

## SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

### RULE OF LIFE

and

### SOURCES

#### THE PROMULGATION OF THE RULE OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI.

*In memoriam perpetuam.* The Seraphic Father, Saint Francis of Assisi, during his life and even after his beautiful death, not only attracted many to serve God in the religious Order founded by him, but also drew numerous numbers of the laity to enter his movement, whilst as far as possible remaining in the world. Moreover, to use the words of our predecessor Pius IX “*it would seem .. that there was never anyone other than Francis who resembled and in whom there shone forth more vividly the image of Christ and the evangelical life.* And so, he who called himself “*the herald of the great king*” was rightly hailed as *another Christ* by his contemporaries, and recognized by future generations as *Christus redivivus*. It is thus that he still appears to the eyes of our generation, and will continue as such for all generations to come [Encyclical: *Rite expiates*, 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1926: AAS 18, 1926, p. 154].

We rejoice that the *Franciscan Charism* today is still a force for the good of the Church and humanity itself, notwithstanding the invasion of doctrines and tendencies which turn people away from God and the supernatural. For ten years, the four Franciscan Orders have – with praiseworthy endurance and common agreement – engaged in preparing a new rule for the Franciscan Third Order Secular, or as it is now called, the Secular Franciscan Order. This enterprise was necessitated by the changed conditions of our times and because of the teaching and mandate of Vatican II. Therefore, our dearly beloved sons, the four General Ministers of the Franciscan Order, have petitioned that we approve the Rule presented to us. Following the example of some of our predecessors, the most recent being Pope Leo XIII, we have willingly decided to grant their request. By doing this, we nurture the hope that the *forma vitae* promoted by that endearing man of Assisi will gain new impetus and will flourish vigorously. After consulting the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, which has examined and evaluated the text with care and diligence, we approve, confirm and sanction with our apostolic authority the Rule of the Secular Francis Order, on condition that it concurs with the text deposited in the archives of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, beginning with the words “The Franciscan family...” and ending with “... according to the norms of the Constitutions”. By this letter and our apostolic authority, we abrogate the previous rule of what was named *The Franciscan Third Order*. Finally, we ordain that this Rule comes into effect now, and remains so for the future, disregarding anything contrary to it. Given at St Peter’s in Rome, under the ring of the Fisherman, on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1978, the 16<sup>th</sup> year of our pontificate.

(signed) John Card. Villot, Secretary of State

LETTER OF THE FOUR MINISTERS GENERAL  
OF THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY

To the Brothers and Sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order on the occasion of granting the Rule approved for them by the Holy See.....

WE joyfully inform you that the Holy See, by means of the Apostolic Letter "Seraphicus Patriarca" dated June 28, 1978 and "under the ring of the Fisherman", has approved the revised Rule of the Franciscan Secular Order which abrogates and takes the place of the preceding Rule of Pope Leo XIII. It is to Pope Paul VI that we owe this splendid gift, which he bestowed shortly before he left this earth. He loved you. Many times, indeed, he demonstrated his love for the Secular Franciscan Order and addressed to you unforgettable words as in June 1968 and in 1971 on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of "*Memoriale Propositi*."

Since March 7, 1966, when the Sacred Congregation for Religious granted permission to begin updating legislation for the Secular Franciscan Order, the journey has been long and arduous.

We wish to underline the work accomplished by the brothers and sisters and by the fraternities through the National Councils, through such publications as Way of Life and Journeys, and by the tireless work of the Presidency of the International Council since its establishment in 1973.

Such work was of primary importance in seeking the ways of the Spirit and most efficacious in recognising the presence and the vitality of the Franciscan Charism in the People of God in our day.

The Rule that we present to you to-day is not only the fruit of this labour. The Church consigns it to you as a norm of life.

Notice first its evangelical content; welcome the Franciscan message that it contains and the guidance it offers you in living according to the holy Gospel. The Hope of renewal hinges upon returning to the origins and the spiritual experience of Francis of Assisi and of the brothers and sisters of Penance who received from him their inspiration and guidance. This sentiment is also included in the Prologue, "Letter to the Faithful" (*recensio prior*) and in the constant references to the teaching and example of Saint Francis. This renewal also depends upon openness to the Spirit in the signs of the times.

Supported by this foundation, you should put into practice the invitation of the Rule to be creative and to exercise co-responsibility.

This creativity, in certain cases, should express itself in the form of statutes. Indeed, number 3 of the Rule states as a general norm: "Its applications will be made by the General Constitutions and particular statutes."

We, the Franciscan Ministers, with all our Friars are ever ready and open to offer you all our assistance so that we may walk together in the way of the Lord.

With these sentiments we are pleased to present the revised Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order to the Presidency of the International Council and through this Council to all Secular Franciscans who will receive it as a norm of life.

ROME, October 4, 1978

Fr. Constantine Koser, Min. Gen. O.F.M

Fr. Vitale Bonmarco, Min. Gen. O.F.M.Conv.

Fr. Paschal Rywalski, Min. Gen. O.F.M. Cap.

Fr. Roland J. Faley, Min. Gen. T.O.R.

## RULE OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

### *Earlier Exhortation to the Brothers & Sisters of Penance*

(1209 – 1215)

#### PROLOGUE

In the name of the Lord!

[Chapter One]

#### **Those Who Do Penance**

All those who love the Lord *with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with their whole strength* and love their neighbours as themselves, who hate their bodies with their vices and sins, who receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and produce worthy fruits of penance. O how happy and blessed are these men and women while they do such things and persevere in doing them, because *the Spirit of the Lord will rest on them* and make its home and *dwelling place* among them, and they are children of the heavenly Father whose works they do, and they are spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers to him when we do *the will of the Father who is in heaven*. We are mothers when we carry him in our heart and body through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others.

O how glorious it is to have a holy and great Father in heaven! O how holy and consoling it is to have such a beautiful Spouse! O how holy and how loving, gratifying, humbling, peace-giving, sweet, worthy of love, and – above all things – desirable to have such a Brother and such a Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for his sheep and prayed to his Father saying:

*Holy Father, in your name, save those whom you have given to me in the world; they were yours, and you gave them to me. The words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have accepted them and have believed in truth that I have come from you and they have known that you have sent me. I pray for them and not for the world. Bless and sanctify them; I sanctify myself for them. I pray not only for them, but for those who will believe in me through their word; that they might be sanctified in being one as we are one. I wish, Father, that where I am, they also may be with me that they may see my glory in your kingdom. Amen.*

[Chapter Two]

#### **Those Who Do Not Do Penance**

All those men and women who are not living in penance, who do not receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who practice vice and sin and walk after the evil concupiscence and the evil desires of their flesh, who do not observe what they have promised to the Lord, and who in their bodies serve the world and the cares of this life. They are held captive by the devil, whose children they are, and whose works they do. They are blind because they do not see the true light, our Lord Jesus Christ. They do not possess spiritual wisdom because they do not have the Son of God, the true wisdom of the Father. It is said of them: *Their wisdom has been swallowed up* and *Cursed are those who turn away from your commands*. They see and acknowledge, know and do evil, and knowingly lose their souls.

See, you blind ones, deceived by your enemies: the flesh, the world, and the devil, because it is sweet for the body to sin and it is bitter to serve God, for all vice and sin flow and *proceed from the human heart* as the Lord says in the Gospel. And you have nothing in this world or in the world to come. And you think that you will possess this world's vanities for a long time, but you are deceived because a day and an hour will come of which you give no thought, which you do not know, and of which you are unaware when the body becomes weak, death approaches, and it dies

a bitter death. And no matter where, when, or how a person dies in the guilt of sin without penance and satisfaction, if he can perform an act of satisfaction and does not do so, the devil snatches his soul from his body with such anguish and distress that no one can know [what it is like] except the one receiving it.

And every talent, ability, knowledge, and wisdom they think they have will be taken away from them. And they leave their wealth to their relatives and friends who take and divide it and afterwards say: "May his soul be cursed because he could have given us more and acquired more than what he distributed to us." Worms eat his body and so body and soul perish in this brief world and they will go to hell where they will be tortured forever.

In the love which is God we beg all those whom these words reach to receive those fragrant words of our Lord Jesus Christ written above with divine love and kindness. And let whoever does not know how to read have them read to them frequently. Because *they are spirit and life*, they should keep them devotedly to the end.

And whosoever has not done these things will be held accountable *before the tribunal of the Lord Jesus Christ on the day of judgement*.

(Regis J Armstrong et al (eds). Francis of Assisi: Early Documents. New York, London & Manilla: New City Press, 1999. Vol. 1, pp. 41-44)

## Chapter I

### The Secular Franciscan Order (SFO)<sup>(1)</sup>

1. The Franciscan family, as one among many spiritual families raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church,<sup>(2)</sup> unites all members of the people of God, lay, religious, and priests-- who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.<sup>(3)</sup> In various ways and forms but in life-giving union with each other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church.<sup>(4)</sup>
2. The Secular Franciscan Order holds a special place in this family circle. It is an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world and open to every group of the faithful. In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of St. Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church.<sup>(5)</sup>
3. The present rule, succeeding "*Memoriale Propositi*" (1221) and the rules approved by the Supreme Pontiffs Nicholas IV and Leo XIII, adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times. Its interpretation belongs to the Holy See and its application will be made by the General Constitutions and particular statutes.

## Chapter II

### The Way of Life

4. The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the centre of his life with God and people.<sup>(6)</sup>

Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.<sup>(7)</sup>

Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel.<sup>(8)</sup>

5. Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of Saint Francis, who often said "*I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood,*" should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.

6. They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.<sup>(9)</sup>

7. United by their vocation as "*brothers and sisters of penance*",<sup>(10)</sup> and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls *conversion*. Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.<sup>(11)</sup>

On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace.<sup>(12)</sup>

8. As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do,<sup>(13)</sup>

Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in

liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.

9. The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family.<sup>(14)</sup> The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.<sup>(15)</sup>

10. Uniting themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed his will into the Father's hands, let them faithfully fulfil the duties proper to their various circumstances of life.<sup>(16)</sup> Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to him even in difficulties and persecutions.<sup>(17)</sup>

11. Trusting in the Father, Christ chose for himself and his mother a poor and humble life<sup>(18)</sup> even though he valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children.

Thus, in the spirit of "*The Beatitudes* ", and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father,<sup>(19)</sup> they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.

12. Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.<sup>(20)</sup>

13. As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters,<sup>(21)</sup> so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord<sup>(22)</sup> and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.<sup>(23)</sup>

14. Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone "*who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself*", let them exercise their responsibilities competently in Christian spirit of service.<sup>(24)</sup>

15. Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.<sup>(25)</sup>

16. Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.<sup>(26)</sup>

17. In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ.<sup>(27)</sup> By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.<sup>(28)</sup>

18. Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which "*bear the imprint of the Most High*"<sup>(29)</sup> and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.

19. Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.<sup>(30)</sup>

Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to

others.<sup>(31)</sup>

Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.<sup>(32)</sup>

### **Chapter III**

#### **Life In Fraternity**

20. The Secular Franciscan Order is divided into fraternities of various levels local, regional, national, and international. Each one has its own moral personality in the Church.<sup>(33)</sup> These various fraternities are coordinated and united according to the norm of this rule and of the constitutions.

21. On various levels, each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and minister who are elected by the professed according to the constitutions.<sup>(34)</sup>

Their service, which lasts for a definite period, is marked by a ready and willing spirit and is a duty of responsibility to each member and to the community.

Within themselves the fraternities are structured in different ways according to the norm of the constitutions, according to the various needs of their members and their regions, and under the guidance of their respective council.

22. The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.<sup>(35)</sup>

23. Requests for admission to the Secular Franciscan Order must be presented to the local fraternity, whose council decides upon the acceptance of new brothers and sisters.<sup>(36)</sup>

Admission into the Order is gradually attained through a time of initiation, a period of formation of at least one year, and profession of the rule.<sup>(37)</sup> The entire community is engaged in this process of growth by its own manner of living. The age for profession and the distinctive Franciscan sign<sup>(38)</sup> are regulated by the statutes. Profession by its nature is a permanent commitment.<sup>(39)</sup>

Members who find themselves in particular difficulties should discuss their problems with the council in fraternal dialogue.

Withdrawal or permanent dismissal from the Order, if necessary, is an act of the fraternity council according to the norm of the constitutions.<sup>(40)</sup>

24. To foster communion among members, the council should organise regular and frequent meetings of the community as well as meeting with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups. It should adopt appropriate means for growth in Franciscan and ecclesial life and encourage everyone to a life of fraternity.<sup>(41)</sup> This communion continues with deceased brothers and sisters through prayer for them.<sup>(42)</sup>

25. Regarding expenses necessary for the life of the fraternity and the needs of worship, of the apostolate, and of charity, all the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution according to their means. Local fraternities should contribute toward the expenses of the higher fraternity councils.<sup>(43)</sup>

26. As a concrete sign of communion and co-responsibility, the councils on various levels, in keeping with the constitutions, shall ask for suitable and well-prepared religious for spiritual assistance. They should make this request to the superiors of the four religious Franciscan families, to whom the Secular Fraternity has been united for centuries.

To promote fidelity to the charism as well as observance of the rule and to receive greater support in the life of the fraternity, the minister or president, with the consent of the council, should take care to ask for a regular pastoral visit by the competent religious superiors<sup>(44)</sup> as well as for a fraternal visit from those of the higher fraternities, according to the norm of the constitutions.

**Blessing of St. Francis (1226):**

*And whoever shall observe all these things may he be filled  
in heaven with the blessing of the most high Father,  
and on earth with that of his beloved Son,  
together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.*

(The figures 1-44 refer to the Numbers in the "Documentary Sources and references for the Rule)

**DOCUMENTARY SOURCES  
AND REFERENCES FOR THE RULE**

(1) Known also by the name "The Secular Franciscan Fraternity" or by the abbreviation "T.O.F." which corresponds to "Third Order Franciscan".

(2) Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), 43 (abbr: Church).

The evangelical counsels of chastity dedicated to God, poverty, and obedience are based upon the words and examples of the Lord. They were further commended by the apostles and the Fathers, and other teachers and shepherds of the Church. The counsels are a divine gift, which the Church has received from her Lord and which she ever preserves with the help of His grace. Church authority has the duty, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, of interpreting these evangelical counsels, of regulating their practice, and finally of establishing stable forms of living according to them.

Thus it has come about that various forms of solitary and community life, as well as different religious families have grown up. Advancing the progress of their members and the welfare of the whole body of Christ, these groups have been like branches sprouting out wondrously and abundantly from a tree growing in the field of the Lord from a seed divinely planted.

These religious families give their members the support of greater stability in their way of life, a proven method of acquiring perfection, fraternal association in the militia of Christ, and liberty strengthened by obedience. Thus these religious can securely fulfil and faithfully observe their religious profession, and rejoicing in spirit make progress on the road of charity.

From the point of view of the divine and hierarchical structure of the Church, the religious state of life is not an intermediate one between the clerical and lay states. Rather, the faithful of Christ are called by God from both these latter states of life so that they may enjoy this particular gift in the life of the Church and thus each in his own way can forward the saving mission of the Church.

(3) Pius XII, Allocution to Tertiaries {"Nel darvi"}, 1 (July 1, 1956). AAS vol.48, 574-575.

**ADDRESS OF POPE PIUS XII**

July 1, 1956

TO THE TERTIARIES OF ITALY

THE FRANCISCAN VISION OF LIFE

RICH HERITAGE

In bidding you affectionate welcome, beloved children - directors, friars, brothers and sisters of the Third Order in Italy - We wish above all to express our joy at the happy revival of your individual and collective activity as well as at the spirit of concord that reigns among you. Reading your history, one is astounded by the number and variety of the blossoms of holiness, of the fruits of apostolic work, that have budded and matured on the three branches of the thriving and vigorous tree of the Franciscan Order. From the time of Blessed Luchesio right down to the countless numbers of lay people in every walk of life, to the priests, to the bishops, to the popes - a veritable multitude of souls has attributed to the Third Order a great part of that spirit which spurred them on to walk in the way of perfection. And no less wonderful is the story of the work done by them towards the religious, moral, social and political reorganization of society.

ALWAYS READY TO CO-OPERATE

After its providential founding, the Third Order, pervaded through and through by the spirit and the teaching of its Seraphic Founder, became immediately the surety of holiness for very many hearts. There were, it is true, during the course of the long years, periods of crisis and of less

fervour; despite that, however, the activity of the Order was always noteworthy and efficacious. In times of strife and feud the Tertiaries became the promoters of concord and peace; with a prudent fearlessness they worked against the abuses of the feudal lords for the betterment and the defence of the humbler classes; in order to reduce, and, in so far as possible, destroy the effects of heresies and schisms, they practised and preached absolute fidelity to the Church and to its visible Head; to stem the spreading tide of injustice, oppression, and plunder they gave an example of detachment from riches, vanities and honours.

It may well be said that whenever the Church called her children together for any work of profound internal renewal, she found the Tertiaries ready to cooperate in ensuring the success of the common effort. For that reason you have had the support and the blessing of the Roman pontiffs: from Honorius III, who tradition has it, gave verbal approval to the rule of your order, down to Gregory IX, the great friend of your holy Patriarch; to Leo XIII, who by the Apostolic Constitution *Misericors Dei Filius* of May 30, 1883, reformed your rule, taking care, however, that the intimate nature of the order was in no way modified; to St. Pius X who proclaimed himself confident of the efficacious contribution of the Tertiaries towards the restoring of all things in Christ (Apostolic Letter, May 5, 1909); to Benedict XV and Pius XI who reaffirmed the perennial modernity of the Third Order. On various occasions we also have willingly praised your spirit and encouraged your work; and today we are glad to meet you once again and to offer you anew Our congratulations, Our good wishes and Our paternal exhortation. And we, like you, ask of the Lord that the splendour of your many glories may never be in any way obscured, that the confidence which the Church places in you may never become vain. For you, of course, as for other institutes, the recent war may have caused at first a period of organic standstill and perhaps of spiritual coolness; but now, as witness this magnificent congress of yours, you have recovered your primitive fervour, to make of the Third Order a school of Christian perfection, of the genuine Franciscan spirit, and of fearless and prompt action for the building up of the Body of Christ.

#### TO SATISFY THE THIRST FOR HEROISM ...

i. You must be, above all, a school of integral Christian perfection.

The Third Order was born in the mind of your Seraphic Father the day that a group of souls, moved and urged on by his words, asked him to be allowed to accompany him on the path he was travelling, following in the footsteps of Christ, in Whose name he was constantly repeating the words "Be ye perfect" (Mt. 5,48). But since it was not possible for everyone to follow the Gospel counsels, Francis remembered that all, as long as they wished it, could tend to the perfection of their own state of life and reach it without embracing the state of perfection. By denying themselves, all could be docile instruments in the hands of Christ: prompt to answer his every desire, his every suggestion. And that complete and continual clinging to the will of God, that affectionate yet strong dedication to him and to his wishes, that fullness and perfection of life in the light of the gospel, can belong to all Christians, and in fact, has been the treasure of so many in every age.

The Third Order of St. Francis was born to satisfy this thirst for heroism among those who, though having to remain in the world, did not wish to be of the world. The Third Order, then, seeks souls who long for perfection in their own state.

You are an order: a lay order, but truly an order, "an order in the true sense of the word," as our Predecessor Benedict XV of holy memory called it (Encycl. Letter *Sacra Propediem*, Jan 6, 1921). You will not be - this should be obvious - an assembly of the perfect; but you must be a school of Christian perfection. Without that resolute resolve it is impossible to be a suitable member of so chosen and so glorious an army.

#### NO SHALLOW SPIRITUALITY

ii. You must be a school of the true Franciscan spirit.

While no one harbours any doubts about the importance of the Franciscan Third Order in the modern world, still worthy of note are the anxieties which the most zealous Franciscans feel about the effective vitality of the Third Order both in Italy and in other countries: there are some who

fear that the Third Order to-day does not give the hosts of saints and apostles that once it provided for the complete service of the Church.

The reasons for such a phenomenon may perhaps be sought - among other things - in a lesser efficacy of the Franciscan spirit in not a few Tertiaries, and at times in some directors. That is to say, some complain that matters frequently remain too much in the field of theory, when in fact, it is not sufficient to know the life of the holy Patriarch and to tell it to others, in order to be sure of forming oneself, and especially others, according to the Franciscan outlook and method. If this complaint were true, it would be necessary to find a prompt remedy for it. Remember that your Third Order cannot blossom and give fruit, as it did in the eras of its glory, if it is not fully imbued with the true and genuine Franciscan spirit.

#### DIFFERENT WAYS OF APPROACHING GOD

You know that the spirituality of any saint is his particular way of picturing God to himself, of speaking to him, of approaching him, of dealing with him. Every saint sees the attributes of God in the light of what he ponders most, of what he penetrates most deeply, of what attracts him most and what conquers him. For every saint one particular virtue of Christ is the ideal towards which he must tend; yet all the saints - indeed the whole Church - strive to imitate the whole Christ. In fact it is because of this that the Church is, so to speak, the total Christ, and the individual Christians - the individual saints - are his members, each more or less perfect.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF LOVE

There is, then, a Franciscan doctrine in accordance with which God is holy, is great, but above all is good, indeed the Supreme Good. For in this doctrine God is love: he lives by love, creates for love, becomes flesh and redeems, that is, he saves and sanctifies, for love.

There is also a Franciscan way of contemplating Jesus: the meeting of uncreated Love with created love. Similarly, there is a method of loving Him and of imitating Him: in reality it sees the Man-God, and prefers to consider him in his holy humanity, because it reveals him more clearly and, as it were, allows him to be touched. From this arises a burning devotion to the Incarnation and the Passion of Jesus, because these (mysteries) allow us to see God, not so much in his glory, in his omnipotent grandeur, or in his eternal triumph, as rather in his human love - so tender in the manger, so sorrowful on the cross.

#### THE WORLD NEEDS THIS SPIRIT

There is, finally, a Franciscan way of imitating Jesus. Your Seraphic Father searched for and found in the gospel, seemingly opened at random, three sayings of the Divine Master. The first said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Mt. 19:21). The second gave warning: "If any one wishes to come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt.16:24). The third, finally: "Carry neither purse, nor wallet, nor sandals" (Lk. 10:4). At that the holy Patriarch said: "This shall be our rule". (Anon.Perus, c. 10 & 11).

From this arises Franciscan poverty which flees from luxury and which loves the things that give less pleasure to the eye and to vanity. From this is born Franciscan simplicity which brings the soul to search for God directly, following the short way, the simple way, that is to say, paying less heed to its own disfigurement and more to the infinite beauty of God. From this springs Franciscan renunciation, total and continual, but without shocks, without violence, without regrets - a sweet renunciation, made for the love of Jesus. From this surges that candid Franciscan joy, which is not the same as noisy gaiety or unseemly laughter, but is rather the tranquil smile, full of amiable serenity.

From this, above all, comes that universal charity which, because it sees everyone and everything in God, loves everyone and everything in him and for him, and which takes delight in everyone and everything because it takes delight in God. Deus meus et omnia! My God and my All!

The world has need of that Franciscan spirit, of that Franciscan vision of life. It is your duty, beloved children, to know it thoroughly, to love it with enthusiasm, and above all to live it with the

perfection that your state of life allows.

### REBUILD MY CHURCH

iii. A school of fearless and prompt action for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Your Third Order will be able to form a select detachment in the peaceful lay army which today, as never before, is arrayed in the field for the defence and the spread of the kingdom of Christ in the world.

In the church of St. Damian your Seraphic Father heard the voice of the Crucified which exhorted him to rebuild His house, threatened by ruin. To defend the Church, to support the Church - that was the yearning of Francis of Assisi. Do you desire, beloved children, to be worthy of your Father and Master?

Look at the times we live in. They are no different, under some aspects, from the times that saw the birth of the Franciscan Order. We have repeatedly warned the world to stop in time at the edge of the precipice. We have invited men to reflect that there is no genuine and lasting salvation save in Jesus. Again and again, We have made appeals to all true Christians leaving aside those points that separate us - to work fearlessly and in concord for the revival and spread of the Church. Many have answered the call, and many more, we are firmly confident, will yet answer it. Men are becoming aware that for those who stand aloof from Christ there is nothing but distress and woe. In very many parts of the world intense work is being done under the guidance of holy pastors.

To work you, then, too, beloved children! Jesus tells you so through the mouth of His Vicar, however unworthy. Join forces, all: bring aid to the world. Support the Church, where, though error and evil are not wanting - alas! - in some of its members, there is nevertheless so much heroism, so much holiness.

With these sentiments, and thanking you for the many charitable gifts with which you have accompanied your coming here, in pledge of the most abundant heavenly favours We impart to you all, to your families and to all your work Our Apostolic Blessing. *Pope Pius XII*

(4) Vatican II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity), 4m. (abbr: Laity)

Since Christ in His mission from the Father is the fountain and source of the whole apostolate of the Church, the success of the lay apostolate depends upon the laity's living union with Christ. For the Lord has said, "He who abides in me, and I in him; he bears much fruit: for without me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5). This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is nourished by spiritual aids which are common to all the faithful, especially active participation in the sacred liturgy. These are to be used by the laity in such a way that while properly fulfilling their secular duties in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not disassociate union with Christ from that life. Rather, by performing their work according to God's will they can grow in that union. In this way must the laity make progress in holiness, showing a ready and happy spirit, and trying prudently and patiently to overcome difficulties. Neither family concerns nor other secular affairs should be excluded from their religious programme of life. For as the Apostle states, "Whatever you do in word or work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17).

Such a life requires a continual exercise of faith, hope, and charity.

Only by the light of faith and by meditation on the word of God can one always and everywhere recognize God in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28), seek His will in every event, see Christ in all men whether they be close to us or strangers, and make correct judgments about the true meaning and value of temporal things, both in themselves and in their relation to man's final goal.

They who have this faith live in the hope of what will be revealed to the sons of God and bear in mind the cross and resurrection of the Lord.

In the pilgrimage of this life, hidden with Christ in God and free from enslavement to wealth, they aspire to those riches which remain forever, and generously dedicate their entire selves to spreading God's Kingdom and to fashioning and perfecting the sphere of earthly things according to the spirit of Christ. Among the struggles of this life, they find strength in hope, convinced that "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

Impelled by divine charity, they do good to all men, especially to those of the household of the faith (cf. Gal. 6:10), laying aside "all malice and all deceit and pretence, and envy, and all slander" (1 Pet. 2:1), and thereby they draw men to Christ. This charity of God, which "is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5), enables the laity to express the true spirit of the beatitudes in their lives. Following Jesus who was poor, they are neither depressed by the lack of temporal goods nor puffed up by their abundance. Imitating Christ who was humble, they have no obsession for empty honours (cf. Gal. 5:26) but seek to please God rather than men, ever ready to leave all things for Christ's sake (cf. Lk. 14:26) and to suffer persecution for justice' sake (cf. Mt. 5:10). For they remember the words of the Lord, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt. 16:24). Promoting Christian friendship among themselves, they help one another in any kind of necessity.

The layman's religious programme of life should take its special quality from his status as a married man and a family man, or as one who is unmarried or widowed, from his state of health, and from his professional and social activity. He should not cease to develop earnestly the qualities and talents bestowed on him in accord with these conditions of life, and he should make use of the gifts which he has received from the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, the laity who in pursuit of their vocation have become members of one of the associations or institutes approved by the Church are trying faithfully to adopt the special characteristics of the spiritual life which are proper to these as well. They should also hold in high esteem professional skill, family and civic spirit, and the virtues relating to social behaviour, namely, honesty, justice, sincerity, kindness and courage, without which there can be no true Christian life.

The perfect example of this type of spiritual and apostolic life is the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles. While leading on earth a life common to all men, one filled with family concerns and labours, she was always intimately united with her Son and cooperated in the work of the Saviour in a manner altogether special. Now that she has been taken up into heaven, "with her maternal charity she cares for these brothers of her Son who are still on their earthly pilgrimage and are surrounded by dangers and difficulties; she will care until they are led into their blessed fatherland." All should devoutly venerate her and commend their life and apostolate to her motherly concern.

(5) Code of Canon Law, 702:1

(6) 1 Celano 18 (O p244; 1 FA:ED p196), 1 Celano 115 (O p329; 1 FA:ED p283)

*How Francis built the church of St. Damian; and of the life of the Ladies who dwelt in that place*

The first work that blessed Francis undertook after he had gained his freedom from the hand of his carnally minded father was to build a house of God.

He did not try to build one anew, but he repaired an old one, restored an ancient one. He did not tear out the foundation, but he built upon it, ever reserving to Christ his prerogative, though he was not aware of it, for other foundation no one can lay, but that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus. When he had returned to the place where, as has been said, the church of St. Damian had been built in ancient times, he repaired it zealously within a short time with the help of the grace of the Most High. This is the blessed and holy place, where the glorious religion and most excellent order of Poor Ladies and holy virgins had its blessed origin about six years after the conversion of

St. Francis and through that same blessed man. Of it, the Lady Clare, a native of the city of Assisi, the most precious and the firmest stone of the whole structure, was the foundation. For when, after the beginning of the Order of Brothers, the said lady was converted to God through the counsel of the holy man, she lived unto the advantage of many and as an example to a countless multitude. She was of noble parentage, but she was more noble by grace; she was a virgin in body, most chaste in mind; a youth in age, but mature in spirit; steadfast in purpose and most ardent in her desire for divine love; endowed with wisdom and excelling in humility; Clare by name, brighter in life, and brightest in character. (1 Cel. 18)

These things the most blessed father Francis fulfilled most perfectly; he bore the image and form of a seraph and, persevering upon the cross, merited to rise to the ranks of the heavenly spirits. For he was always on the cross, fleeing no labour or suffering, if only he could fulfil the will of the Lord in himself and concerning himself.

The brothers, moreover, who lived with him knew how his daily and continuous talk was of Jesus and how sweet and tender his conversation was, how kind and filled with love his talk with them. His mouth spoke out of abundance of his heart, and the fountain of enlightened love that filled his whole being bubbled forth outwardly. Indeed, he was always occupied with Jesus; Jesus he bore in his heart, Jesus in his mouth, Jesus in his ears, Jesus in his eyes, Jesus in his hands, Jesus in the rest of his members. O how often, when he sat down to eat, hearing or speaking or thinking of Jesus, he forgot bodily food, as we read of the holy one: "Seeing, he did not see, and hearing he did not hear." Indeed, many times, as he went along the way meditating on and singing of Jesus, he would forget his journey and invite all the elements to praise Jesus. And because he always bore and preserved Christ Jesus and him crucified in his heart with a wonderful love, he was marked in a most glorious way above all others with the seal of him whom in a rapture of mind he contemplated sitting in inexpressible and incomprehensible glory at the right hand of the Father, with whom he, the co-equal and most high Son of the Most High, lives and reigns, conquers and governs in union with the Holy Spirit, God eternally glorious through all ages forever. Amen. (1 Cel. 115)

(7) Jn. 3:16, 14:6.

(8) Laity, 30h.

Training for the apostolate should start with a child's earliest education. In a special way, however, adolescents and young adults should be initiated into the apostolate and imbued with its spirit. This formation must be perfected throughout their whole lives in keeping with the demands of new responsibilities. It is evident, therefore, that those who have the obligation to provide for Christian education also have the duty to provide for formation in the apostolate.

In the family, parents have the task of training their children from childhood to recognize God's love for all men. Especially by example they should teach them little by little to show concern for the material and spiritual needs of their neighbour. The whole of family life, then, would become a sort of apprenticeship for the apostolate.

Children must also be educated to transcend the family circle, and to open their minds to ecclesiastical and temporal communities. They should be so involved in the local community of the parish that they will acquire a consciousness of being living and active members of the People of God. In their catechetical instructions, their ministry of the word, their direction of souls, and in their other pastoral services, priests should be preoccupied with forming apostles.

Schools, colleges, and other Catholic educational institutions also have the duty to develop a Catholic sense and apostolic activity in young people. If young people lack this formation either because they do not attend these schools or because of any other reason, parents, pastors of souls, and apostolic organizations should attend to it all the more. Teachers and educators, who carry on a distinguished form of the apostolate of the laity by their vocation and office, should be equipped

with the learning and pedagogical skill needed for imparting such apostolic training effectively.

In keeping with their purpose and according to their measure, lay groups and associations dedicated to the apostolate or to other supernatural goals should carefully and persistently promote formation for the apostolate. Frequently these groups are the ordinary vehicle of harmonious formation for the apostolate since they provide doctrinal, spiritual, and practical formation. Their members meet in small groups with their associates or friends, examine the methods and results of their apostolic activity, and measure their daily way of life against the gospel.

Formation of this type must be designed to take into account the whole lay apostolate, which is to be carried on not only among the organized groups themselves but also in all circumstances of a man's life, especially his professional and social life. Indeed, everyone should painstakingly ready himself personally for the apostolate, especially as an adult. For the advance of age brings with it better self-knowledge, thus enabling each person to evaluate more accurately the talents with which God has enriched his soul and to exercise more effectively those charismatic gifts which the Holy Spirit has bestowed on him for the good of his brothers.

(9) Paul VI, Allocution to Tertiaries (*Salutiamo volentieri*) 3, May 19, 1971; AAS. vol 63, 545-546.

"We wish to tell you of the triple confidence we have in you. We have confidence in you because we know you are an example of poverty. It is your role to give the example of true evangelical poverty and to affirm the primacy of love of God and neighbour. This is your programme, your ideal, your source of joy.

We have confidence in you because you love the Cross of Christ. It will never be possible to have Christianity without the Cross, without sacrifice and without effort. The example of St. Francis is your guide.

And finally we have confidence in you that yet again, as so typically seen in the famous fresco of him, Francis lends his strong patient shoulder to support the Church - visible, human and subject to every natural crisis of this world. We hope that you children of Saint Francis will be that supporting shoulder and in your silence and generous service stay close to Us, patient with Us, confident with Us that no misfortune or adversity can prevail against Christ's Church."

(10) Primitive Rule of the Third Order, (abbr. Prim. Rule)

(11) Church, 8

Christ, the one Mediator, established and ceaselessly sustains here on earth His holy Church, the community of faith, hope, and charity, as a visible structure. Through her He communicates truth and grace to all. But the society furnished with hierarchical agencies and the Mystical Body of Christ are not to be considered as two realities, nor are the visible assembly and the spiritual community, nor the earthly Church and the Church enriched with heavenly things. Rather they form one interlocked reality which is comprised of a divine and a human element. For this reason, by an excellent analogy, this reality is compared to the mystery of the incarnate Word. Just as the assumed nature inseparably united to the divine Word serves Him as a living instrument of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the communal structure of the Church serve Christ's Spirit, who vivifies it by way of building up the body (cf. Eph. 4:16).

This is the unique Church of Christ which in the Creed we avow as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. After His Resurrection our Saviour handed her over to Peter to be shepherded (Jn. 21:17), commissioning him and the other apostles to propagate and govern her (cf. Mt. 28:18 ff). Her He erected for all ages as "the pillar and mainstay of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). This Church, constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor, although many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside of her visible structure. These

elements, however, as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism toward Catholic unity.

Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and under oppression, so the Church is called to follow the same path in communicating to men the fruits of salvation. Christ Jesus, "though He was by nature God emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave" (Phil. 2:6), and "being rich, he became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9) for our sakes. Thus, although the Church needs human resources to carry out her mission, she is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to proclaim humility and self-sacrifice, even by her own example.

(12) Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, (Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests), 18b.

That priests may be able to foster union with Christ in all the circumstances of life, they enjoy, in addition to the conscious exercise of their ministry, those means, common and particular, new and old, which the Spirit of God never ceases to stir up in the People of God and which the Church commends and indeed at times commands for the sanctification of her members. Of all spiritual helps, those acts are outstanding by which the faithful receive nourishment from God's Word at the twofold table of sacred Scripture and the Eucharist. It is obvious how important for the proper sanctification of priests is the energetic and frequent exercise of such acts.

To Christ the Saviour and Shepherd, ministers of sacramental grace are intimately united through the fruitful reception of the sacraments, especially the repeated sacramental act of penance. For this sacrament, prepared for by a daily examination of conscience, greatly fosters the necessary turning of the heart toward the love of the Father of mercies. With the light of a faith nourished by spiritual reading, priests can carefully detect the signs of God's will and the impulses of His grace in the various happenings of life, and thus can become more docile day by day to the mission they have undertaken in the Holy Spirit.

They can always find a wondrous model of such docility in the Blessed Virgin Mary. Led by the Holy Spirit, she devoted herself entirely to the mystery of man's redemption. With the devotion and veneration of sons, priests should lovingly honour this mother of the supreme and eternal Priest, this Queen of the Apostles and protectress of their ministry.

That they may discharge their ministry with fidelity, they should prize daily conversation with Christ the Lord in visits of personal devotion to the most Holy Eucharist. They should gladly undertake spiritual retreats and highly esteem spiritual direction. In manifold ways, especially through approved methods of mental prayer and various voluntary forms of prayer, priests should search for and earnestly beg of God that Spirit of genuine adoration by which they themselves, along with the people entrusted to them, can unite themselves intimately with Christ the Mediator of the New Testament. Thus, as sons of adoption, they will be able to cry out: "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

(13) Laity, 4. See above, note (4.)

(14) 2 Celano 198 (O p521; 2 FA:ED p374)

*Of Francis' devotion to our Lady, to whom in particular he entrusted his order*

Toward the Mother of Jesus he was filled with an inexpressible love, because it was she who made the Lord of Majesty our brother. He sang special Praises to her, poured out prayers to her, offered her his affections, so many and so great that the tongue of man cannot recount them. But what delights us most, he made her the advocate of the order and placed under her wings the sons he was about to leave that she might cherish them and protect them to the end. - Hail, advocate of the poor! Fulfil toward us your office of protectress until the time set by the Father.

(15) Church 67; Laity 4: See note (4.)

This most holy Synod deliberately teaches this Catholic doctrine. At the same time, it admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered. It charges that practices and exercises of devotion toward her be treasured as recommended by the teaching authority of the Church in the course of centuries, and that those decrees issued in earlier times regarding the veneration of images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints, be religiously observed.

But this Synod earnestly exhorts theologians and preachers of the divine word that in treating of the unique dignity of the Mother of God, they carefully and equally avoid the falsity of exaggeration on the one hand, and the excess of narrow-mindedness on the other. Pursuing the study of sacred Scripture, the holy Fathers, the doctors, and liturgies of the Church, and under the guidance of the Church's teaching authority, let them rightly explain the offices and privileges of the Blessed Virgin which are always related to Christ, the Source of all truth, sanctity and piety.

Let them painstakingly guard against any word or deed which could lead separated brethren or anyone else into error regarding the true doctrine of the Church. Let the faithful remember, moreover, that true devotion consists neither in fruitless and passing emotion, nor in a certain vain credulity. Rather, it proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues.

(16) Church 41.

In the various types and duties of life, one and the same holiness is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father, worshipping God the Father in spirit and in truth. These souls follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ, in order to be made worthy of being partakers in His glory. Every person should walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of a living faith which arouses hopes and works through charity.

In the first place, the shepherds of Christ's flock ought to carry out their ministry with holiness, eagerness, humility, and courage, in imitation of the eternal High Priest, the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls. They will thereby make this ministry the principal means of their own sanctification. Those chosen for the fullness of the priesthood are gifted with sacramental grace enabling them to exercise a perfect role of pastoral charity through prayer, sacrifice, and preaching, as through every form of a bishop's care and service. They are enabled to lay down their life for their sheep fearlessly, and, made a model for their flock (cf. 1 Pet. 5:3), can lead the Church to ever-increasing holiness through their own example.

Thanks to Christ, the eternal and sole Mediator, priests share in the grace of the bishop's rank and form his spiritual crown. Like bishops, priests should grow in love for God and neighbour through the daily exercise of their duty. They should preserve the bond of priestly fraternity, abound in every spiritual good, and give living evidence of God to all men. Let their heroes be those priests who have lived during the course of the centuries, often in lowly and hidden service, and have left behind them a bright pattern of holiness. Their praise lives on in the Church.

A priest's task is to pray and offer sacrifice for his own people and indeed the entire People of God, realizing what he does and reproducing in himself the holiness of the things he handles. Let him not be undone by his apostolic cares, dangers, and toils, but rather led by them to higher sanctity. His activities should be fed and fostered by a wealth of meditation, to the delight of the whole Church of God. All priests, especially those who are called diocesan in view of the particular title of their ordination, should bear in mind how much their sanctity profits from loyal attachment to the bishop and generous collaboration with him.

In their own special way, ministers of lesser rank also share in the mission and grace of the supreme priest. First among these are deacons. Since they are servants of the mysteries of Christ

and the Church, they should keep themselves free from every fault, be pleasing to God, and be a source of all goodness in the sight of men (cf. 1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13).

Called by the Lord and set aside as His portion, other clerics prepare themselves for various ministerial offices under the watchful eye of pastors. They are bound to bring their hearts and minds into accord with the splendid calling which is theirs, and will do so by constancy in prayer, burning love, and attention to whatever is true, just, and of good repute, all for the glory and honour of God. In addition, there are laymen chosen by God and called by the bishop to devote themselves exclusively to apostolic labours, working with great fruitfulness in the Lord's field.

Married couples and Christian parents should follow their own proper path to holiness by faithful love, sustaining one another in grace throughout the entire length of their lives. They should imbue their offspring, lovingly welcomed from God, with Christian truths and evangelical virtues. For thus they can offer all men an example of unwearying and generous love, build up the brotherhood of charity, and stand as witnesses to and cooperators in the fruitfulness of Holy Mother Church. By such lives, they signify and share in that very love with which Christ loved His Bride and because of which He delivered Himself up on her behalf. A like example, but one given in a different way, is that offered by widows and single people, who are able to make great contributions toward holiness and apostolic endeavour in the Church.

Finally, labourers, whose work is often toilsome, should by their human exertions try to perfect themselves, aid their fellow citizens, and raise all of society, and even creation itself, to a better mode of existence. By their lively charity, joyous hope, and sharing of one another's burdens, let them also truly imitate Christ, who roughened His hands with carpenter's tools, and who in union with His Father is always at work for the salvation of all men. By their daily work itself labourers can achieve greater apostolic sanctity. Those who are oppressed by poverty, infirmity, sickness, or various other hardships, as well as those who suffer persecution for justice' sake - may they all know that in a special way they are united with the suffering Christ for the salvation of the world. The Lord called them blessed in His gospel. They are those whom "the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself, after we have suffered a little while, perfect, strengthen, and establish" (1 Pet. 5:10).

All of Christ's faithful, therefore, whatever be the conditions, duties, and circumstances of their lives, will grow in holiness day by day through these very situations, if they accept all of them with faith from the hand of their heavenly Father, and if they cooperate with the divine will by showing every man through their earthly activities the love with which God has loved the world.

#### (17) Church 42b

"God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (1 Jn. 4:16). God pours out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (cf. Rom. 5:5). Thus the first and most necessary gift is that charity by which we love God above all things and our neighbour because of God. If that love, as good seed, is to grow and bring forth fruit in the soul, each one of the faithful must willingly hear the Word of God and with the help of His grace act to fulfil His will.

Each must share frequently in the sacraments, the Eucharist especially, and in liturgical rites. Each must apply himself constantly to prayer, self-denial, active brotherly service, and the exercise of all the virtues. For charity, as the bond of perfection and the fulfilment of the law (cf. Col.3:14; Rom. 13:10), rules over all the means of attaining holiness, gives life to them, and makes them work. Hence it is the love of God and of neighbour which points out the true disciple of Christ.

Since Jesus, the Son of God, manifested His charity by laying down His life for us, no one has greater love than he who lays down his life for Christ and his brothers (cf. 1 Jn. 3:16; Jn. 15:13). From the earliest times, then, some Christians have been called upon - and some will always be called upon - to give this supreme testimony of love to all men, but especially to persecutors. The Church, therefore, considers martyrdom as an exceptional gift and as the highest proof of love.

By martyrdom a disciple is transformed into an image of his Master, who freely accepted death on behalf of the world's salvation; he perfects that image even to the shedding of blood. Though few are presented with such an opportunity, nevertheless all must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow Him along the way of the cross through the persecutions which the Church will never fail to suffer.

The holiness of the Church is also fostered in a special way by the observance of the manifold counsels proposed in the gospel by our Lord to His disciples. Outstanding among them is that precious gift of divine grace which the Father gives to some men (cf. Mt. 19:11; 1 Cor. 7:7) so that by virginity, or celibacy, they can more easily devote their entire selves to God alone with undivided heart (cf. 1 Cor. 7:32-34). This total continence embraced on behalf of the kingdom of heaven has always been held in particular honour by the Church as being a sign of charity and stimulus towards it, as well as a unique fountain of spiritual fertility in the world.

The Church also keeps in mind the advice of the Apostle, who summoned the faithful to charity by exhorting them to share the mind of Christ Jesus - He who "emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave ... becoming obedient to death" (Phil. 2:7-8), and, because of us, "being rich, he became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9).

Since the disciples must always imitate and give witness to this charity and humility of Christ, Mother Church rejoices at finding within her bosom men and women who more closely follow and more clearly demonstrate the Saviour's self-giving by embracing poverty with the free choice of God's sons, and by renouncing their own wills. They subject the latter to another person on God's behalf, in pursuit of an excellence surpassing what is commanded. Thus they liken themselves more thoroughly to Christ in His obedience.

All of Christ's followers, therefore, are invited and bound to pursue holiness and the perfect fulfilment of their proper state. Hence, let them all see that they guide their affections rightly. Otherwise, they will be thwarted in the search for perfect charity by the way they use earthly possessions and by a fondness for riches which goes against the gospel spirit of poverty. The Apostle has sounded the warning: let those who make use of this world not get bogged down in it, for the structure of this world is passing away (cf. 1 Cor. 7:31, Greek text).

(18) St. Francis: "Letter to All the Faithful" (O p93); "Later Admonition and Exhortation" (1 FA:ED p46)

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the glorious Word of the Father, so holy and exalted, whose coming the Father made known by St Gabriel the Archangel to the glorious and blessed Virgin Mary, in whose womb he took on our weak human nature. He was rich beyond measure and yet he and his holy Mother chose poverty.

(19) Rom: 8:17; Church 48.

The Church, to which we are all called in Christ Jesus, and in which we acquire sanctity through the grace of God, will attain her full perfection only in the glory of heaven. Then will come the time of the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21). Then the human race as well as the entire world, which is intimately related to man and achieves its purpose through him, will be perfectly re-established in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20; 2 Pet. 3.10-13).

Christ, having been lifted up from the earth, is drawing all men to Himself (Jn. 12:32, Greek text). Rising from the dead (cf. Rom. 6:9), He sent His life-giving Spirit upon His disciples and through this Spirit has established His body, the Church, as the universal sacrament of salvation. Sitting at the right hand of the Father, He is continually active in the world, leading men to the Church, and through her joining them more closely to Himself and making them partakers of His glorious life by nourishing them with His own body and blood.

Therefore, the promised restoration which we are awaiting has already begun in Christ, is carried

forward in the mission of the Holy Spirit, and through Him continues in the Church. There we learn through faith the meaning, too, of our temporal life, as we perform, with hope of good things to come, the task committed to us in this world by the Father, and work out our salvation (cf. Phil. 2:12).

The final age of the world has already come upon us (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11). The renovation of the world has been irrevocably decreed and in this age is already anticipated in some real way. For even now on this earth the Church is marked with a genuine though imperfect holiness. However, until there is a new heaven and a new earth where justice dwells (cf. 2 Pet. 3:13), the pilgrim Church in her sacraments and institutions, which pertain to this present time, takes on the appearance of this passing world. She herself dwells among creatures who groan and travail in pain until now and await the revelation of the sons of God (cf. Rom. 8:19-22).

Joined with Christ in the Church and signed with the Holy Spirit "who is the pledge of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:14), we are truly called sons of God and such we are (cf. 1 Jn. 3:1). But we have not yet appeared with Christ in the state of glory (cf. Col. 3:4), in which we shall be like to God, since we shall see Him as He is (cf. 1 Jn. 3:2). Therefore "while we are in the body, we are exiled from the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6), and having the first fruits of the Spirit we groan within ourselves (cf. Rom. 8:23) and desire to be with Christ (cf. Phil. 1:23). A common love urges us to live more for Him, who died for us and rose again (cf. 2 Cor. 5:15). We strive therefore to please the Lord in all things (cf. 2 Cor. 5:9). We put on the armour of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and resist on the evil day (cf. Eph. 6:11-13).

Since we know not the day nor the hour, on our Lord's advice we must constantly stand guard. Thus when we have finished the one and only course of our earthly life (cf. Heb. 9:27) we may merit to enter into the marriage feast with Him and to be numbered among the blessed (cf. Mt. 25:31-46). Thus we may not be commanded to go into eternal fire (cf. Mt. 25:41) like the wicked and slothful servant (cf. Mt. 25:26), into the exterior darkness where 'there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth' (Mt. 22:13; 25:30). For before we reign with the glorious Christ, all of us will be made manifest "before the tribunal of Christ, so that each one may receive what he has won through the body, according to his works, whether good or evil" (2 Cor. 5:10). At the end of the world, "they who have done good shall come forth into resurrection of life-- but who have done evil unto resurrection of judgment." (Jn. 5:29; cf. Mt. 25:46).

We reckon therefore that "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18: cf. 2 Tim. 2:11-12). Strong in faith we look for "the blessed hope and glorious coming of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13) "who will refashion the body of our lowliness, conforming it to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:21) and who will come "to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all those who have believed" (2 Th. 1:10).

(20) St. Francis, Admonitions: 16. (O p83-84; 1 FA:ED p134) & see Prologue to New Rule (ii).

(ii) *Purity of heart*

*Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God* (Mt. 5:8). A man is really clean of heart when he has no time for the things of this world but is always searching for the things of heaven, never failing to keep God before his eyes and always adoring him with a pure heart and soul.

(21) Rom. 8:29

(22) This note has three sources:

2 Cel. 85 (O p 433; 2 FA:ED p303)

*How Francis corrected a brother who spoke ill of a poor man*

Another day when Francis was preaching, a certain poor and infirm man came to the place. Pitying his double affliction, namely, his want and his feebleness, Francis began to speak with his companion about poverty. And when, suffering with the sufferer, Francis' heart had become deeply afflicted, the companion of the saint said to him: "Brother, it is true that this man is poor but it may also be true that nowhere in the whole province is there a man who is richer in his desires." Immediately the saint rebuked him and said to him when he admitted his guilt: "Hurry quickly and take off your tunic and cast yourself down at the feet of this poor man and acknowledge your guilt. And do not only ask for forgiveness, but ask him also to pray for you." He obeyed and went to make satisfaction and he came back. The saint said to him, "When you see a poor man, Brother, an image is placed before you of the Lord and his poor mother. So too in the sick consider the infirmities which the Lord took upon himself for us." Indeed, there was always a bundle of myrrh with Francis; he always looked on the face of his Christ, always touched the man of sorrows who was acquainted with infirmity. (2 Celano 85)

"Letter to All the Faithful", 26 (O p94; 1 FA: ED p47)

Besides this, we must *bring forth therefore fruits befitting repentance* (Lk. 3:8) and love our neighbours as ourselves. Anyone who will not or cannot love his neighbour as himself should at least do him good and not do him any harm.

Those who have been entrusted with the power of judging others should pass judgement mercifully, just as they themselves hope to obtain mercy from God. *For judgement is without mercy to him who has not shown mercy* (James 2:13). We must be charitable, too, and humble, and give alms, because they wash the stains of sin from our souls. We lose everything which we leave behind us in this world; we can bring with us only the right to a reward for our charity and the alms we have given. For these we shall receive a reward, a just retribution from God (Letter to All the Faithful).

1 OFM Rule 7:13 (O p38; 1 FA:ED p69).

"Always be doing something worthwhile; then the devil will always find you busy", and, "Idleness is the enemy of the soul". And so those who serve God should be always busy praying or doing good.

No matter where they are, in hermitages or elsewhere, the friars must be careful not to claim the ownership of any place, or try to hold it against someone else. Everyone who comes to them, friend or foe, rogue or robber, must be made welcome. And all the friars, no matter where they are or in whatever situation they find themselves, should, like spiritually minded men, diligently show reverence and honour to one another without murmuring (1 Pet. 4:9). They should let it be seen that they are happy in God, cheerful and courteous, as is expected of them, and be careful not to appear gloomy or depressed like hypocrites. (1 OFM Rule: 7,13)

(23) 1 OFM Rule, 9:3 (O p39; 1 FA:ED p70); Mt. 25:40

The friars should be delighted to follow the lowliness and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, remembering that of the whole world we must own nothing; but having food and sufficient clothing, with these let us be content (1 Tim. 6:8), as St Paul says. They should be glad to live among social outcasts, among the poor and helpless, the sick and the lepers, and those who beg by the wayside. If they are in want, they should not be ashamed to beg alms, remembering that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living, all-powerful God set his face like a very hard rock (Is. 50:7) and was not ashamed. He was poor and he had no home of his own and he lived on alms, he and the Blessed Virgin and his disciples.

If people insult them and refuse to give them alms, they should thank God for it, because they will be honoured before the judgement-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ for these insults. The shame will

be imputed to those who cause it, not to those who suffer it. Alms are an inheritance and a right which is due to the poor because our Lord Jesus Christ acquired this inheritance for us.

(24) Church, 31; Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), 93 (abbr: Church Today).

The term laity is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in a religious state sanctioned by the Church. These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are established among the People of God. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ, They carry out their own part in the mission of the whole Christian people with respect to the Church and the world.

A secular quality is proper and special to laymen. It is true that those in holy orders can at times engage in secular activities, and even have a secular profession. But by reason of their particular vocation they are chiefly and professedly ordained to the sacred ministry. Similarly, by their state in life, religious give splendid and striking testimony that the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes.

But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven.

They are called there by God so that by exercising their proper function and being led by the spirit of the gospel they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of leaven. In this way they can make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope, and charity. The layman is closely involved in temporal affairs of every sort. It is therefore his special task to illumine and organize these affairs in such a way that they may always start out, develop, and persist according to Christ's mind, to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer. (Church 31)

Mindful of the Lord's saying: "*By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*" (Jn. 13:35). Christians cannot yearn for anything more ardently than to serve the men of the modern world ever more generously and effectively. Therefore, holding faithfully to the gospel and benefiting from its resources, and united with every man who loves and practices justice, Christians have shouldered a gigantic task demanding fulfilment in this world. Concerning this task they must give a reckoning to Him who will judge every man on the last day.

Not everyone who cries, "Lord, Lord," will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the Father's will and take a strong grip on the work at hand. Now, the Father wills that in all men we recognize Christ our brother and love Him effectively in word and in deed. By thus giving witness to the truth, we will share with others the mystery of the heavenly Father's love. As a consequence, men throughout the world will be aroused to a lively hope - the gift of the Holy Spirit - that they will finally be caught up in peace and utter happiness in that fatherland radiant with the splendour of the Lord. (Church Today 93)

(25) Laity, 14.

A vast field for the apostolate has opened up on the national and international levels where most of all the laity are called upon to be stewards of Christian wisdom. In loyalty to their country and in faithful fulfilment of their civic obligations, Catholics should feel themselves obliged to promote the true common good. Thus, they should make the weight of their opinion felt, so that civil authority may act with justice, and laws may conform to moral precepts and the common good. Catholics skilled in public affairs and adequately enlightened in faith and Christian doctrine should not refuse to administer public affairs, since by performing this office in a worthy manner they can simultaneously advance the common good and prepare the way for the gospel.

Catholics should try to cooperate with all men and women of good will to promote whatever is true and just, whatever is holy and worth loving (cf. Phil. 4:8). They should hold discussions with them, excelling them in prudence and courtesy, and initiate research on social and public practices which can be improved in the spirit of the gospel.

Among the signs of our times the irresistibly increasing sense of solidarity among all peoples is especially noteworthy. It is a function of the lay apostolate to promote this awareness zealously and to transform it into a sincere and genuine sense of brotherhood. Furthermore, the laity should be informed about the international field and about the questions and solutions, theoretical as well as practical, which arise in this field, especially with respect to developing nations.

All who work in or give help to foreign nations must remember that relations among peoples should be a genuine fraternal exchange in which each party is at the same time a giver and a receiver. Whether their purpose is international affairs, private business, or leisure, travelling Christians should remember that they are journeying heralds of Christ wherever they go, and should act accordingly.

(26) This note has three sources:

Church Today, 67:2

Human labour which is expended in the production and exchange of goods or in the performance of economic services is superior to the other elements of economic life. For the latter have only the nature of tools.

Whether it is engaged in independently or paid for by someone else, this labour comes immediately from the person. In a sense, the person stamps the things of nature with his seal and subdues them to his will. It is ordinarily by his labour that a man supports himself and his family, is joined to his fellow men and serves them, and is enabled to exercise genuine charity and be a partner in the work of bringing God's creation to perfection. Indeed, we hold that by offering his labour to God a man becomes associated with the redemptive work itself of Jesus Christ, who conferred an eminent dignity on labour when at Nazareth He worked with His own hands.

From all these considerations there arise every man's duty to labour faithfully and also his right to work. It is the duty of society, moreover, according to the circumstances prevailing in it, and in keeping with its proper role, to help its citizens find opportunities for adequate employment. Finally, payment for labour must be such as to furnish a man with the means to cultivate his own material, social, cultural, and spiritual life worthily, and that of his dependents. What this payment should be will vary according to each man's assignment and productivity, the conditions of his place of employment, and the common good.

Since economic activity is generally exercised through the combined labours of human beings, any way of organizing and directing that activity which would be detrimental to any worker would be wrong and inhuman. It too often happens, however, even in our day, that in one way or another workers are made slaves of their work. This situation can by no means be justified by so-called economic laws. The entire process of productive work, therefore, must be adapted to the needs of the person and to the requirements of his life, above all his domestic life. Such is especially the case with respect to mothers of families, but due consideration must be given to every person's sex and age.

The opportunity should also be afforded to workers to develop their own abilities and personalities through the work they perform. Though they should apply their time and energy to their employment with a due sense of responsibility, all workers should also enjoy sufficient rest and leisure to cultivate their family, cultural, social, and religious life. They should also have the opportunity to develop on their own the resources and potentialities to which, perhaps, their professional work gives but little scope. (Church Today 67)

1 OFM Rule, 7:4 (O p37; 1 FA:ED p68)

The friars who have a trade should work at it, provided that it is no obstacle to their spiritual progress and can be practised without scandal. The Psalmist tells us, You shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; happy shall you be, and favoured (127:2); and St Paul adds, If any man will not work, neither let him eat (2 Thess. 3:10). Everyone should remain at the trade and in the position in which he was called. (1 OFM Rule)

2 OFM Rule, 5:1 (O p61; 1 FA:ED p102)

The friars to whom God has given the grace of working should work in a spirit of faith and devotion and avoid idleness, which is the enemy of the soul, without however extinguishing the spirit of prayer and devotion, to which every temporal consideration must be subordinate. (2 OFM Rule)

(27) Rule of Leo XIII, 2:8

(28) Church 41: see note (16); Laity 30: see note (8)

(29) 1 Celano 80 (O p296; 1 FA:ED p250).

For who could ever give expression to the very great affection he bore for all things that are God's? Who would be able to narrate the sweetness he enjoyed while contemplating in creatures the wisdom of their Creator, his power and his goodness? Indeed, he was very often filled with a wonderful and ineffable joy from this consideration while he looked upon the sun, while he beheld the moon, and while he gazed upon the stars and the firmament. O simple piety and pious simplicity! Toward little worms even he glowed with a very great love, for he had read this saying about the Saviour: I am a worm, not a man. Therefore he picked them up from the road and placed them in a safe place, lest they be crushed by the feet of the passers-by. What shall I say of the lower creatures, when he would see to it that the bees would be provided with honey in the winter, or the best wine, lest they should die from the cold? He used to praise in public the perfection of their works and the excellence of their skill, for the glory of God, with such encomiums that he would often spend a whole day in praising them and the rest of creatures. For as of old the three youths in the fiery furnace invited all the elements to praise and glorify the Creator of the universe, so also this man, filled with the spirit of God, never ceased to glorify, praise, and bless the Creator and Ruler of all things in all the elements and creatures.

(30) Rule of Leo XIII, 2:9; 3 Comp. 14:58 (O p941; 2 FA:ED p101).

Blessed Francis also warned his brothers never to judge or criticize those who live in luxury, eat fastidiously, and indulge in superfluous and splendid clothes; God, he said, is their Lord and ours; he has the power to call them to himself and to justify them. He insisted that the friars should reverence such men as their brothers and masters, and they are indeed brothers since they are children of the same Creator; while they are our masters since they help the good to do penance by giving them what is necessary to the body. To this blessed Francis added: "The general behaviour of the friars among people must be such that all who see or hear them may be drawn to glorify our heavenly Father and to praise him devoutly." His great desire was that he and his brothers should abound in the good works for which men give glory and praise to God.

He also said to the brothers: "Since you speak of peace, all the more so must you have it in your hearts. Let none be provoked to anger or scandal by you, but rather may they be drawn to peace and good will, to benignity and concord through your gentleness. We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way. Many

who may seem to us to be children of the Devil will still become Christ's disciples."

(31) This note has two sources:

St. Francis, "Admonitions," 21 (O p85; 1 FA:ED p135)

Blessed that religious who finds all his joy and happiness in the words and deeds of our Lord and uses them to make people love God gladly. Woe to the religious who amuses himself with silly gossip, trying to make people laugh. (Admonitions)

1 OFM Rule, 7:15 (O p38; 1 FA:ED p69)

Everyone who comes to them, friend or foe, rogue or robber, must be made welcome.

And all the friars, no matter where they are or in whatever situation they find themselves, should, like spiritually-minded men, diligently show reverence and honour to one another without murmuring (1 Pet. 4:9). They should let it be seen that they are happy in God, cheerful and courteous, as is expected of them, and be careful not to appear gloomy or depressed like hypocrites. (1 OFM Rule)

(32) Church Today. 78:1-2

Peace is not merely the absence of war. Nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. Nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called "an enterprise of justice" (Is. 32:7). Peace results from that harmony built into human society by its divine Founder, and actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice.

The common good of men is in its basic sense determined by the eternal law. Still the concrete demands of this common good are constantly changing as time goes on. Hence peace is never attained once and for all, but must be built up ceaselessly. Moreover, since the human will is unsteady and wounded by sin, the achievement of peace requires that everyone constantly master his passions and that lawful authority keep vigilant.

But such is not enough. This peace cannot be obtained on earth unless personal values are safeguarded and men freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of their inner spirits and their talents. A firm determination to respect other men and peoples and their dignity, as well as the studied practice of brotherhood, are absolutely necessary for the establishment of peace. Hence peace is likewise the fruit of love, which goes beyond what justice can provide.

That earthly peace which arises from love of neighbour symbolizes and results from the peace of Christ who comes forth from God the Father. For by His cross the incarnate Son, the Prince of Peace, reconciled all men with God. By thus restoring the unity of all men in one people and one body, He slew hatred in His own flesh. After being lifted on high by His resurrection, He poured the Spirit of love into the hearts of men.

For this reason, all Christians are urgently summoned "to practice the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15) and to join with all true peacemakers in pleading for peace and bringing it about.

Motivated by this same spirit, we cannot fail to praise those who renounce the use of violence in the vindication of their rights and who resort to methods of defence which are otherwise available to weaker parties too, provided that this can be done without injury to the rights and duties of others or of the community itself. Insofar as men are sinful, the threat of war hangs over them, and hang over them it will until the return of Christ. But to the extent that men vanquish sin by a union of love, they will vanquish violence as well, and make these words come true: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again" (Is. 2:4).

(33) Code of Canon Law, 687.

(34) Code of Canon Law, 687.

(35) Pius XII, Allocution to Tertiaries ("Nel darvi"), (July 1,1956); AAS, vol. 48, p.577.

(36) Code of Canon Law, 694.

(37) Prim. Rule, 29-30.

(38) 1 Cel 22 (O p247; 1 FA:ED p201).

But when on a certain day the Gospel was read in that church, how the Lord sent his disciples out to preach, the holy man of God, assisting there, understood somewhat the words of the Gospel; after Mass he humbly asked the priest to explain the Gospel to him more fully. When he had set forth for him in order all these things, the holy Francis, hearing that the disciples of Christ should not possess gold or silver or money; nor carry along the way scrip, or wallet, or bread, or a staff; that they should not have shoes, or two tunics, but that they should preach the kingdom of God and penance, immediately cried out exultingly: "This is what I wish, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart." Then the holy father, overflowing with joy, hastened to fulfil that salutary word he had heard, and he did not suffer any delay to intervene before beginning devoutly to perform what he had heard. He immediately put off his shoes from his feet, put aside the staff from his hands, was content with one tunic, and exchanged his leather girdle for a small cord. He designed for himself a tunic that bore a likeness to the cross, that by means of it he might beat off all temptations of the devil; he designed a very rough tunic so that by it he might crucify the flesh with all its vices and sins; he designed a very poor and mean tunic, one that would not excite the covetousness of the world. The other things that he had heard, however, he longed with the greatest diligence and the greatest reverence to perform. For he was not a deaf hearer of the Gospel, but committing all that he had heard to praiseworthy memory, he tried diligently to carry it out to the letter.

(39) Prim. Rule, 31.

(40) Code of Canon Law, 696.

(41) Code of Canon Law, 697.

(42) Prim. Rule, 23.

(43) Prim. Rule, 20.

(44) Rule of Nicholas IV, chap. 16.

*On the correction of such as commit any fault*

i. The superiors and brothers of each locality will assemble in some religious house, or church, if they have no more convenient place: they will choose a director, who shall impose a salutary penance on such of the members as may have committed any fault; and, seeing that this order was instituted by St. Francis, we counsel the brothers and sisters to take a religious from the Order of the Brothers Minor for their director, whom the custos and guardians of the same order shall appoint when required to do so. At the same time, we will not that any lay person exercise the office of director or visitor.

ii. The general assembly shall be held once a year only, unless some urgent necessity requires it. Incurrible and disobedient members shall be warned three times to return to their duties; when, if they will not reform, they shall be expelled from the congregation.