

# FIRST RULE OF THE FRIARS MINOR

## *(Regula non bullata)*

*Which St. Francis made and which Pope Innocent III confirmed without a Bull.* <sup>3</sup>

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. This is the life that Brother Francis begged might be conceded to him and confirmed by the Lord Pope Innocent. And he [the Pope] has conceded and confirmed it to him and to his brothers present and future. Brother Francis, and whoever may be at the head of this religion, promises obedience and reverence to our Lord Pope Innocent and to his successors. And the other brothers shall be bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors.

### *1.—That the Brothers ought to live in Obedience, without Property and in Chastity.*

The Rule and life of these brothers is this: namely, to live in obedience and chastity, and without property, and to follow the doctrine and footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me." And: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me;" in like manner: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." "And everyone that hath left father or mother, brothers or sisters, or wife, or children or lands, for My sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting."

### *2.—Of the Reception and Clothing of the Brothers.*

If any one, wishing by divine inspiration to embrace this manner of life, comes to our brothers, let him be kindly received by them. And if he be firmly resolved to undertake our life, let the brothers take great care not to meddle with his temporal affairs, but let them present him as soon as possible to their minister. Let the minister receive him kindly, and encourage him, and diligently explain to him the tenor of our life. This being done, if he be willing and able, with safety of conscience and without impediment, let him sell all his goods and endeavor to distribute them to the poor. But let the brothers and the ministers of the brothers be careful not to interfere in any way in his affairs, and let them not receive any money, either themselves or through any person acting as intermediary; if however they should be in want, the brothers may accept other necessaries for the body, money excepted, by reason of their necessity, like other poor. And when he [the candidate] shall have returned, let the minister grant him the habit of probation for a year; that is to say, two tunics without a hood and cord and breeches and a chaperon <sup>1</sup> reaching to the girdle. The year of probation being finished, let him be received to obedience. Afterwards it shall not be lawful for him to pass to another Order, nor to "wander about beyond obedience," according to the commandment of the Lord Pope. <sup>2</sup> For according to the Gospel "no man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." <sup>3</sup> If, however, anyone should present himself who cannot without difficulty give away his goods, but has the spiritual will to relinquish them, it shall suffice. No one shall be received contrary to the form and institution of the holy Church.

But the other brothers who have promised obedience may have one tunic with a hood, and another without a hood, if necessity require it, and a cord and breeches. And let all the brothers be clothed with mean garments, and they may mend them with sackcloth and other pieces, with the blessing of God, for the Lord says in the Gospel: they that are in costly apparel and live delicately and they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. <sup>4</sup> And although they should be called hypocrites, let them not cease to do good; let them not desire rich clothes in this world, that they may possess a garment in

the kingdom of heaven.

3.—*Of the Divine Office and of the Fast.*

The Lord says: "This kind [of devil] can go out by nothing but by fasting and prayer"; and again: "When you fast be not as the hypocrites, sad." For this reason let all the brothers, whether clerics or laics, say the Divine Office, the praises and prayers which they ought to say. The clerics shall say the Office, and say it for the living and the dead, according to the custom of clerics; but to satisfy for the defect and negligence of the brothers, let them say every day *Miserere mei*, with the *Pater noster*; for the deceased brothers let there say *De profundis*, with *Pater noster*. And they may have only the books necessary to perform their Office; and the lay-brothers who know how to read the Psalter may also have one; but the others who do not know how to read may not have a book. The lay-brothers however shall say: *Credo in Deum*, and twenty-four *Paternosters* with *Gloria Patri* for Matins, but for Lauds, five; for Prime, Tierce, Sext, and Nones, for each, seven *Paternosters* with *Gloria Patri*; for Vespers, twelve; for Compline, *Credo in Deum* and seven *Paternosters* with *Gloria Patri*; for the dead, seven *Paternosters* with *Requiem aeternam*; and for the defect and negligence of the brothers, three *Paternosters* every day.

And all the brothers shall likewise fast from the feast of All Saints until the Nativity of our Lord, and from Epiphany, when our Lord Jesus Christ began to fast, until Easter; but at other times let them not be bound to fast according to this life except on Fridays. And they may eat of all foods which are placed before them, according to the Gospel.

4.—*Of the Ministers and the other Brothers: how they shall be ranged.*

In the Name of the Lord let all the brothers who are appointed ministers and servants of the other brothers place their brothers in the provinces or places where they may be, and let them often visit and spiritually admonish and console them. And let all my other blessed brothers diligently obey them in those things which look to the salvation of the soul and are not contrary to our life. Let them observe among themselves what the Lord says: "Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them," and "what you do not wish done to you, do it not to others." And let the ministers and servants remember that the Lord says: I have not "come to be ministered unto, but to minister,"<sup>4</sup> and that to them is committed the care of the souls of their brothers, of whom, if any should be lost through their fault and bad example, they will have to give an account before the Lord Jesus Christ in the day of judgment.

5.—*Of the Correction of the Brothers who offend.*

Therefore take care of your souls and of those of your brothers, for "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." If however one of the ministers should command some one of the brothers anything contrary to our life or against his soul, the brother is not bound to obey him, because that is not obedience in which a fault or sin is committed. Nevertheless, let all the brothers who are subject to the ministers and servants consider reasonably and carefully the deeds of the ministers and servants. And if they should see any one of them walking according to the flesh and not according to the spirit, according to the right way of our life, after the third admonition, if he will not amend, let him be reported to the minister and servant of the whole fraternity in the Whitsun Chapter, in spite of any obstacle that may stand in the way. If however among the brothers, wherever they may be, there should be some brother who desires to live according to the flesh, and not according to the spirit, let the brothers with whom he is admonish, instruct, and correct him humbly and diligently. And if after the third admonition he will not amend, let them as soon as possible send him, or make the matter known, to his minister and servant, and let the minister and servant do with him what may seem to him most expedient before God.

And let all the brothers, the ministers and servants as well as the others, take care not to be troubled or angered because of the fault or bad example of another, for the devil desires to corrupt many through the sin of one; but let them spiritually help him who has sinned, as best they can; for he that is whole needs not a physician, but he that is sick.

In like manner let not all the brothers have power and authority, especially among themselves, for as the Lord says in the Gospel: "The princes of the Gentiles lord it over them: and they that are the greater exercise power upon them." <sup>2</sup> It shall not be thus among the brothers, but whosoever will be the greater among them, let him be their minister and servant, <sup>3</sup> and he that is the greater among them let him be as the younger, <sup>4</sup> and he who is the first, let him be as the last. Let not any brother do evil or speak evil to another; let them rather in the spirit of charity willingly serve and obey each other: and this is the true and holy obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ. And let all the brothers as often soever as they may have declined from the commandments of God, and wandered from obedience, know that, as the prophet says, they are cursed out of obedience as long as they continue consciously in such a sin. And when they persevere in the commandments of the Lord, which they have promised by the holy Gospel and their life, let them know that they abide in true obedience, and are blessed by God.

*6.—Of the Recourse of the Brothers to their Ministers and that no Brother may be called Prior.*

Let the brothers, in whatsoever places they may be, if they cannot observe our life, have recourse as soon as possible to their minister, making this known to him. But let the minister endeavor to provide for them in such a way as he would wish to be dealt with himself if he were in the like case. And let no one be called Prior, but let all in general be called Friars Minor. And let one wash the feet of the other.

*7.—Of the Manner of serving and working.*

Let the brothers in whatever places they may be among others to serve or to work, not be chamberlains, nor cellarers, nor overseers in the houses of those whom they serve, and let them not accept any employment which might cause scandal, or be injurious to their soul, but let them be inferior and subject to all who are in the same house.

And let the brothers who know how to work, labor and exercise themselves in that art they may understand, if it be not contrary to the salvation of their soul, and they can exercise it becomingly. For the prophet says: "For thou shalt eat the labors of thy hands; blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee"; and the Apostle: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." And let every man abide in the art or employment wherein he was called. <sup>3</sup> And for their labor they may receive all necessary things, except money. And if they be in want, let them seek for alms like other brothers. And they may have the tools and implements necessary for their work. Let all the brothers apply themselves with diligence to good works, for it is written: "Be always busy in some good work, that the devil may find thee occupied;" and again: "Idleness is an enemy to the soul." Therefore the servants of God ought always to continue in prayer or in some other good work.

Let the brothers take care that wherever they may be, whether in hermitages or in other places, they never appropriate any place to themselves, or maintain it against another. And whoever may come to them, either a friend or a foe, a thief or a robber, let them receive him kindly. And wherever the brothers are and in whatsoever place they may find themselves, let them spiritually and diligently show reverence and honor toward one another without murmuring. And let them take care not to appear exteriorly sad and gloomy like hypocrites, but let them show themselves to be joyful and contented in the Lord, merry and becomingly courteous.

*8.—That the Brothers must not receive Money.*

The Lord commands in the Gospel: "Take heed, beware of all malice and avarice and guard yourselves from the solitudes of this world, and the cares of this life." Therefore let none of the brothers,

wherever he may be or whithersoever he may go, carry or receive money or coin in any manner, or cause it to be received, either for clothing, or for books, or as the price of any labor, or indeed for any reason, except on account of the manifest necessity of the sick brothers. For we ought not to have more use and esteem of money and coin than of stones. And the devil seeks to blind those who desire or value it more than stones. Let us therefore take care lest after having left all things we lose the kingdom of heaven for such a trifle. And if we should chance to find money in any place, let us no more regard it than the dust we tread under our feet, for it is "vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." And if perchance, which God forbid, it should happen that any brother should collect or have money or coin, except only because of the aforesaid necessity of the sick, let all the brothers hold him for a false brother, a thief, a robber, and one having a purse, unless he should become truly penitent. And let the brothers in nowise receive money for alms or cause it to be received, seek it or cause it to be sought, or money for other houses or places; nor let them go with any person seeking money or coin for such places. But the brothers may perform all other services which are not contrary to our life, with the blessing of God. The brothers may however for the manifest necessity of the lepers ask alms for them. But let them be very wary of money. But let all the brothers likewise take great heed not to search the world for any filthy lucre.

#### 9.—*Of asking for Alms.*

Let all the brothers strive to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, and let them remember that we ought to have nothing else in the whole world, except as the Apostle says: "Having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content." And they ought to rejoice when they converse with mean and despised persons, with the poor and the weak, with the infirm and lepers, and with those who beg in the streets. And when it may be necessary, let them go for alms. And let them not be ashamed thereof, but rather remember that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living and Omnipotent God, set His face "as a hard rock," and was not ashamed, and was poor, and a stranger, and lived on alms, He Himself and the Blessed Virgin and His disciples. And when men may treat them with contempt, and refuse to give them an alms, let them give thanks for this to God, because for these shames they shall receive great honor before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ. And let them know that the injuries shall not be imputed to those who suffer them, but to those who offer them. And alms is an inheritance and a right which is due to the poor, which our Lord Jesus Christ purchased for us. And the brothers who labor in seeking it will have a great recompense, and they will procure and acquire a reward for those who give; for all that men leave in this world shall perish, but for the charity and alms deeds they have done they will receive a reward from God.

And let one make known clearly his wants to another, in order that he may find and receive what are necessary for him. And let everyone love and nourish his brother as a mother loves and nourishes her son, in so far as God gives them grace. And "let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and he that eateth not, let him not judge him that eateth." And whensoever a necessity shall arise, it is lawful for all the brothers, wherever they may be, to eat of all food that men can eat, as our Lord said of David, who "did eat the loaves of proposition, which was not lawful to eat but for the priests." And let them remember what the Lord says: "and take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life: and that they come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the whole earth." And in like manner in time of manifest necessity let all the brothers act in their needs, as our Lord shall give them grace, for necessity has no law.

#### 10.—*Of the sick Brothers.*

If any of the brothers fall into sickness, wherever he may be, let the others not leave him, unless one of the brothers, or more if it be necessary, be appointed to serve him as they would wish to be served themselves; but in urgent necessity they may commit him to some person who will take care of him in

his infirmity. And I ask the sick brother that he give thanks to the Creator for all things, and that he desire to be as God wills him to be, whether sick or well; for all whom the Lord has predestined to eternal life are disciplined by the rod of afflictions and infirmities, and the spirit of compunction; as the Lord says: "Such as I love I rebuke and chastise." If, however, he be disquieted and angry, either against God or against the brothers, or perhaps ask eagerly for remedies, desiring too much to deliver his body which is soon to die, which is an enemy to the soul, this comes to him from evil and he is fleshly, and seems not to be of the brothers, because he loves his body more than his soul.

11.—*That the Brothers ought not to speak or detract, but ought to love one another.*

And let all the brothers take care not to calumniate anyone, nor to contend in words; <sup>4</sup> let them indeed study to maintain silence as far as God gives them grace. Let them also not dispute among themselves or with others, but let them be ready to answer with humility, saying: "we are unprofitable servants." And let them not be angry, for "whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." And let them love one another, as the Lord says: "This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you." And let them show their love by the works they do for each other, according as the Apostle says: "let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Let them "speak evil of no man," nor murmur, nor detract others, for it is written: "Whisperers and detractors are hateful to God." And let them be "gentle, showing all mildness toward all men." Let them not judge and not condemn, and, as the Lord says, let them not pay attention to the least sins of others, but rather let them recount their own in the bitterness of their soul. And let them "strive to enter by the narrow gate," for the Lord says: "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it!"

12.—*Of avoiding unbecoming Looks and the Company of Women.*

Let all the brothers, wherever they are or may go, carefully avoid unbecoming looks, and company of women, and let no one converse with them alone. Let the priests speak to them honestly, giving them penance or some spiritual counsel. And let no woman whatsoever be received to obedience by any brother, but spiritual counsel being given to her let her do penance where she wills. Let us all carefully watch over ourselves, and hold all our members in subjection, for the Lord says: "Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart."

13.—*Of the Punishment of Fornicators.*

If any brother by the instigation of the devil should commit fornication, let him be deprived of the habit of the Order which he has lost by his base iniquity and let him put it aside wholly, and let him be altogether expelled from our religion. And let him afterwards do penance for his sins.

14.—*How the Brothers should go through the World.*

When the brothers travel through the world, let them carry nothing by the way, neither bag, nor purse, nor bread, nor money, nor a staff. And whatsoever house they shall enter, let them first say, "Peace be to this house," and remaining in the same house, let them eat and drink what things they have. Let them not resist evil, but if anyone should strike them on the cheek, let them turn to him the other; and if anyone take away their garment, let them not forbid him the tunic also. Let them give to everyone that asketh them, and if anyone take away their goods, let them not ask them again

15.—*That the Brothers may not keep Beasts nor ride.*

I enjoin all the brothers, both clerics and laics, that when they travel through the world, or reside in places, they in no wise, either with them or with others or in any other way, have any kind of beast of burden. Nor is it lawful for them to ride on horseback unless they are compelled by infirmity or great

necessity.

16.—*Of those who go among the Saracens and other Infidels.*

The Lord says: "Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves." Wherefore, whoever of the brothers may wish, by divine inspiration, to go among the Saracens and other infidels, let them go with the permission of their minister and servant. But let the minister give them leave and not refuse them, if he sees they are fit to be sent; he will be held to render an account to the Lord if in this or in other things he acts indiscreetly. The brothers, however, who go may conduct themselves in two ways spiritually among them. One way is not to make disputes or contentions; but let them be "subject to every human creature for God's sake," yet confessing themselves to be Christians. The other way is that when they see it is pleasing to God, they announce the Word of God, that they may believe in Almighty God,—Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, the [Creator](#) of all, our Lord the Redeemer and Saviour the Son, and that they should be baptized and be made Christians, because, "unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

These and other things which please God they may say to them, for the Lord says in the Gospel: "Everyone that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven;" and "he that shall be ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed, when He shall come in His majesty and that of His Father, and of the holy angels."

And let all the brothers, wherever they may be, remember that they have given themselves, and have relinquished their bodies to our Lord Jesus Christ; and for love of Him they ought to expose themselves to enemies both visible and invisible, for the Lord says: "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, shall save it" in eternal life. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." If however they should persecute you in one city, flee to another. "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake." "Be glad in that day and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven." "I say to you, my friends, be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." "See that ye are not troubled." "In your patience you shall possess your souls." "But he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."

17.—*Of Preachers.*

Let none of the brothers preach contrary to the form and institution of the holy Roman Church, and unless this has been conceded to him by his minister. But let the minister take care that he does not grant this leave indiscreetly to anyone. Nevertheless, let all the brothers preach by their works. And let no minister or preacher appropriate to himself the ministry of brothers or the office of preaching, but let him give up his office without any contradiction at whatever hour it may be enjoined him. Wherefore I beseech in the charity which God is all my brothers, preachers, prayers, or laborers, both clerics and laics, that they study to humble themselves in all things and that they glory not, nor rejoice, nor inwardly exalt themselves on account of good words and works, nor indeed for any good which God may sometimes say or do and operate in them or by them, according to what the Lord says: "But yet rejoice not, in this that spirits are subject unto you." And let us know for certain that nothing belongs to us but vices and sins. And we ought rather to rejoice when we "fall into divers temptations," and when we bear some afflictions or sorrows of soul or body in this world for the sake of eternal life. Let us then all, brothers, avoid all pride and vainglory. Let us keep ourselves from the wisdom of this world, and the prudence of the flesh; for the spirit of the world wishes and cares much for words, but little for work; and it seeks not religion and interior sanctity of spirit, but wishes and desires a religion and sanctity appearing from without to men. And these are they of whom the Lord says: "Amen, I say unto you, they have received their reward." But the spirit of the Lord wishes the flesh to be mortified and

despised, and to be considered vile, abject, and contemptible; and it studies humility and patience, pure simplicity, and true peace of mind, and always desires above all things divine fear and divine wisdom, and the divine love of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. and let us refer all good to the Lord God most High and Supreme; let us acknowledge that all good belongs to Him, and let us give thanks for all to Him from whom all good proceeds. And may He, the most High and Supreme, only True God, have, and may there be rendered to Him and may He receive, all honors and reverences, all praises and benedictions, all thanks and all glory, to whom all good belongs, who alone is good. And when we see or hear evil said or God blasphemed, let us bless and thank and praise the Lord who is blessed for ever. Amen.

18.—*How the Ministers should meet together.*

Each minister may assemble with his brothers every year wherever he may please on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, to treat of those things which belong to God. And let all the ministers who are in parts beyond the sea and beyond the mountains come once in three years, and the other ministers once every year to the chapter on Whit Sunday, at the Church of St. Mary of the Portiuncula, unless it be otherwise ordered by the minister and servant of the whole brotherhood.

19.—*That all the Brothers must live in a Catholic way.*

Let all the brothers be Catholics, and live and speak in a Catholic manner. But if anyone should err from the Catholic faith and life in word or in deed, and will not amend, let him be altogether expelled from our fraternity. And let us hold all clerics and religious as our masters in those things which regard the salvation of souls, if they do not deviate from our religion, and let us reverence their office and order and administration in the Lord.

20.—*Of the Confession of the Brothers and of the Reception of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Let my blessed brothers, both clerics and laics, confess their sins to priests of our religion. And if they cannot do this, let them confess to other discreet and Catholic priests, knowing firmly and hoping that from whatever Catholic priests they may receive penance and absolution, they will undoubtedly be absolved from these sins if they take care to observe humbly and faithfully the penance enjoined them. If however they cannot then have a priest, let them confess to their brother, as the Apostle James says: "Confess your sins to one another;" <sup>1</sup> but let them not on this account fail to have recourse to priests, for to priests alone the power of binding and loosing has been given. And thus contrite and having confessed, let them receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ with great humility and veneration, calling to mind what the Lord Himself says: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life;" and "Do this for a commemoration of Me."

21.—*Of the Praise and Exhortation which all the Brothers may make.*

And this or the like exhortation and praise all my brothers may announce with the blessing of God, whenever it may please them among whatever men they may be: Fear and honor, praise and bless God, give thanks <sup>2</sup> and adore the Lord God Almighty in Trinity and Unity, Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, the Creator of all. "Do penance," bring forth fruits worthy of penance, for know that we must soon die. "Give and it shall be given to you;" "Forgive, and you shall be forgiven." And if you do not forgive men their sins, the Lord will not forgive you your sins. Confess all your sins. Blessed are they who shall die in penitence, for they shall be in the kingdom of heaven. Woe to those who do not die in penitence, for they shall be the children of the devil, whose works they do, and they shall go into eternal fire. Beware and abstain from all evil, and persevere in good until the end.

22.—*Of the Admonition of the Brothers.*

Let us all, brothers, give heed to what the Lord says: "Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you." For our Lord Jesus, whose footsteps we ought to follow, called His betrayer friend, <sup>3</sup> and offered Himself willingly to His crucifiers. Therefore all those who unjustly inflict upon us tribulations and anguishes, shames and injuries, sorrows and torments, martyrdom and death, are our friends whom we ought to love much, because we gain eternal life by that which they make us suffer. And let us hate our body with its vices and sins, because by living carnally it wishes to deprive us of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and eternal life, and to lose itself with all else in hell; for we by our own fault are corrupt, miserable, and averse to good, but prompt and willing to evil; because, as the Lord says in the Gospel: from the heart of men proceed and come evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, false testimonies, blasphemy, foolishness. All these evils come from within, from the heart of man, and these are what defile a man. But now, after having renounced the world, we have nothing else to do but to be solicitous, to follow the will of God, and to please Him. Let us take much care that we be not the wayside, or the stony or thorny ground, according to what the Lord says in the Gospel: The seed is the word of God. And that which fell by the wayside and was trampled under foot are they that hear the word and do not understand; then the devil cometh, and snatcheth that which has been sown in their hearts and taketh the word out of their hearts, lest believing they should be saved. But that which fell upon the rock are they who, when they hear the word, at once receive it with joy; but when tribulation and persecution arise on account of the word, they are immediately scandalized, and these have no roots in themselves, but are for a while, for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. But that which fell among thorns are they who hear the word of God, and the solicitude and cares of this world, the fallacies of riches, and the desire of other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. But that sown on good ground are they who, in a good and best heart, hearing the word understand and keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

And for this reason, brothers, let us, as the Lord says, "let the dead bury their dead." <sup>2</sup> And let us be much on our guard against the malice and cunning of Satan, who desires that man should not give his heart and mind to the Lord God, and who going about seeks to seduce the heart of man under pretext of some reward or benefit, to smother the words and precepts of the Lord from memory, and who wishes to blind the heart of man by worldly business and cares, and to dwell there, as the Lord says: "When an unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest and findeth none; then he saith: 'I will return into my house whence I came out.' And coming he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last state of that man is made worse than the first." Wherefore let us all, brothers, watch much, lest under pretext of some reward or labor or aid we lose or separate our mind and heart from the Lord. But I beseech all the brothers, both the ministers and others, in the charity which God is, <sup>2</sup> that, overcoming all obstacles and putting aside all care and solicitude, they strive in the best manner they are able, to serve, love, and honor the Lord God with a clean heart and a pure mind, which He seeks above all. And let us always make in us a tabernacle and dwelling-place for Him, who is the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, who says: "Watch, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape" all the evils "that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man." And when you stand to pray, say, "Our Father, who art in heaven." And let us adore Him with a pure heart, for "we ought always to pray, and not to faint," for the Father seeks such adorers. "God is a Spirit, and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth." And let us have recourse to Him as the "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," who says; "I am the Good Shepherd," who feed My sheep, "and I lay down My life for My flock." But all you are brothers. "And call none your father upon earth; for one is your Father who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, who is in heaven, Christ." "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you." "Where there are two or three gathered

together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Let us therefore hold fast the words, the life and doctrine and holy Gospel of Him who deigned for us to ask His Father to manifest to us His Name, saying: Father, I have manifested Thy Name to the men whom Thou hast given Me because the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them, and they have received them, and have known in very deed that I came forth out of Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, because they are Thine and all My things are Thine. Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We also are. These things I speak in the world that they may have joy filled in themselves., I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil. Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world. And for them I do sanctify Myself, that they may be sanctified in truth. Not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they may be consummated in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me. And I have made known Thy Name to them, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them. Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me, that they may see Thy glory in Thy kingdom.

*23.—Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving.*

Almighty, most Holy, most High and Supreme God, Holy and Just Father, Lord King of heaven and earth, for Thyself we give thanks to Thee because by Thy holy will, and by Thine only Son, Thou hast created all things spiritual and corporal in the Holy Ghost and didst place us made to Thine image and likeness in paradise, whence we fell by our own fault. And we give Thee thanks because, as by Thy Son Thou didst create us, so by the true and holy love with which Thou hast loved us, Thou didst cause Him, true God and true Man, to be born of the glorious and ever-Virgin, most Blessed holy Mary, and didst will that He should redeem us captives by His Cross and Blood and Death. And we give thanks to Thee because Thy Son Himself is to come again in the glory of His Majesty to put the wicked who have not done penance for their sins, and have not known Thee, in eternal fire, and to say to all who have known Thee and adored Thee, and served Thee in penance: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." And since all we wretches and sinners are not worthy to name Thee, we humbly beseech Thee, that our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, in whom Thou art well pleased, <sup>1</sup> together with the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, may give thanks to Thee as it is pleasing to Thee and Them, for all; He suffices Thee always for all through whom Thou hast done so much for us. Alleluia. And we earnestly beg the glorious Mother, the most Blessed Mary ever-Virgin, Blessed Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and all the choirs of the blessed spirits, seraphim, cherubim, and thrones, dominations, principalities and powers, virtues, angels and archangels, blessed John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Peter, Paul, the blessed patriarchs and prophets, innocents, apostles, evangelists, disciples, martyrs, confessors, virgins, blessed Elias and Enoch, and all the Saints who have been and are, and shall be, for Thy love, that they may, as it is pleasing to Thee, give thanks for these things to the most high, true God, eternal and living, with Thy most dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, for ever and ever. Amen. Alleluia.

And all we, brothers minor, useless servants, humbly entreat and beseech all those within the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church wishing to serve God, and all ecclesiastical Orders, priests, deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, exorcists, lectors, door-keepers, and all clerics; all religious men and women, all boys and children, poor and needy, kings and princes, laborers, husbandmen, servants and masters, all

virgins, continent, and married people, laics, men and women, all infants, youths, young men and old, healthy and sick, all small and great, and all peoples, clans, tribes, and tongues, all nations and all men in all the earth, who are and shall be, that we may persevere in the true faith and in doing penance, for otherwise no one can be saved. Let us all love with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our strength and fortitude, with all our understanding and with all our powers, with our whole might and whole affection, with our innermost parts, our whole desires, and wills, the Lord God, who has given, and gives to us all, the whole body, the whole soul, and our life; who has created and redeemed us, and by His mercy alone will save us; who has done and does all good to us, miserable and wretched, vile, unclean, ungrateful, and evil.

Let us therefore desire nothing else, wish for nothing else, and let nothing please and delight us except our Creator and Redeemer, and Saviour, the only true God, who is full of good, all good, entire good, the true and supreme good, who alone is good, merciful and kind, gentle and sweet, who alone is holy, just, true, and upright, who alone is benign, pure, and clean, from whom, and through whom, and in whom is all mercy, all grace, all glory of all penitents and of the just, and of all the blessed rejoicing in heaven. Let nothing therefore hinder us, let nothing separate us, let nothing come between us. Let us all, everywhere, in every place, at every hour, and at all times, daily and continually believe, truly and humbly, and let us hold in our hearts, and love, honor, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and exalt, magnify and give thanks to the most High and Supreme, Eternal God, in Trinity and Unity, to the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, to the Creator of all, to the Saviour of all who believe and hope in Him, and love Him, who, without beginning or end, is immutable, invisible, unerring, ineffable, incomprehensible, unfathomable, blessed, praiseworthy, glorious, exalted, sublime, most high, sweet, amiable, lovable, and always wholly desirable above all forever and ever.

In the Name of the Lord, I beseech all the brothers that they learn the tenor and sense of those things that are written in this life for the salvation of our souls, and frequently recall them to mind. And I pray God that He who is Almighty, Three in One, may bless all who teach, learn, hold, remember, and fulfil those things as often as they repeat and do what is there written for our salvation. And I entreat all, kissing their feet, to love greatly, keep and treasure up these things. And on the part of Almighty God and of the Lord Pope, and by obedience, I, Brother Francis, strictly command and enjoin that no one subtract from those things that are written in this life, or add anything written to it over and above, and that the brothers have no other Rule.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.