, which with one touch she transforms and turns wholly from its original purpose.

That of 1221 marks an intermediate stage. It is the clash of two principles, or rather of two spirits; they approach, they touch, but they are not merged in one another; here and there is a mixture, but nowhere combination; we can separate the divers elements without difficulty. Their condition is the exact reflection of what was going on in Francis's soul, and of the rapid evolution of the Order.

To aid him in his work, Francis joined to himself Brother Caesar of Speyer, who would be especially useful to him by his profound acquaintance with the sacred texts.

What strikes us first, on glancing over this Rule of 1221, is its extraordinary length; it covers not less than ten folio pages, while that of 1223 has no more than three. Take away from it the passages which emanate from the papacy and those which are fixed at the previous chapter, you will hardly have shortened it

by a column; what remains is not a Rule, but a series of impassioned appeals, in which the father's heart speaks, not [255] to command but to convince, to touch, to awaken in his children the instinct of love.

It is all chaotic and even contradictory, without order, a medley of outbursts of joy and bitter sobs, of hopes and regrets. There are passages in which the passion of the soul speaks in every possible tone, runs over the whole gamut from the softest note to the most masculine, from those which are as joyous and inspiring as the blast of a clarion, to those which are agitated, stifled, like a voice from beyond the tomb.

"By the holy love which is in God, I pray all the friars, ministers as well as others, to put aside every obstacle, every care, every anxiety, that they may be able to consecrate themselves entirely to serve, love, and honor the Lord God, with a pure heart and a sincere purpose, which is what he asks above all things. Let us have always in ourselves a tabernacle and a home for him who is the Lord God most mighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who says: 'Watch and pray always, that you may be found worthy to escape all the things which will come to pass, and to appear upright before the Son of man.'

Let us then keep in the true way, the life, the truth, and the holy Gospel of Him who has deigned for our sake to leave his Father that he may manifest his name to us, saying, 'Father, I have manifested thy name to those whom thou hast given me, and the words which thou hast given me I have given also unto them. They have received them, and they have known that I come from thee, and they believe that thou hast sent me. I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are one. I have said these things, being still in the world, that they may have joy in themselves. I have given them thy words, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou wilt keep them from the evil. Sanctify them through the truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world I have also sent them into the world, and for their sake I sanctify myself that they may themselves be sanctified in the truth; and neither pray I for these alone, but for all those who shall believe on me through their words, that we may all be one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou lovest them as thou hast loved me. I have made known [255] unto them thy name, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.

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## *PRAYER*

"Almighty, most high and sovereign God, holy Father, righteous Lord, King of heaven and earth, we give thee thanks for thine own sake, in that by thy holy

will, and by thine only Son and thy Spirit thou hast created all things spiritual and corporeal, and that after having made us in thine image and after thy likeness, thou didst place us in that paradise which we lost by our sin. And we give thee thanks because after having created us by thy Son, by that love which is thine, and which thou hast had for us, thou hast made him to be born very God and very man of the glorious and blessed Mary, ever Virgin, and because by his cross, his blood and his death thou hast willed to ransom us poor captives. And we give thee thanks that thy Son is to return in his glorious majesty to send to eternal fire the accursed ones, those who have not repented and have not known thee; and to say to those who have known and adored thee and served thee by repentance, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.' And since we, wretched and sinful, are not worthy to name thee, we humbly ask our Lord Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, in whom thou art well pleased, that he may give thee thanks for everything; and also the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, as it may please thee and them; for this we supplicate him who has all power with thee, and by whom thou hast done such great things for us. Alleluia.

And we pray the glorious Mother, the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, St. Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and all the choir of blessed Spirits, Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Principalities and Powers, Virtues and Angels, Archangels, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Peter, Paul, and the holy Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Holy Innocents, Apostles, Evangelists, Disciples, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, the blessed ones, Elijah and Enoch, and all the saints who have been, shall be, and are, we humbly pray them by thy love to give thee thanks for these things, as it pleases thee, sovereign, true, eternal and living God, and also to thy Son, our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, forever and ever. Amen. Alleluia.

And we supplicate all those who desire to serve the Lord God, in the bosom of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, all priests, deacons, subdeacons, acolytes and exorcists, readers, porters, all clerks, all monks and nuns, all children and little ones, paupers and exiles, kings, and princes, workmen and laborers, servants and masters, the virgins, the continent and the married, laics, men and women, all children, youths, young men and old men, the sick and the well, the small [257] and the great, the peoples of every tribe and tongue and nation, all men in every part of the world whatsoever, who are or who shall be, we pray and beseech them, all we Brothers Minor, unprofitable servants, that all together, with one accord we persevere in the true faith and in penitence, for outside of these no person can be saved.

Let us all, with all our heart and all our thought,



and all our strength, and all our mind, with all our vigor, with all our effort, with all our affection, with all our inward powers, our desires, and our wills, love the Lord God, who has given to us all his body, all his soul, all his life, and still gives them every day to each one of us. He created us, he saved us by his grace alone; he has been, he still is, full of goodness to us, us wicked and worthless, corrupt and offensive, ungrateful, ignorant, bad. We desire nothing else, we wish for nothing else; may nothing else please us, or have any attraction for us, except the Creator, the Redeemer, the Saviour, sole and true God, who is full of goodness, who is all goodness, who is the true and supreme good, who alone is kind, pious and merciful, gracious, sweet and gentle, who alone is holy, righteous, true, upright, who alone has benignity, innocence and purity; of whom, by whom, and in whom is all the pardon, all the grace, all the glory of all penitents, of all the righteous and all the saints who are rejoicing in heaven.

Then let nothing again hinder, let nothing again separate, nothing again retard us, and may we all, so long as we live, in every place, at every hour, at every time, every day and unceasingly, truly and humbly believe. Let us have in our hearts, let us love, adore, serve, praise, bless, glorify, exalt, magnify, thanks the most high, sovereign, eternal God, Trinity and Unity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Creator of all men, both of those who believe and hope in him and of those who love him. He is without beginning and without end, immutable and invisible, ineffable, incomprehensible, indiscernible, blessed, lauded, glorious, exalted, sublime, most high, sweet, lovely, delectable, and always worthy of being desired above all things, in all the ages of ages. Amen."

Have not these artless repetitions a mysterious charm which steals deliciously into the very depths of the heart? Is not in them a sort of sacrament of which the words are only the rude vehicle? Francis is taking refuge in God, as the child throws itself upon its mother's bosom, and in the incoherence of its weakness and its joy stammers out all the words it knows, repeating by them all only the eternal "I am thine" of love and faith.

[258] There is in them also something which recalls, not only by citations, but still more by the very inspiration of the thought, that which we call the sacerdotal prayer of Christ. The apostle of poverty appears here as if suspended between earth and heaven by the very strength of his love, consecrated the priest of the new worship by the inward and irresistible unction of the Spirit. He does not offer sacrifice like the priest of the past time; he sacrifices himself, and carries in his body all the woes of humanity.

The more beautiful are these words from the mystical point of view, the less do they correspond with what is expected in a Rule; they have neither the precision nor the brief and imperative forms of one. The transformations which they were to undergo in

order to become the code of 1223 were therefore fatal when we consider the definitive intervention of the Church of Rome to direct the Franciscan movement.

It is probable that this rough draft of a Rule, such as we have it now, is that which was distributed in the chapter of Whitsunday, 1221. The variants, sometimes capital, which are found in the different texts, can be nothing other than outlines of the corrections proposed by the provincial ministers. Once admit the idea of considering this document as a rough draft, we are very soon brought to think that it had already undergone a rapid preliminary revision, a sort of pruning, in which the ecclesiastical authority has caused to disappear all that was in flagrant contradiction with its own projects for the Order.

If it is asked, who could have made these curtailments, one name springs at once to our lips – Ugolini. He criticised its exaggerated proportions, its want of unity and precision. Later on it is related that Francis had seen in a dream a multitude of starving friars, and himself [259] unable to satisfy their wants, because though all around him lay innumerable crumbs of bread, they disappeared between his fingers when he would give them to those about him. Then a voice from heaven said to him: "Francis, make of these crumbs a wafer; with that thou shalt feed these starving ones."

There is little hazard in assuming that this is the picturesque echo of the conferences which took place at this time between Francis and the cardinal; the latter might have suggested to him by such a comparison the essential defects of his project. All this, no doubt, took place during Francis's stay in Rome, in the beginning of 1221.

Before going there, we must cast a glance over the similarity in inspiration and even in style which allies the Rule of 1221 with another of St. Francis's works, that which is known under the title of The Admonitions. This is a series of *spiritual counsels* with regard to the religious life; it is closely united both in matter and form with the work which we have just examined. The tone of voice is so perfectly the same that one is tempted to see in it parts of the original draft of the Rule, separated from it as too prolix to find place in a Rule.

However it may be with this hypothesis, we find in The Admonitions all the anxieties with which the soul of Francis was assailed in this uncertain and troubled hour. Some of these counsels sound like bits from a private journal. We see him seeking, with the simplicity of perfect humility, for reasons for submitting himself, renouncing his ideas, and not quite succeeding in finding them. He repeats to himself the exhortations that others had given him; we feel the effort to understand and ad-[259]mire the ideal monk whom Ugolini and the Church have proposed to him for an example:

The Lord says in the Gospels: "He who does not give up all that he has cannot be my disciple. And he who would save his life shall lose it." One gives up all he possesses and loses his life when he gives himself entirely into the hands of his superior, to obey him ... And when the inferior sees things which would be better or more useful to his soul than those which the superior commands him, let him offer to God the sacrifice of his will.

Reading this one might think that Francis was about to join the ranks of those to whom submission to ecclesiastical authority is the very essence of religion. But no; even here his true feeling is not wholly effaced, he mingles his words with parentheses and illustrations, timid, indeed, but revealing his deepest thought; always ending by enthroning the individual conscience as judge of last resort.

All this shows clearly enough that we must picture to ourselves moments when his wounded soul sighs after the passive obedience, the formula of which, *perinde ac cadaver*, goes apparently much further back than the Company of Jesus. These were moments of exhaustion, when inspiration was silent.

One day he was sitting with his companions, when he began to groan and say: "There is hardly a monk upon earth who perfectly obeys his superior." His companions, much astonished, said: "Explain to us, father, what is perfect and supreme obedience." Then, comparing him who obeys to a corpse, he replied: "Take a dead body, and put it where you will, it will make no resistance; when it is in one place it will not murmur, when you take it away from there it will not object; [261] put it in a pulpit, it will not look up but down; wrap it in purple, it will only be doubly pale" (2Cel 3, 89).

This longing for corpse-like obedience witnesses to the ravages with which his soul had been laid waste; it corresponds in the moral domain to the cry for annihilation of great physical anguish.

The worst was that he was absolutely alone. Everywhere else the Franciscan obedience is living, active, joyful.

He drank this cup to the very dregs, holding sacred the revolts dictated by conscience. One day in the later years of his life a German friar came to see him, and after having long discussed with him pure obedience:

"I ask you one favor," he said to him, "it is that if the Brothers ever come to live no longer according to the Rule you will permit me to separate myself from them, alone or with a few others, to observe it in its completeness." At these words Francis felt a great joy. "Know," said he, "that Christ as well as I authorize what you have just been asking;" and laying his hands upon him, "Thou art a priest forever," he added, "after the order of Melchisedec."

We have a yet more touching proof of his solicitude to safeguard the spiritual independence of his disciples: it is a note to Brother Leo. The latter, much alarmed by the new spirit which was gaining power in the Order, opened his mind thereupon to his master, and doubtless asked of him pretty much the same permission as the friar from Germany. After an interview in which he replied *viva voce*, Francis, not to leave any sort of doubt or [262] hesitation in the mind of him whom he surnamed his little sheep of God, *pecorella di Dio*, wrote to him again:

Brother Leo, thy brother Francis wishes thee peace and health. I reply yes, my son, as a mother to her child. This word sums up all we said while walking, as well as all my counsels. If thou hast need to come to me for counsel, it is my wish that thou shouldst do it. Whatever may be the manner in which thou thinkest thou canst please the Lord God, follow it, and live in poverty. Do this, God will bless thee and I authorize it. And if it were necessary for thy soul, or for thy consolation that thou shouldst come to see me, or if thou desirest it, my Leo, come. Thine in Christ.

Surely we are far enough here from the corpse of a few pages back.

It would be superfluous to pause over the other admonitions. For the most part they are reflections inspired by circumstances. Counsels as to humility recur with a frequency which explains both the personal anxieties of the author, and the necessity of reminding the brothers of the very essence of their profession.

The sojourn of St. Francis at Rome, whither he went in the early months of 1221, to lay his plan before Ugolini, was marked by a new effort of the latter to bring him and St. Dominic together.

[263] The cardinal was at this time at the apogee of his success. Everything had gone well with him. His voice was all powerful and not only in affairs of the Church, but also in those of the Empire. Frederic II, who seemed to be groping his way, and in whose mind were germinating dreams of religious reformation, and the desire of placing his power at the service of the truth, treated him as a friend, and spoke to him with unbounded admiration.

In his reflections upon the remedies to be applied to the woes of Christianity, the cardinal came at last to think that one of the most efficacious would be the substitution of bishops taken from the two new Orders, for the feudal episcopate almost always recruited from local families in which ecclesiastical dignities were, so to speak, hereditary. In the eyes of Ugolini such bishops were usually wanting in two essential qualities of a good prelate: religious zeal and zeal for the Church.

He believed that the Preaching and the Minor Friars would not only possess those virtues which were lacking in the others, but that in the hands of the papacy they might become a highly centralized hierarchy, truly



catholic, wholly devoted to the interests of the Church at large. The difficulties which might occur on the part of the chapters which should elect the bishops, as well as on the side of the high secular clergy, would be put to flight by the enthusiasm which the people would feel for pastors whose poverty would recall the days of the primitive Church.

At the close of his interviews with Francis and Dom-[264]inic, he communicated to them some of these thoughts, asking their advice as to the elevation of their friars to prelatures. There was a pious contest between the two saints as to which should answer first. Finally, Dominic said simply that he should prefer to see his companions remain as they were. In his turn, Francis showed that the very name of his institute made the thing impossible. "If my friars have been called *Minores*," he said, "it is not that they may become *Majores*. If you desire that they become fruitful in the Church of God, leave them alone, and keep them in the estate into which God has called them. I pray you, father, do not so act that their poverty shall become a motive for pride, nor elevate them to prelatures which would move them to insolence toward others."

The ecclesiastical policy followed by the popes was destined to render this counsel of the two founders wholly useless.

Francis and Dominic parted, never again to meet. The *Master* of the Preaching Friars shortly after set out for Bologna, where he died on August 6th following, and Francis returned to Portiuncula, where Pietro di Catana had just died (March 10, 1221). He was replaced at the head of the Order by Brother Elias. Ugolini was doubtless not without influence in this choice.

Detained by his functions of legate, he could not be present at the Whitsunday chapter (May 30, 1221). He was represented there by Cardinal Reynerio, who came [265] accompanied by several bishops and by monks of various orders. About three thousand friars were there assembled, but so great was the eagerness of the people of the neighborhood to bring provisions, that after a session of seven days they were obliged to remain two days longer to eat up all that had been brought. The sessions were presided over by Brother Elias, Francis sitting at his feet and pulling at his robe when there was anything that he wished to have put before the Brothers.

Brother Giordani di Giano, who was present, has preserved for us all these details and that of the setting out of a group of friars for Germany. They were placed under the direction of Caesar of Speyer, whose mission succeeded beyond all expectation. Eighteen months after, when he returned to Italy, consumed with the desire to see St. Francis again, the cities of Wurzburg, Mayence, Worms, Speyer, Strasburg, Cologne, Salzburg, and Ratisbon had become Franciscan centres, from whence the new ideas were

radiating into all Southern Germany.

The foundation of the Tertiaries, or Third Order, generally in the oldest documents called Brotherhood of Penitence, is usually fixed as occurring in the year 1221; but we have already seen that this date is much too recent, or rather than it is impossible to fix any date, for what is later called, quite arbitrarily, the Third Order is evidently contemporary with the First.

[266] Francis and his companions desired to be the apostles of their time; but they, no more than the apostles of Jesus, desired to have all men enter their association, which was necessarily somewhat restricted, and which, according to the gospel saying, was meant to be the leaven of the rest of humanity. In consequence, their life was literally the *apostolic life*, but the ideal which they preached was the *evangelical life*, such as Jesus had preached it.

St. Francis no more condemned the family or property than Jesus did; he simply saw in them ties from which the *apostle*, and the apostle alone, needs to be free.

If before long sickly minds fancied that they interpreted his thought in making the union of the sexes an evil, and all that concerns the physical activity of man a fall; if unbalanced spirits borrowed the authority of his name to escape from all duty; if married persons condemned themselves to the senseless martyrdom of virginity, he should certainly not be made responsible. These traces of an unnatural asceticism come from the dualist ideas of the Catharists, and not from the inspired poet who sang nature and her fecundity, who made nests for doves, inviting them to multiply under the watch of God, and who imposed manual labor on his friars as a sacred duty.

The bases of the corporation of the *Brothers and Sisters of Penitence* were very simple. Francis gave no new doctrine to the world; what was new in his message [267] was wholly in his love, in his direct call to the evangelical life, to an ideal of moral vigor, of labor, and of love.

Naturally, there were soon found men who did not understand this true and simple beauty; they fell into observances and devotions, imitated, while living in the world, the life of the cloister to which for one reason or another they were not able to retire; but it would be unjust to picture to ourselves the *Brothers of Penitence* as modelled after them.

Did they receive a Rule from St. Francis? It is impossible to say. The one which was given them in 1289 by Pope Nicholas IV is simply the recasting and amalgamation of all the rules of lay fraternities which existed at the end of the thirteenth century. To attribute this document to Francis is nothing less than the placing in a new building of certain venerated stones from an ancient edifice. It is a matter of façade and ornamentation, nothing more.

Notwithstanding this absence of any Rule

emanating from Francis himself, it is clear enough what, in his estimation, this association ought to be. The Gospel, with its counsels and examples, was to be its true Rule. The great innovation designed by the Third Order was concord; this fraternity was a union of peace, and it brought to astonished Europe a new truce of God. Whether the absolute refusal to carry arms was an idea [268] wholly chimerical and ephemeral, the documents are there to prove, but it is a fine thing to have had the power to bring it about for a few years.

The second essential obligation of the Brothers of Penitence appears to have been that of reducing their wants so far as possible, and while preserving their fortunes to distribute to the poor at proper intervals the free portion of the revenue after contenting themselves with the strictly necessary.

To do with joy the duties of their calling; to give a holy inspiration to the slightest actions; to find in the infinitely littles of existence, things apparently the most commonplace, parts of a divine work; to keep pure from all debasing interest; to use things as not possessing them, like the servants in the parable who would soon have to give account of the talents confided to them; to close their hearts to hatred, to open them wide to the poor, the sick, to all abandoned ones, such were the other essential duties of the Brothers and Sisters of Penitence.

To lead them into this royal road of liberty, love, and responsibility, Francis sometimes appealed to the terrors of hell and the joys of paradise, but interested love was so little a part of his nature that these considerations and others of the same kind occupy an entirely secondary place in those of his writings which remain, as also in his biographies.

For him the gospel life is natural to the end. Whoever comes to know it will prefer it; it has no more need to be proved than the outer air and the light. It needs only to lead prisoners to it, for them to lose all desire to return to the dungeons of avarice, hatred, or frivolity.

Francis and his true disciples make the painful ascent [269] of the mountain heights, impelled solely, but irresistibly, by the inner voice. The only foreign aid which they accept is the memory of Jesus, going before them upon those heights and mysteriously living again before their eyes in the sacrament of the eucharist.

The letter to all Christians in which these thoughts break forth is a living souvenir of St. Francis's teachings to the Tertiaries.

To represent these latter to ourselves in a perfectly concrete form we may resort to the legend of St. Lucchesio, whom tradition makes the first Brother of Penitence.

A native of a little city of Tuscany he quitted it to avoid its political enmities, and established himself at Poggibonsi, not far from Sienna, where he continued to trade in grain. Already rich, it was not difficult

for him to buy up all the wheat, and, selling it in a time of scarcity, realize enormous profits. But soon overcome by Francis's preaching, he took himself to task, distributed all his superfluity to the poor, and kept nothing but his house with a small garden and one ass.

From that time he was to be seen devoting himself to the cultivation of this bit of ground, and making of his house a sort of hostelry whither the poor and the sick came in swarms. He not only welcomed them, but he sought them out, even to the malaria-infected Maremma, often returning with a sick man astride on his back and preceded by his ass bearing a similar burden. The [270] resources of the garden were necessarily very limited; when there was no other way, Lucchesio took a wallet and went from door to door asking alms, but most of the time this was needless, for his poor guests, seeing him so diligent and so good, were better satisfied with a few poor vegetables from the garden shared with him than with all the most copious repast. In the presence of their benefactor, so joyful in his destitution, they forgot their own poverty, and the habitual murmurs of these wretches were transformed into outbursts of admiration and gratitude.

Conversion had not killed in him all family ties; Bona Donna, his wife, became his best co-laborer, and when in 1260 he saw her gradually fading away his grief was too deep to be endured. "You know, dear companion," he said to her when she had received the last sacraments, "how much we have loved one another while we could serve God together; why should we not remain united until we depart to the ineffable joy? Wait for me. I also will receive the sacraments, and go to heaven with you."

So he spoke, and called back the priest to administer them to him. Then after holding the hands of his dying companion, comforting her with gentle words, when he saw that her soul was gone he made over her the sign of the cross, stretched himself beside her, and calling with love upon Jesus, Mary, and St. Francis, he fell asleep for eternity.





# PROBLEMS OF YOUTH

## THE CONVERSION OF ST. FRANCIS

### ACCORDING TO THE MEMORIALE

### OF THOMAS OF CELANO

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#### *New elements in the *Legenda trium sociorum**

From the text of the first seven chapters of *The Legend of Three Companions* we come to know that the first name that Francis received from his mother was that of John;<sup>1</sup> that the same mother tried in some way to justify her son in front of the neighbours who criticised him for his excessive prodigality, and because the young man sewed the cheapest cloth on to expensive clothes out of his desire to look original;<sup>2</sup> in spite of this, his natural virtues predisposed him to meet divine Grace.<sup>3</sup> It was again thanks to this text that we come to know what happened during the battle that Francis and the Assisi citizens fought against the citizens of Perugia, regarding the imprisonment of the young Francis, which lasted for one year, and regarding his behaviour in the Perugia dungeon;<sup>4</sup> we also discover Francis' noble gesture in donating his precious clothes to a poor knight.<sup>5</sup> After the vision at Spoleto (a detail already outlined by the *De inceptione*), the *Legenda* shows us that Francis returned to Assisi, where he was elected leader of the young people of the town: during that same occasion, the Lord visited him and he answered in an enigmatic way to his friends who asked him whether he wanted to take a wife.<sup>6</sup> The same *Legenda* gives us unedited particulars regarding the way that Francis used to dine with his mother and his kind hearted ways of being over-generous at table in placing more pieces of bread than were necessary, in order to take them to the poor.<sup>7</sup> The account of Francis' journey to Rome is also new, as is the description of the generous money offering he

threw on St. Peter's tomb, and of how he changed his clothes with those of a beggar, and then sat down on the stairs of St. Peter's Basilica and asked for alms in French.<sup>8</sup> Another new account is that of the vision of the disabled woman, whose sight disturbed Francis while he was absorbed in prayer,<sup>9</sup> as well as the account of the strong experience he had in front of the Crucifix, who addressed to him the invitation that Francis at first misunderstood, and which according to the anonymous author revealed Francis' love to the passion of Christ impressed in his heart.<sup>10</sup>

The legal action taken by Pietro di Bernardone against his son is also rich with other particulars: the *Legenda* describes with rare precision the function of the civil institutions of Assisi and their competence, while it hints again – in a way that is not present in the other Franciscan biographical sources – to the government of the consuls.<sup>11</sup> Also new is the meeting that Francis had with bishop Guido who advised him to give back to his father the money he had acquired.<sup>12</sup> Equally new is the proclamation of Francis who, naked in front of all the onlookers, declared that he would not call Pietro di Bernardone by the name of “father” any longer, but that he would simply say: “Our Father who are in heaven.”<sup>13</sup>

After this episode, Francis began to around the town begging for stones in order to rebuild the church of San Damiano, using simple and humble words.<sup>14</sup> When Francis realised that the priest of San Damiano was treating him with delicate care, trying to procure refined meals for him, Francis decided to go and beg for alms from door to door without taking any notice of mixing together in one bowl all the leftovers that were given to him, and eating them with a great sense of nausea,

although he then felt great inner consolation.<sup>15</sup> Even in this case we are facing unedited facts that explain much better the reaction of Pietro di Bernardone who – deeply hurt by what happened – cursed Francis whenever he met him: Francis, therefore, makes an agreement with a beggar, and asks him to accompany him so that he would bless him whenever his father would curse him<sup>16</sup> (in this case, the episode was already known, since the author takes it from *De inceptiōe*, where the name of the beggar, Alberto, is also revealed).<sup>17</sup> Another new episode is Francis' meeting with his brother who cursed him publicly in the street.<sup>18</sup> Also new is the beautiful episode of Francis who goes to beg for oil for the lamp that burned in the church of San Damiano in front of the Crucifix, when Francis initially felt embarrassed in front of the persons who had been his long time friends.<sup>19</sup> In this same context we also find for the first time the prophecy of Francis regarding the future of that church: namely, that it would become a monastery of women who would glorify God by their form of life.<sup>20</sup>

From the end of chapter 8 until chapter 16 the author follows the text of *De inceptiōe*, which he includes nearly entirely, integrating it at times with the *Vita* of Celano and, in some paragraphs (25-27) with the *Vita sancti Francisci* of Julian of Speyer. Nevertheless, even in this second part of the *Legenda* we can find many particulars that were ignored up to that moment, and that enrich us with the knowledge of the very first years of the Franciscan experience.

Another new detail is the event regarding the mysterious precursor of Francis, who preceded his coming with the heralding of peace.<sup>21</sup> The *Legenda atrium sociorum* also is exact when it states (and this is an element of fundamental importance) that the first followers approached Francis two years after his conversion.<sup>22</sup> Unedited particular details are also found in the episode regarding Francis' encounter with Bernardo, particularly regarding the dialogue between the two,<sup>23</sup> while the figure of Pietro, which is given a certain importance in the *De inceptiōe*, remains in the background. Even when he describes the meeting of Francis and his brothers with Innocent III, the anonymous author – who also draws from and mixes together the versions of the *Vita beati Francisci* and the *De inceptiōe* – adds new details. We are referring to the explanation that Francis gives to the Pope regarding the parable of the beautiful and poor

woman who is bride of the great king, as well as to the dream of Innocent III who saw the Lateran collapsing and being propped up by the shoulders of a man who was *modicus et despectus* (small and of shabby appearance).<sup>24</sup>

## *The Legenda trium sociorum as the source of the Memoriale*

If we analyse paragraphs 3-17 of the *Memoriale* (abbreviated here as 2C) it is possible to note that Thomas of Celano, when he is describing the events relating to the conversion of Francis, bases himself almost exclusively upon elements taken from new details drawn from the *Legenda trium sociorum*. I will now list them in order.

1. Francis' mother gave him the name Giovanni (2C 3,1;<sup>25</sup> cfr. L3C 2,1); it is she herself who praises her son in front of her neighbours (2C 3,3;<sup>26</sup> cfr. L3C 2,2-6).

2. Francis fought against the Perugians and was taken captive; in prison he showed himself to be joyful and courteous, and was able to befriend a haughty knight who had a very difficult character (2C 4,2-7;<sup>27</sup> cfr. L3C 4).

3. After having been freed, one day Francis gave his clothes to a poor and semi-naked knight (2C 5,3;<sup>28</sup> cfr. L3C 6,1-2).

4. Francis had a vision of a splendid palace, with arms of all kinds and also dreamt of a most beautiful bride. He interpreted the dream in an exclusively earthly manner, and thus decided to depart on a military expedition in Puglia (2C 6,1-4;<sup>29</sup> cfr. L3C 5,3-8), but one night, while he was sleeping, he had a second dream that compelled him to reflect and to return on his own footsteps to Assisi (2C 6,5-10;<sup>30</sup> cfr. L3C 6,3-13).

5. When he returned to Assisi, Francis returned to his former way of life. During a sumptuous dinner offered by him, his friends elected him as their leader. While he was walking with them along the streets, holding the scepter of command in his hands, the Lord visited him and filled him with indescribable sweetness (2C 7,1-10;<sup>31</sup> cfr. L3C 7).

6. Francis went on pilgrimage to Rome: there he changed his soft clothes with the rough clothes of a beggar and remained in the company of beggars in front of the church of St. Peter; in the same place Francis marveled at the miserable alms that the pilgrims were giving, and threw a



generous money offering on the altar of the prince of the apostles (2C 8,3-5;<sup>32</sup> cfr. L3C 10,2-7).

7. Francis dedicated himself to an intense life of prayer in solitary places, but the devil tempted him with the vision of a woman from Assisi, who was disabled and deformed, and threatened to reduce him to that state if he would continue persevering along the way of life of penance (2C 9,1-5;<sup>33</sup> cfr. L3C 12,1-6). The Lord, however, consoled him, and invited him to prefer bitter things to sweetness (2C 9,6-7;<sup>34</sup> cfr. L3C 11,1-2). Some time later, while he was riding his horse in the whereabouts of Assisi, he met a leper: he kissed him and offered him money; then he went to the leper hospital and gave a money alms to each leper and kissed the lepers one by one on the hand and on their mouth (2C 9,9-15;<sup>35</sup> L3C 11,3-8).

8. Francis was already changed in his heart and was ready also be changed in his body, when he had an intense spiritual experience in the church of San Damiano: an image of the Crucifix spoke to him, moving its lips, and invited him to go and repair the church that was on the verge of collapsing (2C 10,1-7;<sup>36</sup> cfr. L3C 13,6-10). From that moment the compassion of the Crucifix impressed itself so profoundly in his heart that he did not succeed in fighting back tears even in public (2C 10,8; 11,6-8;<sup>37</sup> cfr. L3C 14).

9. Francis offered money to the priest so that he could light a lamp in front of the Crucifix; then he dedicated his time to restoring the church of San Damiano (2C 11,9-12;<sup>38</sup> cfr. L3C 13,11-13; 21).

10. Whenever his father met him he always



*St. Francis in front of Bishop Guido of Assisi*

ended up cursing Francis. Thus Francis chose a beggar and asked him to accompany him so that he could bless him every time his father would curse him. The bishop of the city advised him to give back the money to his father, since it had not been acquired in a correct way; in front of all those present Francis declared that from that moment he could freely say: "Our Father, who are in heaven and not 'My father, Pietro di Bernardone'" (2C 12,1-5;<sup>39</sup> cfr. L3C 23,1-5). Even his brother, whenever he met him along the road, ridiculed Francis (2C 12,8-10;<sup>40</sup> cfr. L3C 23,7-8).

11. Francis changed his way of life and his customs. He went to the city to beg for oil for the lamp of San Damiano. While he was doing so he was won over by embarrassment in front of a group of old friends who were having a game:

then, however, he won over himself, returned on his footsteps and confessed to those present his guilt and asked for alms in French (2C 13,1-5;<sup>41</sup> cfr. L3C 24,1-4). Also speaking in French, he prophesied that in the church of San Damiano there would be a monastery of holy virgins in the future (2C 13,6;<sup>42</sup> cfr. L3C 24,5).

12. While he was intent on repairing the church, the priest showed Francis great respect by sharing with him his food. Therefore Francis decided to go to the city and to beg for alms from door to door, and placed all the leftovers in one bowl: he had to win over his nausea to eat what he had received, but as soon as he won over himself he felt great joy in his spirit (2C 14,2-7;<sup>43</sup> cfr. L3C 22,1-9).

13. Bernardo, a citizen of Assisi, went to speak to Francis and to ask for his advice. Together they went to a church where, after having prayed, they opened the book of the Gospels ready to welcome the teachings of Christ (2C 15,1-10;<sup>44</sup> cfr. L3C 28,1-29.6).

14. When Francis presented himself with his companions in front of Pope Innocent III, the pontiff did not initially accept his request. Francis obeyed and pleaded with trust the Lord, asking his companions to do the same. Christ therefore spoke to him through a parable, and Francis referred to his companions the story of the poor and beautiful lady who lived in the desert and who was married to a king (2C 16;<sup>45</sup> cfr. L3C 49,4-51,4).

15. Francis describes the meaning of the parable that the Pope heard with wonder, because some days before he had dreamt that the Lateran basilica, which was on the verge of collapse, had been propped up by the shoulders of a small and scorned (*modicus et despectus*) religious. In that man the Pope recognised Francis (2C 17,1-6;<sup>46</sup> cfr. L3C 51,5-8).

As one can see, Celano makes an intelligent choice, and offers in this first part of *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* a complete picture regarding the events relating to the youthful years and to the conversion of Francis, as well as to the first steps of the group of brothers who gathered around him. Some events regarding brother Sylvester are left aside in this first part, but are then inserted into the second section.<sup>47</sup> Also in chapters 12-17 Thomas of Celano makes intelligent choices, drawing from the witness of the citizens of Assisi and of the companions of Francis events that he had not written down in his *Vita sancti Francisci*.<sup>48</sup>

## *The Memoriale completes the Vita beati Francisci*

It is not, therefore, true that Thomas of Celano goes against what he declares in the *Prologus*, namely that “this work contains some marvelous details about the conversion of St. Francis not included in earlier legends written about him.”<sup>49</sup> Neither is it true that the *Memoriale* constitutes “une reprise et un décalque” of the *Vita Sancti Francisci*.<sup>50</sup> When he represents the facts already narrated in the *Vita*, as for example the vision of the palace full of arms, Thomas not only adds the element of the beautiful bride, which is not mentioned in the *Vita* or in the *De inceptione*, but he is constrained to rewrite the episode from scratch, because otherwise the second vision that Francis had at Spoleto would remain incomprehensible. The same thing is verified when Thomas describes the encounter of Francis with the lepers. Although he had already made a reference to the fact in the *Vita*, it is evident that in the *Memoriale* he represents the unedited details that had been brought to his knowledge through the *Legenda trium sociorum*. Francis gave money to the leper and then he went to the leper hospital and gave to each of the invalids some money, while kissing them personally. The same thing can be stated regarding the meeting of Francis with his father in front of the bishop of Assisi, and regarding the meeting of the friars with Innocent III: regarding this last event (“one of the moments of history to which I would have desired to take part,” writes Piero Zerbi)<sup>51</sup>, the author of the *Legenda trium sociorum*, as we have said, unites together the discordant versions of the *Vita beati Francisci* and of the *De inceptione*, adding to the preceding narratives the explanation of the parable of the poor woman and the king, as well as that of the Pope’s dream. In his *Memoriale*, Thomas only presents the parable (narrated in the *De inceptione*), synthesizes the explanation offered by Francis, and therefore refers to the dream of Innocent III.

Some lexical recurrences confirm the influence exercised on Thomas by the author of the *Legenda trium sociorum*. This last author, in fact, draws his inspiration from the words dictated by Francis in the *Testament* (“what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and



body”),<sup>52</sup> that were underlined more than once in the events that God worked during the itinerary of Francis’ conversion, and which had filled him with so much sweetness: during the evening in which his friends had elected him as their leader, the Lord visited him “and filled his heart with so much tenderness that he was unable to speak or move. He could only feel and hear this marvelous tenderness; it left him so estranged from any sensation that, as he himself said later, even if he had been completely cut to pieces, he would not have been able to move.”<sup>53</sup> After these facts Francis often retired to pray in solitude: this pushed him to experience that mysterious sweetness that visited him more often and in a convincing way called him to pray even when he was in the midst of a piazza or in other public places.<sup>54</sup> The meeting with the lepers is read in the light of the antithesis bitter-sweet;<sup>55</sup> after having exerted violence upon himself, Francis succeeded in eating the leftovers in his bowl, and exulted in the Lord because his flesh, which was so weak and afflicted, became strong enough to accept because of God those things that before had seemed to be harsh and bitter. Thus he gave thanks to God who had changed bitterness into sweetness and who had comforted him in so many ways.<sup>56</sup>

It is only once, in the *Vita*, that Thomas narrates the facts relating to the conversion of Francis hinting in a generic way to the sweetness of grace with which the Lord had visited him, namely before making reference to the dream of the castle full of arms.<sup>57</sup> In the *Memoriale*, instead, Thomas often speaks about the sweetness that invades Francis, always drawing words and expressions from the *Legend of Three Companions*: in the evening during which Francis was elected leader by his companions, he was filled with such great sweetness that he could not move or speak;<sup>58</sup> he often retreated to solitary places in order to pray, pushed by that sovereign sweetness that invaded him completely from the beginning of his journey and did not leave him in peace until he lived;<sup>59</sup> after the vision of the deformed woman, the Lord comforted him, and invited him to lay aside carnal and vain pleasures and choose spiritual ones and to prefer bitter things to the sweet: he therefore went to visit the lepers, and in this way he realised the divine invitation to prepare himself in a manly way to observe all his other promises;<sup>60</sup> he also made violence upon himself, and with the joy of the spirit he ate the mixed leftovers of the food in

the bowl. Thomas here echoes Virgil when he says that love soothes everything, and renders sweet what is bitter.<sup>61</sup>

## *A multiplication of miracles and marvels*

Celano therefore builds upon the *Legenda trium sociorum* when he presents a diverse personality of Francis and when he inserts new facts in order to complete what he had narrated in the *Vita*. In this insertion of new episodes, one however notes some “marvelous and miraculous amplifications”, using the expression of Miccoli.<sup>1</sup>

According to the *Legenda*, in fact, the mother justifies the excessive prodigality of her son, who spent money as if he were the heir of a great prince, saying that, after all, he was also a son of God through divine grace;<sup>2</sup> in the *Memoriale*, instead, according to the woman – who becomes divinely inspired – the young man would become, through the grace of his merits, a son of God.<sup>3</sup> During the imprisonment, according to the *Legenda*, Francis showed a spirit of joy, and for this reason one of his companions in the dungeon judged him to be crazy: he therefore answered him that one day he would be admired over all the world.<sup>4</sup> In that occasion as well, Thomas of Celano changes the sense of the verb and transforms these words into a prophecy: Francis would be venerated into a saint in the whole world.<sup>5</sup> The meeting with the leper echoes this miraculous amplification since, according to Thomas of Celano, after Francis kissed the leper he looked around but did not see anyone in the whereabouts, although he was standing in the open countryside.<sup>6</sup>

Another amplification of the miraculous element is seen in the episode of the Crucifix of San Damiano. According to the *Legenda* this was for Francis an inner experience, and its authenticity was proved by the beneficial effects that Francis felt in his soul: he became filled with an intense joy! On that occasion he heard an invitation of Christ whose effective meaning he did not initially understand.<sup>7</sup> Thomas makes use of this witness, but adds to it some new and important details: he in fact underlines that “with the lips of the painting the image of Christ crucified spoke to him” and the young man “was more than a little stunned, trembling, and stuttering like a man out of his senses,” yet “he prepared himself to



*Pietro di Bernardone and Madonna Pica, parents of St. Francis*

obey.”<sup>8</sup> The hagiographer does not hint at the fact that Francis did not understand the true message of the Crucifix, for a simple reason: since in the *Vita* he had referred to the reconstruction of the abandoned churches, in order to hint at Francis’ lack of understanding he would have to speak again of things he had already treated. Therefore he preferred to skim over this detail.

### *The Memoriale and the Vita: differences and continuity*

As we have shown, the *Vita* and the *Memoriale*, for the reasons we have tried to explain, denote an evident exclusion of some details. In the *Memoriale* the author seems to want to regain the trust of those that he had wounded so much in the *Vita*, and who certainly had not ceased to lament against him: he does not insist on the negative attitude of Francis’ parents towards his formation, and the role of the Assisi society (that was condemned in the *Vita* with an equal measure

of justice) is decisively reworked to be made to look more positive. The greatest difference is met in the description of the parents of Francis. If in the *Vita* it is said that they had educated their son, since his childhood, “in arrogance in accordance with the vanity of the age” and that he “imitating their worthless life and character was himself made more vain and arrogant,” in the *Memoriale* Francis’ mother, who had called her son Giovanni, becomes “a friend of all complete integrity, with some of the virtue of Saint Elizabeth, of whom we read in Scripture she was privileged to resemble and act, both in the name she gave her son and in her prophetic spirit.”<sup>9</sup> Whereas in the *Vita* Francis was described as a young man of vanity and loose morals, in the *Memoriale* Celano affirms that the “neighbors were admiring Francis’s greatness of spirit and integrity of conduct.”<sup>10</sup>

A more attentive reading however shows that the two biographies reveal a substantial continuity in the characterization of the key personages. In fact, we discover that not even in the *Vita* the picture of the young Francis was



always totally negative. Celano says that “he was not greedy but extravagant, not a hoarder of money but a squanderer of his property, a prudent dealer but a most unreliable steward. He was, nevertheless, a rather kindly person, adaptable and quite affable, even though it made him look foolish.”<sup>11</sup> With respect to the nobleman of Assisi who was preparing the military expedition, Francis was inferior in nobility of birth, but superior for his greatness of heart, he was less rich than him, but more generous in giving.<sup>12</sup> Since he was very courteous, Francis immediately felt sorry for having sent away a poor man who asked him for alms.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, in the *Memoriale* Celano affirms that Francis, a young man of the town, did not seem to be the son of his parents.<sup>14</sup>

In his first biography Thomas of Celano had not defined the mother of Francis as a new Elizabeth, as he would do in *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, but he did not miss to underline the fact that she did not approve of her husband verbally abusing his son;<sup>15</sup> on the contrary, Pietro maintains his harsh treatment of Francis in the *Memoriale*, whereas a new figure appears, that of Francis’ brother who is not less harsh than his father in cursing Francis for his way of life.<sup>16</sup> Among other things, the *Memoriale* presents to us Francis who is decidedly tough with his father, to the point of declaring openly that he would not call him father any longer.<sup>17</sup> If then the *Vita* does not cancel the positive aspects of Francis, it is also true that the *Memoriale* does not hide the reality of Francis as a happy go lucky young man. In fact, the description of the young people who, going round Assisi in the middle of the night singing at the top of their voices, “dirtied the streets of the town with their drunken songs”<sup>18</sup> is a very vivid one. So beyond an approach which is certainly different and has various accentuations of tone, there appears to be a fundamental unity between the two biographies: the *Memoriale* integrates with new facts the narration of the *Vita*, making use of materials which we nowadays know thanks to their transmission by the so-called *Legend of Three Companions*.

## The emergence of hagiographical models

The personal contribution of Thomas of Celano, besides the miraculous amplifications in

some of the events, is found above all in the explicit assumption of new hagiographical models<sup>19</sup> that somehow exercised a profound effect regarding the awareness of the providential role that the Most High assigned to Francis and to his religious family. This awareness, in reality, began to take shape in the Franciscan Order immediately after the death of the founder. In the so-called *Epistola encyclica de transitu sancti Francisci*, which is a document to which today I assign a renewed sense of trust, brother Elias, in an elegant style, enriched by biblical quotations, emphasizes the role of Francis, presenting him as another Moses, another John the Baptist and another Elijah. In this way he wanted to convey the idea that Francis and, as a consequence, his friars, had a non-marginal role in the last phase of history. They were also responsible for an operation that was dense with meaning and pregnant with consequences,<sup>20</sup> introducing images that would then be developed by Franciscan hagiography. In the *Memoriale*, in fact, departing from the idea that the first name imposed by Francis’ mother on her son was Giovanni, while his father was away from home, Thomas of Celano instituted a similarity between Francis and John the Baptist: the mother, who had chosen that name for him, becomes therefore another Elizabeth;<sup>21</sup> if John is called by Christ friend of the Bridegroom, then Francis is presented as friend of the Most High,<sup>22</sup> and if the Baptist was the greatest among those born of women, Francis of Assisi was the most perfect among the founders of religious Orders.<sup>23</sup> In the *Prologue* to the *Legenda Maior*, Bonaventure defines Francis as the friend of the Bridegroom,<sup>24</sup> who comes with the spirit and the power of Elijah.<sup>25</sup>

Even the generous gesture of Francis, who offered his precious clothes to the poor and semi-naked knight, gives Thomas the occasion to make a new comparison, this time with the “great Saint Martin”. The biographer comments upon the event in this way: “Francis first gave away his clothes, then everything else; Martin gave away everything else and then gave away his clothes. Both lived poor and humble in this world and both entered heaven rich (Is 16:14). Martin was poor, but a knight, and clothed a poor man with part of his clothes. Francis was rich, but not a knight, and he clothed a poor knight with all of his clothes. Both of them, having carried out Christ’s command deserved to be visited by Christ in a vision. Martin was praised for his perfection and Francis was

graciously invited to do what was still missing.”<sup>26</sup>

Last but not least, we note the reference to Saint Paul, who becomes a true model for the conversion of Francis. In the *Vita*, the reference to Paul who, we should remember, said that he carried into his body the stigmata of Christ (cfr. Gal 16:17) was constant, but never shown in an explicit manner.<sup>27</sup> Both the *De inceptione* as well as the *Legenda trium sociorum*, when narrating the experience that Francis lived at Spoleto, through a constant use of biblical texts, had shown an implicit comparison with the experience that Paul lived on the road to Damascus.<sup>28</sup> Thomas of Celano, however, seems to be more explicit, affirming that, upon the invitation of the Lord, Francis “becoming even now a model of obedience, giving up his own will changed from Saul to Paul.”<sup>29</sup>

The meaning attributed to some actions of Francis, which tend to underline his catholicity, to his participation in the apostolic mission, to his devotion to the Roman See, and to the reality of the stigmata impressed on his body is also new. The comments of the hagiographer, present in this first part of the *Memoriale* are well known, but they also receive greater importance in the second part. For example, when Francis threw a great quantity of coins on the altar of the prince of the apostles, according to Celano, Francis wanted to show “that the one God honored above others should be honored by all in a special way.”<sup>30</sup> The gesture of offering sacred vestments to poor priests and to render them due honour, even to those among them who were of inferior rank, has a precise meaning: “As he was to be entrusted with the mission of an apostle, he was completely Catholic in faith. From the very beginning he was full of reverence for God’s ministers and ministries.”<sup>31</sup> After the inner experience in front of the Crucifix, the passion of Christ became so impressed in the heart of Francis. This offers to Celano the occasion to insist upon the authenticity of the miracle of the stigmata: “What an admirable thing, unheard of in earlier ages! Who would not be amazed at this? Who ever heard of anything like it? Who could ever doubt that Francis, as he returned to his homeland, already appeared crucified? Christ spoke to him from the wood of the cross in a new and unheard of miracle, even when to all appearances, he had not yet completely forsaken the world. From that hour his soul melted as the Beloved spoke to him. A little while afterward his heart’s love showed in the wounds of his body.”<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

Thomas of Celano made use of the memories of the fellow citizens of Francis of Assisi in order to complete the account of his conversion that he had written down nearly twenty years earlier. On the occasion of the canonization the people of Assisi did not give witness, and with all probability nobody ever cared to ask them to collaborate in the proceedings. Some twenty years later, in answer to the request of the minister general Crescenzo da Jesi, these citizens offered their precious collaboration, which Thomas recognised to be authoritative and credible, to the point that he gathered – nearly in their totality – the elements of novelty offered by their contribution, to the point of offering a picture of Francis which was not exactly identical to the preceding one. Celano thus gave proof of his loyalty as a biographer, but created some difficulties to the contemporaries, so much so, that some years later, the Order asked Bonaventure to rewrite the life of Francis (even though this was not principally or uniquely the cause for the origin of such a decision). Without knowing how much Thomas of Celano was aware of what he was doing, he certainly created great difficulties for those who came after him.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> L3C 2,1 (FAED II, 68).
- <sup>2</sup> L3C 2,2-8 (FAED II, 68-69).
- <sup>3</sup> L3C 3,1-3 (FAED II, 71-72).
- <sup>4</sup> L3C 4 (FAED II, 69-70).
- <sup>5</sup> L3C 6,1-2 (FAED II, 71).
- <sup>6</sup> L3C 7 (FAED II, 71-72).
- <sup>7</sup> L3C 9 (FAED II, 73).
- <sup>8</sup> L3C 10,2-7 (FAED II, 73-74).
- <sup>9</sup> L3C 12,4-6 (FAED II, 74-75).
- <sup>10</sup> L3C 13,6-14 (FAED II, 75-76).
- <sup>11</sup> L3C 19,1-7 (FAED II, 79).
- <sup>12</sup> L3C 19,8-11 (FAED II, 80).
- <sup>13</sup> L3C 20,1-3 (FAED II, 80).
- <sup>14</sup> L3C 21,3-8 (FAED II, 81).
- <sup>15</sup> L3C 22,1-9 (FAED II, 81-82).
- <sup>16</sup> L3C 23,1-5 (FAED II, 82).
- <sup>17</sup> AP 9,2-3 (FAED II, 37).
- <sup>18</sup> L3C 23,7-8 (FAED II, 82-83).
- <sup>19</sup> L3C 24,1-4 (FAED II, 83).
- <sup>20</sup> L3C 24,5-8 (FAED II, 83).
- <sup>21</sup> L3C 26,3-4 (FAED II, 85).



<sup>22</sup> L3C 27,1 (FAED II, 85).  
<sup>23</sup> L3C 28,1-5 (FAED II, 85).  
<sup>24</sup> L3C 49-51 (FAED II, 96-98).  
<sup>25</sup> 2C 3,1-6 (FAED II, 241-242).  
<sup>26</sup> 2C 3,3 (FAED II, 242).  
<sup>27</sup> 2C 4,2-7 (FAED II, 243).  
<sup>28</sup> 2C 5,3 (FAED II, 244).  
<sup>29</sup> 2C 6,1-4 (FAED II, 245).  
<sup>30</sup> 2C 6,5-10 (FAED II, 245-246).  
<sup>31</sup> 2C 7,1-10 (FAED II, 246-247).  
<sup>32</sup> 2C 8,3-5 (FAED II, 247).  
<sup>33</sup> 2C 9,1-5 (FAED II, 248).  
<sup>34</sup> 2C 9,6-7 (FAED II, 248).  
<sup>35</sup> 2C 9,9-15 (FAED II, 248-249).  
<sup>36</sup> 2C 10,1-7 (FAED II, 249).  
<sup>37</sup> 2C 10,8; 11,6-8 (FAED II, 249-250).  
<sup>38</sup> 2C 11,9-12 (FAED II, 250).  
<sup>39</sup> 2C 12,1-5 (FAED II, 251).  
<sup>40</sup> 2C 12,8-10 (FAED II, 251).  
<sup>41</sup> 2C 13,1-5 (FAED II, 252).  
<sup>42</sup> 2C 13,6 (FAED II, 252).  
<sup>43</sup> 2C 14,2-7 (FAED II, 253).  
<sup>44</sup> 2C 15,1-10 (FAED II, 253-254).  
<sup>45</sup> 2C 16 (FAED II, 254-256).  
<sup>46</sup> 2C 17,1-6 (FAED II, 255-256).  
<sup>47</sup> Cfr. L3C 30-31 (FAED II, 86-87) with 2C 109 (FAED II, 319-320). The facts relating to Sylvester are already narrated in De inceptione 12-13 (FAED II, 38-39).  
<sup>48</sup> 2C 18-25 takes material that we know through the Legend of Three Companions and Assisi Compilation.  
<sup>49</sup> 2C 2 (FAED II, 240).  
<sup>50</sup> FRANCIS DE BEER, *La conversion de saint François selon Thomas de Celano*, 55.  
<sup>51</sup> P. ZERBI, *San Francesco d'Assisi e la Chiesa Romana*, in *Francesco d'Assisi nell'ottavo centenario della nascita*. Presentazione di G. Lazzati, Milano 1982, 77.  
<sup>52</sup> Test 3 (FAED I, 124). Latin text in *Fontes Franciscani* 227: "...id quod videbatur mihi amarum, conversum fuit mihi in dulcedinem animi et corporis."  
<sup>53</sup> L3C 7,4 (FAED II, 72). Latin text in *Fontes Franciscani*, 1380: "Et ecce subito visitatur a Domino, tantaque dulcedine repletur cor eius quod nec loqui nec moveri poterat, nihilque aliud sentire vel audire nisi dulcedinem illam valebat, quae ita ipsum alienaverat a sensu carnali quod, sicut ipse postea dixit, si fuisset tunc totus frustatim incisus non potuisset se de loco movere."  
<sup>54</sup> L3C 8,3 (FAED II, 72): "Often, almost daily, he withdrew secretly to pray. He was inclined to do so by that same tenderness he had tasted earlier, which now visited him ever more frequently, driving him to prayer in the piazza and in other public places."  
<sup>55</sup> L3C 11,1-2.7-8: "One day, while he was praying enthusiastically to the Lord, he received this response: 'Francis, everything you loved carnally and desired to have, you must despise and hate, if you wish to know my will. Because once you begin doing this, what before seemed delightful and sweet will be unbearable and bitter; and what before made you shudder will offer you great sweetness and enormous delight.' [...] After a few days, he moved to a hospice of lepers, taking with him a large sum of money. Calling them all together, as he kissed the hand of each, he gave them alms. When he left there, what before had been bitter, that is, to see and touch lepers, was turned into sweetness."

<sup>56</sup> L3C 22,10-11 (FAED II, 82): "Then his heart rejoiced in the Lord so much that his flesh, although weak and afflicted, was strong enough to endure joyfully for the Lord anything harsh or bitter. Above all, he gave thanks to God that He had changed the bitter into the sweet, and that He had comforted him in so many ways."  
<sup>57</sup> 1C 5,1 (FAED I, 185-186): "One night, after Francis had devoted himself with all of his determination to accomplish these things and was eager, seething with desire, to make the journey, the One who had struck him with the rod of justice visited him in a vision during the night in the sweetness of grace."  
<sup>58</sup> 2C 7,9 (FAED II, 246): "So much divine sweetness poured over him – as he later recounted – that he was struck dumb and could not move."  
<sup>59</sup> 2C 9,2 (FAED II, 248): "He was drawn away, lured by that remarkable delight that from the very beginning flowed over him abundantly and never left him as long as he lived."  
<sup>60</sup> 2C 9,6-7.14-15 (FAED II, 248-249): "Strengthened by the Lord, he rejoiced at a response of healing and grace: 'Francis,' God said to him in spirit, 'you have traded what you loved in a fleshly, empty way for things of the spirit, taking the bitter for the sweet (Prv 27:7). If you want to come to know Me, despise yourself. For when the order is reversed, the things I say will taste sweet to you even though they seem the opposite.' [...] He made his way to the houses of the lepers and, giving money to each, he also gave a kiss on the hand and mouth. Thus he took the bitter for the sweet and courageously prepared to carry out the rest."  
<sup>61</sup> 2C 14,6-7 (FAED II, 253): "He went through Assisi begging leftovers from door to door. When he saw his bowl filled with all kinds of scraps, he was at first struck with revulsion; but he remembered God and, overcoming himself, ate it with spiritual relish."  
<sup>62</sup> G. MICCOLI, *La "conversione" di san Francesco*, 790.  
<sup>63</sup> L3C 2,6 (FAED II, 68): "When neighbours commented on his extravagance, his mother replied: 'What do you think of my son? He will still be a son of God through grace.'"  
<sup>64</sup> 2C 3,3 (FAED II, 242): "For when her neighbours were admiring Francis's greatness of spirit and integrity of conduct she asked them, as if prompted by divine premonition, 'What do you think this son of mine will become? You will see that he shall merit to become a son of God!'" Cfr. E. PRINZIVALLI, *Un santo da leggere: Francesco d'Assisi nel percorso delle fonti agiografiche*, in *Francesco d'Assisi e il primo secolo di storia francescana* (Biblioteca Einaudi 1), Torino 1997, 95.  
<sup>65</sup> L3C 4,3-4 (FAED II, 70): "One time when his fellow prisoners were depressed, he, who was naturally cheerful and jovial, not only was not dejected but actually seemed to be happy. One of the prisoners rebuked him as insane for being cheerful in prison. Francis replied vigorously: 'What do you think will become of me? Rest assured, I will be worshipped throughout the whole world.'"  
<sup>66</sup> 2C 4,4-5 (FAED II, 243): "His unhappy companions rebuked him as he reveled in his chains, and thought he was out of his mind. Francis answered them prophetically: 'What do you think makes me so happy? I'm thinking about something else: some day the whole world will worship me as a saint!'"  
<sup>67</sup> In the account of the *Legenda*, after the meeting Francis mounted his horse and continued on his journey (L3C 11,3-5: FAED II, 74). According to 2C 9,12 (FAED II, 249): "Francis immediately mounted his horse and although the field was wide open, without any obstruction, when he looked around he could not see the leper anywhere." Cfr. G. MICCOLI, *La "conversione" di san Francesco*,

792; R. MANSELLI, San Francesco d'Assisi. Editio maior, 128 and note 37.

<sup>68</sup> L3C 13,6-10 (FAED II, 76): "A few days had passed when, while he was walking by the church of San Damiano, he was told in the Spirit to go inside for a prayer. Once he entered, he began to pray intensely before an image of the Crucified, which spoke to him in a tender and kind voice: 'Francis, don't you see that my house is being destroyed? Go, then, and rebuild it for me.' Stunned and trembling, he said: 'I will do so gladly, Lord.' For he understood that it was speaking about that church, which was near collapse because of its age. He was filled with such joy and became so radiant with light over that message, that he knew in his soul that it was truly Christ crucified who spoke to him."

<sup>69</sup> 2C 10,1-7 (FAED II, 249): "With his heart already completely changed – soon his body was also to be changed – he was walking one day by the church of San Damiano, which was abandoned by everyone and almost in ruins. Led by the Spirit he went in to pray and knelt down devoutly before the crucifix. He was shaken by unusual experiences and discovered that he was different from when he had entered. As soon as he had this feeling, there occurred something unheard of in previous ages: with the lips of the painting, the image of Christ crucified spoke to him. 'Francis,' it said, calling him by name, 'go rebuild My house; as you see, it is all being destroyed.' Francis was more than a little stunned, trembling, and stuttering like a man out of his senses. He prepared himself to obey and pulled himself together to carry out the command. He felt this mysterious change in himself, but he could not describe it. So it is better for us to remain silent about it too. From that time on, compassion for the Crucified was impressed into his holy soul. And we honestly believe the wounds of the sacred Passion were impressed deep in his heart, though not yet on his flesh."

<sup>70</sup> 1C 1,1 (FAED I, 182); 2C 3,2 (FAED II, 242).

<sup>71</sup> 2C 3,3 (FAED II, 242).

<sup>72</sup> 1C 2,4 (FAED I, 183).

<sup>73</sup> 1C 4,6 (FAED I, 185).

<sup>74</sup> 1C 17,7 (FAED I, 195).

<sup>75</sup> 2C 3,4-5 (FAED II, 242): "In fact this was the opinion of many, whom Francis pleased, by his very fine efforts, as he grew older. He completely rejected anything that could sound insulting to anyone. No one felt a young man of such noble manners could be born of the stock of those who were called his parents."

<sup>76</sup> 1C 13,1-2 (FAED I, 192): "When his father had left home for a little while on pressing family business, the man of God remained bound in the prison of his home. His mother, who had remained at home alone with him, did not approve of her husband's action and spoke to her son in gentle words. After she saw that she could not dissuade her son from his intentions, she was moved by maternal instinct. She broke his chains and let him go free."

<sup>77</sup> Cfr. 2C, chapter 7, entitled "How his father and his brother in the flesh persecuted him" (FAED II, 251-252).

<sup>78</sup> 2C 12,5 (FAED II, 251): "Within earshot of many who had gathered about, he declared: 'From now on I will say freely: Our Father who art in heaven, and not: My father, Pietro di Bernardone. Look, not only do I return his money; I give him back all my clothes. I will go to the Lord naked.'"

<sup>79</sup> 2C 7,7 (FAED II, 246).

<sup>80</sup> Cfr. J.R.H. MOORMAN, The Sources for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi, 111.

<sup>81</sup> Cfr. F. ACCROCCA, La lettera (o le lettere) di frate Elia sul transito di san Francesco, in Frate Francesco 69 (2003) 503-520; W.

SCHENKLUHN, La basilica di san Francesco in Assisi: Ecclesia specialis. La visione di papa Gregorio IX di un rinnovamento della Chiesa (Fonti e ricerche 5), Milano 1994, 174.

<sup>82</sup> Cfr. 2C 3,2 (FAED II, 241).

<sup>83</sup> 2C 3,1 (FAED II, 241): "Francis was the name of this servant and friend of the Most High."

<sup>84</sup> 2C 3,8 (FAED II, 243): "This observation is worthy of note: among all those born of women there has never been one greater than John (Mt 11:11) and among all the founders of religious communities there has never been one more perfect than Francis." Already in 1C 47 (FAED I, 224-225) Thomas of Celano refers to the famous vision of the friars, who saw a fiery chariot during one night when Francis was absent, and recognised in the vision the soul of their holy founder. This vision undoubtedly linked Francis to the prophet Elijah, and therefore to Elijah which was to come, namely John the Baptist.

<sup>85</sup> LM, Prologue 1,7 (FAED II, 527). In LM 13,8 (FAED II, 632) Francis is presented as the "friend of Christ."

<sup>86</sup> LM, Prologue, 1,6 (FAED II, 526).

<sup>87</sup> 2C 5 (FAED II, 244-245).

<sup>88</sup> Cfr. F. ACCROCCA, "Alter apostolus", 198-215; for other clarifications cfr. idem, Francesco e il demonio. La guarigione della donna di Sangemini, in Il Santo 39 (1999) 232, note 41.

<sup>89</sup> Cfr. AP 6,2-6 (FAED II, 36); L3C 6,3-8 (FAED II, 71).

<sup>90</sup> 2C 6,9 (FAED II, 245). NOEL MUSCAT, The Conversion of Saint Paul in the Episode of Francis' Dream in Spoleto, in Spirtu u Hajja. Journal of Franciscan Culture, Franciscan OFM Province Malta, 87 (2009) 2-7 [essay can be downloaded from the website <http://www.i-tau.org/publications/>].

<sup>91</sup> 2C 8,5 (FAED II, 247): "When he approached the altar of the Prince of the Apostles, he was surprised that people gave such small gifts. He threw in a whole handful of money, showing that the one God honored above others should be honored by all in a special way."

<sup>92</sup> 2C 8,6-7 (FAED II, 248).

<sup>93</sup> 2C 11,1-3 (FAED II, 249-250).





## Chiara taceva...la sua fama gridava

“ Giova ricordare che Chiara è stata la prima donna nella storia della Chiesa che abbia composto una Regola scritta, sottoposta all'approvazione del Papa, perché il carisma di Francesco d'Assisi fosse conservato in tutte le comunità femminili che si andavano stabilendo numerose già ai suoi tempi e che desideravano ispirarsi all'esempio di Francesco e di Chiara. Nel convento di san Damiano Chiara praticò in modo eroico le virtù che dovrebbero contraddistinguere ogni cristiano: l'umiltà, lo spirito di pietà e di penitenza, la carità. Pur essendo la superiora, ella voleva servire in prima persona le suore malate, assoggettandosi anche a compiti umilissimi: la carità, infatti, supera ogni resistenza e chi ama compie ogni sacrificio con letizia. La sua fede nella presenza reale dell'Eucaristia era talmente grande che, per due volte, si verificò un fatto prodigioso. Solo con l'ostensione del Santissimo Sacramento, allontanò i soldati mercenari saraceni, che erano sul punto di aggredire il convento di san Damiano e di devastare la città di Assisi. Anche questi episodi, come altri miracoli, di cui si conservava la memoria, spinsero il Papa Alessandro IV a canonizzarla solo due anni dopo la morte, nel 1255, tracciandone un elogio nella Bolla di canonizzazione in cui leggiamo: «Quanto è vivida la potenza di questa luce e quanto forte è il chiarore di questa fonte luminosa. Invero, questa luce si teneva chiusa nel nascondimento della vita claustrale e fuori irradiava bagliori luminosi; si raccoglieva in un angusto monastero, e fuori si spandeva quanto è vasto il mondo. Si custodiva dentro e si diffondeva fuori. Chiara infatti si nascondeva; ma la sua vita era rivelata a tutti. Chiara taceva, ma la sua fama gridava». Grati a Dio che ci dona i Santi che parlano al nostro cuore e ci offrono un esempio di vita cristiana da imitare, vorrei concludere con le stesse parole di benedizione che santa Chiara compose per le sue consorelle e che ancora oggi le Clarisse, che svolgono un prezioso ruolo nella Chiesa con la loro preghiera e con la loro opera, custodiscono con grande devozione: «Vi benedico nella mia vita e dopo la mia morte, come posso e più di quanto posso, con tutte le benedizioni con le quali il Padre delle misericordie benedisse e benedirà in cielo e in terra i figli e le figlie, e con le quali un padre e una madre spirituale bendisse e bendirà i suoi figli e le sue figlie spirituali».

Papa Benedetto XVI  
Udienza Generale al Vaticano  
15 settembre 2010

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## Abbreviations

### Writings of St. Francis

Adm	Admonitiones.
CantAudPov	Cantico Audite Poverelle.
CantSol	Canticum fratris Solis.
LaudDei	Laudes Dei Altissimi.
BenLeo	Benedictio fratri Leoni data.
EpAnt	Epistola ad sanctum Antonium.
EpCler I	Epistola ad Clericos (Redactio prior).
EpCler II	Epistola ad Clericos (Red. posterior).
EpCust I	Epistola ad Custodes I.
EpCust II	Epistola ad Custodes II.
EpFid I	Epistola ad Fideles I.
EpFid II	Epistola ad Fideles II.
EpLeo	Epistola ad fratrem Leonem.
EpMin	Epistola ad Ministrum.
EpOrd	Epistola toti Ordini missa.
EpRect	Epistola ad populorum rectores.
ExhLD	Exhortatio ad Laudem Dei.
ExpPat	Expositio in Pater noster.
FormViv	Forma vivendi sanctae Clarae data.
Fragm	Fragmenta alterius RegulaeNB.
LaudHor	Laudes ad omnes horas dicendae.
OffPass	Officium Passionis Domini.
OrCruc	Oratio ante crucifixum.
RegB	Regula bullata.
RegNB	Regula non bullata.
RegEr	Regula pro eremitoriis data.
SalBMV	Salutatio beatae Mariae Virginis.
SalVirt	Salutatio virtutum.
Test	Testamentum.
UltVol	Ultima voluntas S. Clarae scripta.

### Sources for the Life of St. Francis

1C	Tommaso da Celano, Vita Sancti Francisci.
LCh	Celano, Legenda ad usum chori.
2C	Celano, Memoriale in Desiderio Animae.
3C	Celano, Tractatus de Miraculis S. Francisci.
LJS	Julian of Speyer, Vita Sancti Francisci.
OR	Officium Rhythmicum S. Francisci.
AP	Anonimo Perugino.
L3C	Leggenda dei Tre Compagni.
CA	Compilatio Assisiensis.
LMj	S. Bonaventura, Legenda Maior S. Francisci.
LMn	S. Bonaventura, Legenda minor S. Francisci.
SP	Speculum Perfectionis.
SC	Sacrum commercium S. Francisci.
ABF	Actus Beati Francisci et Sociorum Eius.
Fior	Fioretti di San Francesco.

### Sources for the Life of St. Clare

BICl	Blessing of St. Clare.
1-4LAg	Letters to St. Agnes of Prague..
LCl	Legend of St. Clare.
PC	Acts of the Process of Canonization.
PrPov	Privilege of Poverty.
RegCl	Rule of St. Clare.
TestCl	Testament of St. Clare.

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